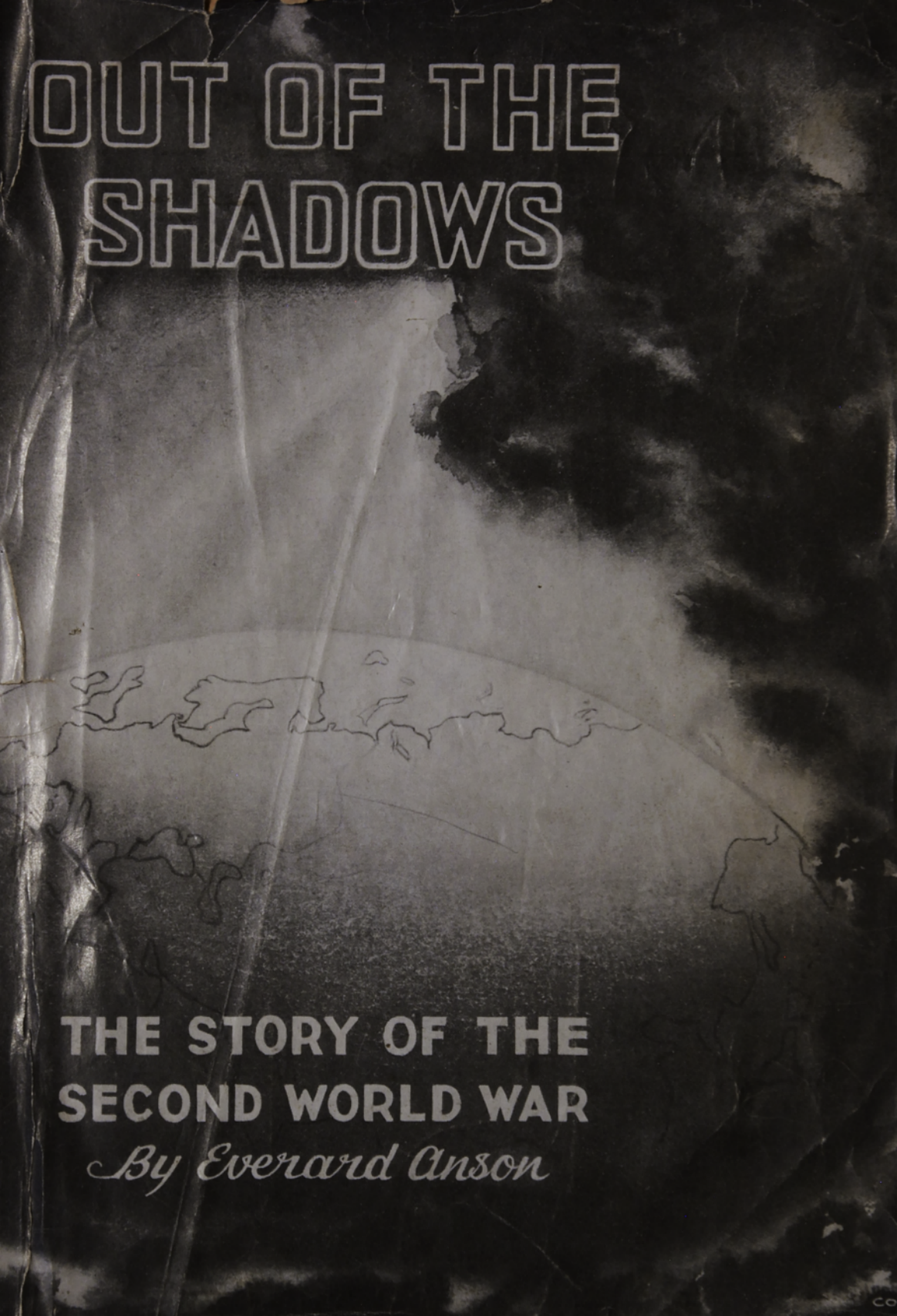
OUT OF THE SHADOWS



THE STORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By Everard Anson

EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908328-02-4

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908330-98-0

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: Out of the shadows : the story of the Second World War

Author: Anson, Everard

Published: A.H. and A.W. Reed, Wellington, N.Z.,1945

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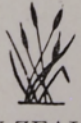

NEW ZEALAND
A. H. and A. W. REED
WELLINGTON

1945
Wholly set up and printed in New Zealand
by Wright and Carman, Ltd., Wellington,
for A. H. and A. W. Reed,
Publishers,
182 Wakefield Street, Wellington.

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PRELUDE TO BATTLE

It is the greatest possible concern to every State what kind of a government exists elsewhere. This is especially the case in a world becoming closer and closer knit by scientific development. If the great Powers had actively interested themselves in what was taking place in Germany for the last fifty years and in Japan for the last twenty-five years, and had taken appropriate action, Great War II could not have started.

It is clear that Great War I must be regarded as a mere curtain-raiser to Great War II. It created the hatreds and bitterness which reacted to produce war. Yet, it is not possible to say when the prelude to Great War II. started. Both these two wars had their roots deep in the past. In fact, all history was a prelude, including Bismarck, Queen Victoria, and scientific invention. When Great War II. took legal shape on September 3 the people of Britain acknowledged a condition which had arisen out of the symptoms which for a decade had made war inevitable.

In reality Great War II. began when Japan marched into Manchuria on the most slender pretexts on September 18, 1931, and proceeded to overrun China despite the League of Nations. Confirmation that it was to be a world war took place when year after year Hitler thrust himself into greater and greater power as a train of undeclared wars swept, via Ethiopia and Spain, into Europe. The entire policy of this upstart was concentrated on a grandiose scheme to make Germany master of the world. When Hitler said he did not want war it was correct. Nobody wants to fight for their ambition if it can be acquired by peaceful means. Hitler, therefore, acquired by peaceful means everything that could be obtained without fighting. For the rest he had to fight. The prelude to battle is the story of all the things Hitler was able to acquire before war became inevitable. If ever there were proof required that what goes on in one country is the business of every country, it was obtained between 1930 and 1939.

Hitler's entire peace policy was based on methods more usually used in war. First came the objective, then the bombardment, and then the attack. It was associated with the usual approach marches, the feints, lies and "shrewdies," and an avalanche of propaganda patter. When he could, he used infiltration, peaceful if possible, by force if necessary. As soon as he had gained one objective there was a pause before a new offensive was launched at a tactically suitable moment. In fact, Hitler was acutely interested in what was taking place in other countries. If it was inimical to his plans all means were taken to have it altered. We were to become unwilling observers of Hitler and Mussolini even going so far as to upset high-placed foreign statesmen and diplomats who showed signs of inimical tendencies.

On January 30, 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of the German Republic. Thirteen years previously he had founded the National Socialist Party. In

his appeal to the electorate on July 30, 1932, he had been backed by thirty-three per cent. of the people of Germany. This is significant because the elections were the last in Germany to be held under conditions of complete electoral freedom. It seems ironical now, but the Industrialists and Landowners had elected Hitler and backed him to the hilt with their money. Strangely enough, their reason for doing so was because they wanted someone in power who was "completely controllable." Hitler was dependent upon them for all his funds. At this time his party was in the last stages of bankruptcy. But for the Industrialists, Hitler and his adventurers would have sunk into penniless oblivion.

Hitler walked into the political world of Germany with his Brown Army —a sinister contribution to politics which eventually disposed of the industrialists. Goering, Goebbels, Himmler and other adventurers were given key jobs. Great War II. had started. For lack of formal declaration, none knew who was friend or foe. From 1933 to 1939 the German policy was confuse, isolate, strike.

How came it that an unknown house-painter was able to possess himself of a nation of 80,000,000 people? Why did a community give to one man full power to lead them on a wild dance of death? After Great War I. food was short in Germany. A series of bastard republics arose. Moreover, the Germans were suffering as the result of an inferiority complex due to their defeat. There was extreme economic and social suffering which acted as salt to the wounds created by the Treaty of Versailles after Great War I. From 1919 to 1933 the average German felt himself to be an international outcast. Deep down in 80,000,000 souls there smouldered resentment, and desire for revenge. This feeling was fanned by vindictive outbursts against Germany by some of the signatories to the Treaty of Versailles.

When Hitler suddenly appeared to tell the Germans that they were a superior race destined to lead the world, every German responded. He offered national unity—international understanding—power—conquest—and above all he offered them a leader. The Allies had made it easy for Hitler to play upon the emotions of a people who had sunk to profound psychopathic conditions. Moreover, Hitler offered, one by one, objects upon which the Germans could vent their revenge. One cannot, therefore, blame Great War II. entirely upon Hitler or upon the Germans. Part of the blame must be fixed upon those who enabled suitable conditions to arise in Germany. The outside world must shoulder its share of the responsibilities of Great War II. In fact, only by straight thinking will the communities of the world be able to put into practice policies which can avert Great War III. The world awaits a leader to teach the nations how to live peacefully with all men.

Having got himself fairly elected, Hitler decided to convert his minority into a majority. It mattered little if this came about by fair means or foul. The bogus elections held on March 5, 1933, were presaged by a reign of terror. Hitler's private armies, swollen by his previous political victory, were enrolled as private police. All civil servants known to hold views not according with the Nazis' were dismissed. Goering set the Reichstag on fire and clamped down on the Communists as the perpetrators. Furthermore, just before the elections, the President, the aged Hindenburg, was compelled to sign an emergency decree which suspended all guarantees of personal liberty, freedom of opinion and other fundamental liberties associated with normal democratic citizenship. Incidentally all the Communist members of the Reichstag were thrown into prison. The elections were thus held under conditions akin to gangster rule. It was, therefore, remarkable that there

was as much kick left in the old regime as was noticeable in the polls. The state of the parties was:—

	Million Votes.	Seats.
Nazis	17¼	288
Socialists	7¼	120
Communists	5	81
Centre Party	4½	73
Nationalists	3¼	42
Other Parties	2	32

The Nazis with their National Party associates had now a majority of four million. There had been 16,000,000 Germans brave enough to vote against a tyranny which was spreading across Germany. There was still an "Opposition" made up largely of the Industrialists, the Churches, and the German Army. One by one Hitler selected these as his objective and reduced them to impotence. This phase of the war was waged inside Germany against all those opponents who might endanger Hitler's ambitions.

So successful was Hitler in his scheme that by the winter of 1933 there was no political Opposition. He instituted a new paganism which defied the Churches and reduced their power. The German Army was weaned to Nazi ways by a blood purge, promise of promotion, and above all by the spending of money on rearmament. The professional soldiers fell for the bait and were helplessly hooked long before the real import dawned upon them in 1944 when victory had receded out of sight. It was even too late then to plot against Hitler.

As soon as the German Army was snuggling down nicely in Hitler's hip-pocket, along with a secretly expanding Air Force, Hitler sacked Schacht, the economic expert. This individual was sounding the alarm represented by growing industrial opposition. Foreign nations argued that what went on inside another country was nobody's business except the inmates of that country. Indeed, this curious type of loose thinking, illogical conclusion, or no thinking at all, contributed an incredible phase to a decade which developed from one incredulity to another. One may blame the statesmen, the politicians, the soldiers of the various countries concerned, but in the final analysis, the communities of countries beyond Germany must accept responsibility for inept governments, and self-centred party politics. This prelude to battle, this peace which passed all understanding, was tolerated by the communities of Britain and her Empire, by the Americas, by France, and by the lesser fry. The dictators found their task that much simplified by easy-going communities outside Germany.

However tolerantly the outside world watched the antics of Hitler inside Germany, in 1933 there occurred an event which assuredly indicated his sinister mood. On October 14, 1933, Nazi Germany withdrew from the League of Nations Disarmament Conference, then in session at Geneva. Hitler thereupon gave the required two year's notice to withdraw from the League. The decision caused a twitter in diplomatic circles. Prime Minister MacDonald explored a few avenues. His henchmen left no stones unturned, and the depths were duly plumbed. Any nation, it was argued, could leave the League. President Wilson had gone to the Peace Table in 1918 with high ideals, but backed by Congress with knife poised to cut away any unfortunate strappings Wilson might use to tie up with any child born. A few months later Congress had in fact repudiated the League of Nations and killed the Peace. If America could be accessory to this tragedy, what did it matter, it was argued, if Hitler withdrew from this still-born child? Any suggestion that having defied the world in one way, Hitler would do so in any other was

discounted. "Who was this upstart, anyway?" He remained a joke. The import of this event was not lost on Russia. That country joined the League of Nations the very next year.

The moment Hitler had won his priority objectives on the home front he began to test the outside world. Mounting propaganda arose in connection with various matters trivial enough in themselves. He was treated with amused tolerance. Behind this wordy screen Hitler began to spend larger and larger sums on preparation for war, until it reached the astronomical figure of £2,500,000,000 yearly.

From 1935 onward, Hitler tested the reactions of other countries in a manner which became more and more cheeky with every success. In March, 1935, he repudiated the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty, largely on the score that the Allies weren't disarming fast enough. This was certainly a shock to the other nations, and it brought a stern resolution from the League of Nations Council in Geneva. Undaunted, Hitler accompanied his repudiation by the restoration of conscription, the transfer of his civil air fleet to military control, and intimated that the Reich was building submarines. In fact, he graciously agreed to limit German naval tonnage to thirty-five per cent. of Britain's surface naval tonnage and forty-five per cent. of her submarine tonnage. He told his cronies inside Germany that he was making their country "the most capable instrument of war that has ever existed." He formed the Nazi Motor Corps, upon which was patterned his motorised army and his Panzers.

Almost in the same breath, Hitler snatched the Saar from the League of Nations' control by terroristic propaganda which attained new high peaks as the date for the elections approached in March, 1935. The Treaty of Versailles had placed the Saar coal-mining area under League control and the output at the disposal of the French. At the end of fifteen years the people of the Saar were to decide by plebiscite whether they wished to remain under the League, under France, or revert to Germany.

The people of Saar voted ninety-one per cent. for return to Germany, thus giving Hitler his second outside victory. With conscription, and the Saar, in his pocket he put the official seal on his naval treaty with Britain, thereby alienating feelings between France and Britain. Altogether, 1935 was a most satisfactory year for Hitler.

While Hitler tested foreign reactions, Mussolini anxiously watched from his balcony. The remarkable lack of repercussions encouraged Mussolini to carve out an Empire for Italy. Ever since his over-dramatised "March on Rome" in 1922, Mussolini had concentrated entirely on domestic affairs. By 1926 he could say in company with Louis XIV.: "L'etat, c'est moi." Mussolini amplified a clash between Italian native troops and frontier tribesmen at Wal-Wal, Ethiopia, in December, 1934, into an excuse for war. The best that can be said for it is that it was no worse an excuse than the incident used in Manchuria by the Japanese to enter into undeclared war against China. When it became obvious that the League of Nations did not intend to go beyond words, Mussolini struck against Abyssinia at Assab on October 3, 1935.

The communities of powerful nations were compelled to watch Mussolini bully the half-civilised State of Abyssinia into capitulation. These communities, moreover, were compelled to watch their Governments institute half-hearted sanctions and wordy conferences. In fact, the first conference spent months in discussing the definition of the word "aggressor." In the interval, Mussolini charged down the double ranks of the nations represented on the League, seized the Abyssinian bone before their very eyes and gobbled

it up before action was taken. Britain and France did no more than refuse to recognise Mussolini's newly gained Empire and hope it would give him indigestion. It was, however, a glittering diplomatic prize, despite its collection of deserts. Mussolini could now boast to his friend Hitler and to his Italians who responsively shouted "Viva Duce." Hitler, in fact, started to take note of Mussolini. Hitherto things had been somewhat chilly between them. Hitler now realised that the pair could conclude a deal.

Half-hearted and futile sanctions offered opportunity for sympathy and discussions between Hitler and Mussolini. The Axis was therefore conceived in the autumn of 1935 and was born, with suitable visits and speeches by the parents, in November, 1936. This evil and unnatural union was due entirely to inaction and lack of firmness on the part of Britain and France. The United States of America, at this time, was in a state of splendid isolation, every head in the sands of illusion. Those three countries were subsequently to pay a terrible price for their lack of action at this time. In pounds, shillings and pence the price was £30,000,000 a day for several years, added to which must also be included the casualties of Great War II.

On May 5, 1936, Haile Selassie, Emperor of Abyssinia, King of Kings, was aboard a British warship on the way to England, a king without a country. On the same day Italian troops entered Addis Ababa. Four days later Mussolini proclaimed the rebirth of the Roman Empire, the annexation of Ethiopia. At Geneva the League of Nations sank to a state of collapse from which it never really recovered.

During the crisis produced by Mussolini's Ethiopian war, Hitler started the German Army on the march. On March 7, 1936, his armies padded safely into the zone east of the Rhine which had been demilitarised by the Treaty of Versailles. This area was France's guarantee against sudden attack. A treaty breach on a grandiose scale of this nature came as near to war as any act Hitler could have instigated. He was warned by his own generals that in the event of war with France, Germany had no hope of success. As if to mitigate the enormity of his act Hitler cynically renounced the Treaty of Locarno. In fact, his pretext for his march into the Rhine was that France's new defensive pact with Russia had violated Locarno. This treaty, signed in 1925, guaranteed the eastern frontiers of France and Belgium. The only British reaction to Hitler's escapade in the Rhine was an announcement in the House of Commons and efforts to prevent France from taking military action. This act of Hitler was a test case by which war or peace was decided. Had Britain taken a strong stand, even to the point of going to war, Hitler would have been booted ignominiously out of the Rhine. He would have landed with a nasty thud in Germany, with a face pulped beyond all saving. It would have been quite impossible for the Germans to have accepted him as a superman destined to lead them to world power.

During the period when the stamp of German soldiers could be heard in France thudding across the Rhine, Goering was asking Poland to join Germany in an attack on Russia. The Poles were now backed by promise of help from France, and they refused to link up with Germany. This, however, was of no great importance. Hitler was astounded at his success. Moreover, Mussolini was strutting around Italy drunk with dreams of empire. The more he shouted and ranted the colder and the more hostile the British became. In fact, Mussolini, egged on by Hitler, and Hitler, egged on by Mussolini, proceeded to direct over-heated blasts of most "impropaganda" all round the world. Britain was raked with blasts of this hot air. But for the fact that few people in Britain could speak Italian it might have produced immediate reaction. Instead, a stage was reached where Mussolini made and unmade

politicians in key positions in Britain. Sir Samuel Hoare was jettisoned on account of his cold-blooded suggestion that the Ethiopian campaign should be accepted at its real value. Mr. Eden was now jettisoned because he demanded a firm policy toward Italy. Mr. Chamberlain, in contrast, seemed fascinated by this diminutive, bald-pated clown who held the Italian stage.

Broken pledges became more and more common where Hitler and Mussolini were concerned. Indeed, the signing of a treaty of perpetual friendship, or a statement by Hitler that he had no designs on a country, had to be accepted in the nature of a declaration of war. The Axis extended their goodwill to Japan, involved at that time in an undeclared war against China which grew from incident to action in a never-ending series of irregularities.

In July, 1936, Hitler and Mussolini arranged a little curtain-raiser in Spain to test out their men and equipment destined for the real thing. The Civil War in Spain sprang from an Army revolt at Tetuan, Spanish Morocco, in July, 1936. The startled democracies sheltered behind a policy of non-intervention. The two dictators publicly associated themselves with this policy. Nevertheless, during the next two and a half years during which this bitter war raged, they sent "volunteers" to General Franco totalling 45,000 Germans and 100,000 Italians. Moreover, General Franco also received Axis aid in the matter of large quantities of war material, including aeroplanes. The curtain on this bloody and grim struggle only descended in May, 1939, just in time for the stage to be cleared for Great War II.

In November, 1937, Lord Halifax was constrained to visit Hitler to see if he couldn't get that dictator to moderate a bit. It was rather like asking a policeman to pay a visit to a runaway horse in full stride to ask it to moderate the pace. Lord Halifax returned in glum silence. His visit, it would seem, had been a failure. Furthermore, Hitler's pogroms against the Jews grew from a private vendetta into a world scandal. The world became full of Jews seeking refuge from Hitler's inhuman cruelties.

In view of the fact that Hitler had previously announced that he had no designs on Austria it became clear that this country had been marked down for early attention. Indeed, Hitler had made Mussolini secretly promise late in 1936 to agree in principle to German penetration in Austria. This submissive phase stood out in strong contrast to Mussolini's mercurial reactions in 1934 when Austrian Nazis murdered the Austrian Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss. Mussolini had then sent 40,000 picked troops and an air force to the Brenner Pass. Hitler had backed down.

Hitler invaded Austria in March, 1938. In April he referred to the conclusion of an Anschluss with Austria as "the achievement of a long existing ambition." He made no attempt to explain his public statement made three years previously that he did not wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, or annexe the country, or conclude an Anschluss. It was becoming painfully clear that Hitler was unreliable. The curious fact is that the more unreliable Hitler became with the others, the more assured Chamberlain became that Hitler wouldn't be unreliable with him. This was strange because Hitler had publicly expressed his mind about democracies: "No nation was ever created by democracy, and all the great empires were destroyed by it. I dare to predict that unless democracy is overcome culture will not increase, but diminish."

After the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Schuschnigg had had a stormy interview with Hitler, the trusting doctor invited the Austrians to vote whether they preferred to remain independent. Hitler pressed the button. On March 11, 1938, the recently purged and thoroughly Nazi German Army overran

Austria. Hitler then held his own plebiscite and, strangely enough, it resulted in 99.73 per cent. of the terrified voters declaring for the absorption of Austria into Germany. At this juncture Hitler served notice on Czecho-Slovakia by announcing that he had no intention of attacking that country. The British public realised with a shock that Hitler had taken one more step which must inevitably lead to war. Chamberlain even went so far as to admit reluctantly that events made it necessary to review the British defence programme.

The British Empire, indeed the whole world, was destined to see Prime Minister Chamberlain make a series of flying visits to Hitler in 1938, if not cap in hand, certainly umbrella in hand. He made three visits in all—September 15 to Berchtesgaden, 22 to Godesberg, and 28 to Munich. These three visits sealed the fate of Czecho-Slovakia. On the visit of September 15, Hitler told Chamberlain that if the Sudeten Germans were not at once returned to the Reich he was ready to risk world war. On the visit of September 22, Hitler demanded that almost every part of Czecho-Slovakia where a German could be found must be handed over to the Reich by October 1. On September 27 the British Fleet was mobilised. Next day Chamberlain made visit number three. Mr. Churchill described what took place in these words: "At Berchtesgaden £1 was demanded at pistol point. When it was given (at Godesberg) £2 was demanded at pistol point. Finally at Munich the dictator consented to take £1/17/6 and the rest in promises of good will for the future." This good will promise consisted of a piece of paper signed by Hitler and Chamberlain which stated that the two countries did not want to fight one another and would confer on points of difficulty which might arise. On Sunday, October 2, 1938, German tanks and troops crossed the Czech frontier to occupy the Sudeten territory. This included all the fortifications the Czechs had erected at great cost during the previous five years. Czecho-Slovakia now stood defenceless against Germany. Hitler marched into the rest of Czecho-Slovakia on March 15, 1939, thereby eliminating that country, taking over the huge Skoda armament works, and acquiring a jumping-off platform for the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939.

Bismarck had said long ago: "He who controls Bohemia controls Europe." Hitler was leaving no country right side up in his effort to control Europe. The occupation of Czecho-Slovakia was no more than a march across the prostrate body of an already stricken country. Not only the Danube Basin was now at the mercy of Hitler. The occupation of the Bohemian bastion placed Poland at the mercy of Germany. The entire system of alliances built up by France was in ruins. If ever there was a time for the democracies, including America, to sound the general alarm that time had come.

When one looks back on the black decade of 1930-1940, which formed so ominous a prelude to Great War II., it becomes impossible to interpret the motives behind British and French foreign policy. In France, changes of government were so frequent it became impossible to imagine that any Prime Minister could formulate a responsible long-term policy. Moreover, self-interest and speculation inimical to the community as a whole were rife. Many people in high places were prepared to sell themselves and their country to possible enemies in the wild grab to become enriched by shady money transactions. Self was paramount, country was forgotten. It was easy for Hitler to foment the rot, until France was virtually controlled by her enemies.

During the interlude when the democracies were drifting to war the British Prime Ministers were MacDonald, 1931-1934; Baldwin, 1935-1936;

Chamberlain, 1937-1940. In reality the MacDonald era consisted more truly of MacDonald, MacDonald-Baldwin, and finally of Baldwin-MacDonald. In fact, MacDonald took over an Empire supreme in the world, secure and free. Between the three of them they conducted it to the edge of disaster. Unemployment increased. The Air Forces sank to sixth in the world. The Army was left with semi-obsolete weapons. The Navy was allowed to become inadequate under the guise of disarmament. Hitler was permitted to poise a bigger, better, sharper dagger over the world every year; especially over the heart of Britain herself.

This fearful menace, which slowly took shape in Europe was forcefully exposed by a few courageous public figures—specially by Winston Churchill. Their warnings were derided by the Party in power, and the authors were charged with alarmist views. In the House of Commons a huge docile majority "yessed" the Prime Ministers through every incredible situation. Churchill was refused a responsible position because "he had no judgment." It was even contended that all he wanted was office. Campaigns for more aeroplanes were waved aside with smiles, or dubbed "mere press campaigns." Anthony Eden and Duff Cooper at long last could stomach no more of the decade. Unable to tolerate the betrayal of British interest, they resigned.

MacDonald strutted like a peacock through this decade. He travelled from conference to conference in search of that "deep fundamental thing" which always eluded him. Baldwin put party before everything, and the winning of an election before rearmament. "Now suppose I had gone to the country and had said: 'Germany is rearming; we must rearm.' . . . I cannot think of any change which would have made the loss of the election, from my point of view, more certain." That, and a pipe, summed up the Baldwin outlook. Chamberlain pledged Britain not to fight for Czecho-Slovakia because she was so far off. He pledged Britain to fight for Poland apparently because she was even farther off. His umbrella was not large enough to cover his inconsistencies. If Hitler meant war, let him fight Russia, appeared to sum up Chamberlain's policy. Yet, inconsistently enough, he let himself be jockeyed into a situation in which Hitler and Stalin signed a pact which eliminated war on two fronts for Germany; and made war certain for Britain.

Nevertheless, Chamberlain inherited the omissions of his two predecessors. His task was hopeless from the start. It was made more difficult by his touching faith in the broken pledges of the two bad boys of Europe. An opponent asked him after Munich if he really believed Hitler would keep his word. His opponent pointed out that in 1933 Hitler had stated in the Reichstag: "The German people have no thought of invading any country." In 1934 Hitler stated: "After the Saar question is settled, the German Government is ready to accept not only the letter but also the spirit of the Locarno Pact." In May, 1935, in the Reichstag Hitler stated: "Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annexe Austria, or to conclude an Anschluss." In March, 1936, Hitler stated: "We have no territorial demands to make in Europe." In February, 1937, Hitler reaffirmed his recognition of Austrian sovereignty. In March, 1938, he assured the world that Germany had no hostile intention against Czecho-Slovakia. "Do you not feel a twinge of doubt," asked his opponent, "about Hitler's promises?" Chamberlain replied: "Ah, but this time he promised Me." Chamberlain was sincere in that he was convinced he could get Hitler to play ball.

When Hitler marched into Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary gobbled up a tasty rasher of Czecho-Slovakia and announced with Hitler's connivance that

Carpatho-Ukraine had been incorporated into Hungary. When the Nazis had previously marched into the Sudetenland, Poland grabbed the Teschen area. Hungary also got a nice slice in southern Slovakia and Ruthenia. What was left of Czecho-Slovakia was degraded into a German protectorate with a colonial status. Both Britain and France snapped out of nearly ten years of delusion into stark, terrible reality. The people of both countries realised that Hitler had been waging war against them for nearly ten years. The telegraph of the Ship of State was slammed across to full speed ahead. Exactly five years too late full rearmament began. Moreover, British diplomats rushed round Europe granting pledges and guarantees to Poland, Turkey, Rumania, Greece. A mission of subordinate civil servants even went to Russia. That country, however, was somewhat naturally suspicious of both Britain and France. She asked for a complete defensive alliance. She demanded guarantees to the Baltic States and the right to send troops to Poland if Hitler attacked. Negotiations dragged on until it became obvious they must fall through.

On August 23, 1939, Hitler finally and definitely put the last inch of Chamberlain's nose out of joint by announcing that the Nazi guardians against Communism had joined hands with Communism. Thus ended the long search for collective security. The apple cart had upset and scattered the unripened fruits all over Europe. Above all, it ensured the utter and complete isolation of Poland.

When Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, in honour of her pledge to Poland it was an immense shock to the whole Empire. It was an even greater shock to Chamberlain. Hitler had broken his promise, not to some remote foreign statesman, but to Mr. Chamberlain, to "Me." Thus, in this touching expression of faith to a mentally deranged upstart, the British Empire and the world limped on the feet of Time into the most terrible world war known to mankind.

CURTAIN-RAISER

The moment Hitler had safeguarded his eastern flanks by his sensational pact with Russia, he wasted no time in contemplation of Chamberlain's philosophic ideals. He quickly pressed the button which opened the door and let loose the monster of war. Indeed it required no prophet to discern the terrible monster which had been rattling at its bars all the summer. Hitler had been feeding it with vast sums of money. In 1938 alone he had spent £1,650,000,000 on rearmament. It was thus to be expected that he would take it upon his own shoulders to initiate the opening ceremony. After months of sabre rattling and double crossing he elected to open Great War II. on September 1, 1939. The Nazi mechanised hordes were turned loose on Poland, even then digesting the newly gained territories as a result of the Czecho-Slovakian episode.

Backed by seven armoured divisions, a modern petrol-driven Ghengis Khan swept over Poland. Five thousand modern tanks were pitted against a few hundred obsolete tanks and some regiments of cavalry. Six thousand aeroplanes, backed by a gigantic industrial machine, swept aside a few hundred. Communications in Poland were paralysed within a week. On September 27, Warsaw surrendered and some leading Polish figures were making for Rumania. The Russians stepped in at this juncture to occupy all that

part of Poland east of Warsaw. Hitler got the rest.

The military events of this curtain-raiser had moved so rapidly, the full significance of the campaign was lost even to many military experts in France and Britain. There was, in fact, a tendency to suggest that what happened to Poland could not happen to a well-equipped modern army such as France and Britain fondly imagined they owned. The real truth was that Hitler in this curtain-raiser had given to the world the blue print of all subsequent campaigns. Every factor had played its part—concentrated air attack based on a definite plan, fast-moving tank actions, interlocked strategical movements of large forces, and a breath-taking time scale unheard of in any previous campaign. In four weeks Hitler had moved over one hundred divisions distances up to 250 miles to play their part in a preconceived plan based on complete mechanisation.

At the time, even the experts failed to appreciate that the initial German plan used three-quarters of the entire German army and ninety per cent. of the first-line Air Force. Only a skeleton force was left to watch Germany's western frontiers. It was a risk which, if France and Britain had been able to concentrate really modern armies in the west, would have led to the speedy occupation of a large part of western Germany.

In the German plan for the elimination of Poland speed was priority number one. The German General Staff had made plans to strike at Warsaw from three directions—north-east Germany and the Corridor, East Prussia, and from south-west Germany and Slovakia. The Army group in the north was commanded by Colonel General von Bock. It was subdivided into two armies commanded by Von Kluge and Von Keuchler. The last-named was in command in the East Prussia area. Von Kluge's force totalled twenty divisions, with its main striking force in East Pomerania. In East Prussia Von Keuchler was in command of eight divisions, one cavalry division and one mechanised division. In the south-west Von Runstedt was in command of thirty-five divisions, four mechanised divisions, three mountain divisions. He had under his charge, in addition, a special Condor Legion; a sort of experimental army consisting of a trial hotch-potch of mechanical arms, including its own air outfit. The Legion contained veterans of the Spanish Civil War. It was intended to try out the Legion against the Polish set-piece defences in the west. Experience so gained was destined to be used against Sedan and the Maginot Line. The assembly positions of Runstedt's Army group was in Prussian Silesia and Slovakia.

Polish plans were based on delaying actions in the frontier area. These troops consisted largely of cavalry and infantry. They would have been quite suitable for Great War I, but events proved them to be hopelessly inadequate against the Germans' Panzer spearheads. Behind these advanced forces, there were assembled three army groups—one north-west of Warsaw, one south-west, and the third opposite Cracow facing Slovakia. The northern army group was based on the Vistula, the second on the area south-east of Lodz, and the third in the south on the Nida River. The main Polish defence position was on the line of the rivers Narew, Bug, Vistula, and the San in the extreme south. The three army groups were to fall back and occupy this defensive position, counter-attacking as the opportunity offered. Behind this river line, Polish reserve divisions were to assemble in East Poland. They were fed from recruits mobilised in East Poland where mobilisation was longer owing to poor communications. It was anticipated, however, that they would be assembled in plenty of time; based on a time scale of Great War I. The three forward army groups contained, in theory, thirty first-line divisions as well as fourteen cavalry brigades and a few armoured

units. The reserve troops, theoretically, totalled another thirty divisions more or less completely equipped, given time.

The German armies concentrated in their jumping-off areas between August 20 and September 1. As the German armies had been in a state of chronic mobilisation for nearly six months, they were a good jump ahead of the Polish forces. Indeed, Polish general mobilisation was postponed from day to day. The Polish Government was reluctant to take the final step. This reluctance was augmented by pressure from her Western Allies who were still in the appeasement stage and unwilling to provoke Hitler. Indeed, it is claimed that thirty-six hours' delay in the second phase of the Polish mobilisation was directly attributable to Allied pressure. As a result, the Poles were deprived of their reserves, who were supposed to be mobilising east of Warsaw. Moreover, first-line units west of Warsaw were compelled to operate from the start with reduced establishments.

The Germans struck before Polish mobilisation was complete. German air attacks on Polish communications paralysed mobilisation at a critical period. The Poles never produced a maximum military effort before their armies were scattered and disorganised.

The Germans were determined to destroy the Polish Army as quickly as possible. The Polish plan sought to delay this long enough for help to arrive. It was hoped that bad weather and Allied intervention would come to their help. On September 1 the German war machine swung into its stride. Von Kluge struck south, down the corridor. Keuchler moved south into Poland from East Prussia. It was planned to produce a converging attack south of the corridor, thereby cutting it off, and leaving the Danzig area to be dealt with at leisure. In the south-west von Runstedt's armies directed a converging attack on the area between Czestochowa and Cracow. Once their initial objectives had been attained the three German army groups had been instructed to march on Warsaw. This city was thus assailed from the north, west and south, and it was hoped to cut off Polish armies withdrawing to the rivers. Meanwhile, the Condor Legion made a direct frontal attack in an easterly direction on Kattowitz to assault the Polish frontier defences in this area. This experimental attack was to determine whether fortifications of a modern type could be broken by air and mechanised forces operating on principles already tried out in Spain. This attack plays no part in the main strategy. It was, in fact, not required. The main attacks round the Polish flanks were calculated to accomplish the necessary military objectives.

Von Keuchler's attack met strong resistance north of Warsaw around Plonsk and Pultusk. Von Kluge's attack was completely successful. Von Rundstedt also attained his objectives in the south. Three well-defined threats to Warsaw developed after a week's fighting.

The Poles had never planned to make a desperate stand on their frontiers. Most of Poland is flat, especially in the north. It is ideal tank country. They planned for their northern army group to fall back on Warsaw, where it would occupy the key position at the junction of the rivers Narew, Bug, and Vistula. The centre army group was to fall back on the central Vistula and the south army group to the San. The line was then to be prolonged in the north by inserting a fourth army group along the upper reaches of the Narew when mobilisation was sufficiently developed to make this possible. It was a sound plan.

General Bortnowski was in charge of the Polish army group whose task it was to fall back on Warsaw. He failed to carry out his retirement fast enough and got caught in a sack, before he got to Warsaw, and almost

isolated due to the rapid German advance. As a result, the army group south of him had to change direction to protect Warsaw. Moreover, the southern army group had to bear away from its correct line of retirement to replace the central army group which had replaced the northern group at Warsaw. The result was that the San line in the south was left with only two divisions to defend it.

In the meantime, von Kleucher had managed to get moving from Plonck, had forced the Narew, and was advancing toward the Bug. Furthermore, in the south the San was crossed by a strong mechanised German column. This German column pushed rapidly toward Lwow to cut the only remaining Polish supply line with the outside world, via Rumania. Warsaw was, therefore, in danger of being hopelessly outflanked.

While all these operations were proceeding, the German Air Force had paralysed Polish communications. A series of co-ordinated bombing attacks had been instituted on the three main north-south Polish railway lines. The bombing programme started with the easternmost, from Lwow to Bialystok. The idea was to wreck the Polish mobilisation of reserves, thus depriving the operational army groups of their reinforcements when most needed. The next line to be wrecked ran from Jarislaw to the borders of East Prussia, via Warsaw. The third was from Kattowitz to Danzig. This plan did more to wreck Polish plans than anything else. Not only was mobilisation never completed, but the withdrawing of army groups got behind timetable, causing further complications. As a further precaution, the German air force attacked every known Polish airfield. Many Polish aeroplanes were destroyed on the ground before they moved to secret operational bases. Each German army contained its own tactical air force.

In spite of the difficulties, the Polish army occupied part of the proposed defensive line. The main German advance was checked in some places. Further success, however, depended entirely on a smooth flow of reinforcements from the reserve mobilisation area in East Poland between Warsaw and the Russian frontier. The occupation of this area by the Russians without warning delivered the knock-out blow to Poland. Further resistance became impossible because there were no troops with which to resist. The losses of battle could not be replaced. The gallant Polish garrison at Warsaw was left to put up a hopeless but heroic resistance which has always distinguished the Polish soldier when fighting against intolerable odds.

Possibly the most important lesson of this campaign, a prototype of many to come, was that in Great War II. no offensive could succeed without very complete air co-operation. Air superiority, in fact, was essential to success. Furthermore, as a corollary, no defence can succeed unless it included the necessary elements for protection against air attack. The only complete protection against air attack is superior fighter force. The people of Britain were destined to owe thanks to a little-recognised airman—Air Vice Marshal Tedder—who, in 1938, had reached the same conclusions and had instituted plans to give priority to fighter production.

Britain and France were compelled to watch Hitler bludgeoning Poland because there was little that they could do to help. Poland was beyond reach of any military aid which these two countries could give. There was thus little that could be done except declare war and thus honour the pledges which had been given by Chamberlain. On September 3 Britain formally declared war on Germany. Declarations of war were also made on that day by France, New Zealand, Australia, and India. South Africa followed on September 6, after a political upheaval which made Smuts Premier and sent Hertzog into a Nazi wilderness. Canada declared war on September 10.

Once again the British Empire was at war with Germany. The situation, however, was not reassuring. There was no eastern front. Moreover, Hitler had been preparing for war for ten years. He had spent on rearmament nearly four times the combined expenditure of Britain and France. Moreover, he had been able to concentrate on a compact design. Both Britain and France had spread their money over defence for two vast empires.

It was by no means encouraging to watch in Poland the ghastly aftermath of Nazi victory. The murderous manner in which the Nazis set about destroying Poland was compatible with the broad lines of their doctrine of totalitarian war. This doctrine had been made public as long ago as June, 1933, when a Berlin weekly, on June 13, had stated: "Totalitarian victory means the utter destruction of the vanquished nation, and its complete and final disappearance from the historical arena. The victor will not negotiate with the vanquished concerning the conditions for peace, because there will be no party capable of negotiations. He will impose whatever conditions he thinks fit. In reality totalitarian warfare is nothing but a gigantic struggle for elimination whose upshot will be terrible and irrevocable in its finality." Under the circumstances one can sympathise with many of the higher-ranking Polish officers and politicians whose exit from Poland was swift if undignified. Under these gruesome aspects Great World War II. started.

Apart from a declaration of war, little activity was manifested on the western front. On September 11, 1939, the British Expeditionary Force landed in France under Lord Gort. This small beginning, destined to swell to over 300,000 troops by 1940, established itself along the French frontiers running with Belgium. Trenches were dug and the British area prepared for any contingency which might have been expected to arise in Great War I. Time passed swiftly with inspections, football matches, and harvesting. Some of the British public called it a "Sitzkrieg"; all called it a phony war. The blunt truth was that neither Britain nor France were ready. So far as Britain was concerned the blame must be placed on the three Prime Ministers who were in power between 1930 and 1939—MacDonald, Baldwin and Chamberlain. In the final analysis, the blame must be borne by all those peoples who complacently permitted in Britain and her Empire a state of affairs dominated by political self-interest and lack of clear thinking. In the third Republic of France a state of political general post had supervened, which made it impossible for any long-term clear-cut policy to be implemented. The decade 1930-1940 provides an awful lesson concerning which all communities all over the Empire should take note.

The highlights of the early phase of Great War II. were provided at sea. Almost by public intervention, Winston Churchill returned to his old office as First Lord of the Admiralty the day that war was declared—September 3. Hitler feared Churchill more than any other individual in Britain. In fact, he was the only one person in Britain that Hitler did fear. Hitler had noted Churchill's persistent warnings, which started the moment Hitler came to power and continued as a thunderous crescendo right up to the declaration of war. The burden of Premiership was left to elderly Neville Chamberlain, a man of considerable business experience but little flair for war. The British Navy proceeded to its war stations. Minefields were laid. The Blockade was started. The U-boats got busy and the British convoy system once again sent the 2,000 British ships, always on the high seas, zigzagging across the oceans of the world, thereby adding twenty-five per cent. to the normal steaming time. The task of protecting them was prodigious. Britain owned 21,000,000 tons of shipping spread over the oceans of the world. Every day

there were at least 2,000 ships at sea, and up to 200 entering or leaving ports in Britain.

Only one day after Britain declared war a German submarine got its first victim—the British liner *Athenia,* torpedoed 250 miles off Ireland with the loss of 128 lives. On September 18 the British public was somewhat rocked by the news that *H.M.S. Courageous* had been sunk by a German submarine with the loss of 512 lives. A further shock was administered to the general public when, on October 14, *H.M.S. Royal Oak* was torpedoed at anchor in Scapa Flow with the loss of 800 lives. It was Churchill's painful duty to rise from his place in the House of Commons to describe the circumstances of this indefensible disaster. He had to admit that a Nazi submarine had succeeded in creeping into this main naval base because an essential blockship had arrived the day after the sinking—too late. Explanation was difficult on the part of a man who in Great War I. had seen to every detail of preparedness so far as the British Navy was concerned. He had been thundering long before the present disaster regarding Britain's naval unpreparedness. Now it fell upon him to explain the shortcomings of previous First Lords. It was a nasty blow for Chamberlain, and an even worse blow for Lord Stanhope whom Mr. Churchill had superseded. A little later Mr. Churchill had to admit that Scapa Flow was in such a state of unpreparedness when Great War II. started, the Fleet had been robbed of the use of this base over a long period and had been forced to put to sea. Sir Roger Keyes emphasised that Churchill was in no way to blame. It was never explained why this alarming unpreparedness had been permitted. Lord Stanhope, who was then drawing £5,000 a year as Lord President of the Council, offered no apologies. Chamberlain gave no explanations.

The Royal Air Force joined in the naval highlights by bombing Kiel on September 5. This raid was conducted by twelve slow bombers, of which half were lost. It provided the first aerial thrill of the war. All manner of wishful conjectures were discussed, including the possible dropping of a bomb down the funnel of a pocket battleship. If this did occur it must have been a very small bomb because pocket battleships proceeded to play havoc with British shipping at various focal points. The German Luftwaffe confounded many of the grimmer aviation prophets by refraining from dropping any bombs at all on Britain until November 13, 1939. Even then, the bombs fell a long way from any centre of population—on the Shetland Islands. One rabbit was killed. This date is perhaps worthy of honourable note because thence onward bombing increased until in a year it had attained a crescendo even more blood-curdling than the wildest dreams of the many pre-war prophets.

While British professors were busy solving the problem set by a shower of magnetic mines in British coastal water, a first-class naval drama was taking place in the south Atlantic. On December 13, 1939, British cruisers *Exeter* (eight-inch), *Ajax* (six-inch), and the New Zealand light cruiser *Achilles* (six-inch) made contact with the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee.* This German ship had been out on a rather too successful commerce raid. Thanks to brilliant work at the Admiralty the two British cruisers made a date with *Graf Spee.* It was thus left for these three cruisers to take on an eleven-inch crack German battleship. Although outgunned, the British cruisers damaged the raider sufficiently to induce her to seek safety in Montevideo Harbour. No explanation has ever been given why this German battleship ran for safety to a neutral port. Her damage was superficial rather than mortal. The faster but doughty British cruisers had punched several nasty holes in her waterline. A spray of high-explosive had perforated the upper works.

There were two big gaps in her fire-control tower. Her aeroplane had been blown to bits and a galley damaged. The *Graf Spee* was hurt, but not crippled. This naval embodiment of German designers had failed in a running battle lasting ten hours to sink three British light cruisers. Maybe Hitler wished to hide any further realistic facts that his pocket battleships could be offset by nippy British craft thanks to superior seamanship. Captain Langsdorf, commander of the *Graf Spee*, had twenty-seven years' training in the German Navy. He had fought at Jutland. He never gave any explanation regarding his dash for safety.

During the ninety hours that *Graf Spee* rested at Montevideo the gallant British cruisers waited outside the River Plate like terriers after a rat. *Exeter* was badly damaged. She limped off for the Falklands and *Cumberland* took her place. Hans Langsdorf took his ship five miles out into the river estuary, unloaded his crew into launches, rowed off and pushed a button at the end of a long cord. The *Graf Spee* blew up and sank in several feet of mud, blazing furiously. Next day he called 1,039 survivors together, bade them good-bye. That night in his Hotel del Immigrantes at Buenos Aires he put a bullet into the centre of his forehead. He left a note explaining that he was disgraced in having to carry out Hitler's orders. This enigmatical interlude compares most unfavourably with an incident on November 27 when the British armed cruiser *Rawalpindi* fought to the last with guns firing and flags flying when attacked by two German battleships.

Although the *Graf Spee* incident aroused immense excitement at the time, it is probable that in view of subsequent events it must be considered as not of major significance, certainly not from the German point of view. It eased the loss of British ships caused by commerce raiders and therefore contributed an unassessable quota of relief in an ever-growing shipping crisis caused by U-boats.

The war at this stage was in the nature of a battle between a whale and a rhinoceros. The German Navy was in no position to challenge the navies of Britain and France. The Allies, between them, could muster twenty-two capital ships, and eight aircraft carriers. Germany had seven capital ships, two of which were of Great War I. vintage. Out of these seven capital ships, there were three pocket battleships of 10,000 tons, 26 knots, and a main armament of six eleven-inch guns. In fact, the German fleet had been developed for a role of commerce raiding and in this capacity it was destined to give British admirals some anxious moments.

Hitler had laid plans to conquer the world with armies rather than navies. He argued that the nation which controlled all the land of the world must dominate the oceans. The oceans occupy three-quarters of the surface of the world and the land one-quarter of the surface. He had, therefore, spent his money in the creation of land forces at the expense of sea forces. In co-operation with Mussolini and Tojo it was planned to embark on a vast scheme of land conquest, each doing their share.

In order to organise the scheme of world conquest, the three participators had subdivided the world into an Eastern Hemisphere organised by the Japanese, and a Western Hemisphere organised by Hitler and Mussolini. The Western Hemisphere was mainly land and required armies. The Eastern Hemisphere was mainly oceans and required an amphibious striking force. Hence, Japan had the Navy and, except for Mussolini's Navy in "Mare Nostrum," Hitler had created a nuisance navy consisting largely of submarines. Hitler further divided the land areas into the "World Island" which consisted of all land which could be reached dry-shod from Germany. This included, therefore, all Europe, Russia and China. It thus overlapped with the Japanese plans. In this area were contained seven-eighths of the peoples

of the world. Whatever nations dominated this "World Island" dominated the world. A further subdivision produced what Hitler called the "Heartland" which contained most of Europe, including Britain, and that part of Russia west of the Urals. The prelude to Great War II. had been spent by Hitler assembling by peaceful methods as much of the "Heartland" as could be conquered without open war. Great War II. was necessary in order to acquire the outlying portions of the "Heartland." That done the two dictators planned to overrun the whole of Africa and march eastward into the "Heartland," linking up with Japan in India. Russia had no place in the plan and would be eliminated. This left the continent of America out in the cold, especially the United States of America.

Once the "Heartland" was secure and Japan had conquered north-east Russia and the Western Pacific, it was planned to overwhelm the United States of America. The combined navies of Japan, Italy and Germany, with captured increments from the British and French navies, would give Hitler naval superiority over the United States of America. It was, therefore, planned to occupy key areas in South America and similar areas in the Arctic regions of North America. Japan planned to link up with her already established colonies in South America. Moreover her fleets would operate in the South Atlantic, while German air-borne divisions flew the narrowest link between Africa and South America. In the Arctic, Japan was to sweep north via the Aleutians into Alaska and the western seaboard of Canada and America. Hitler was to sweep into the Hudson Bay area via the Arctic islands round Greenland.

In this manner, Hitler, Mussolini and the Emperor of Japan would become masters of the land masses of the world. The opening stages of Great War II. found the plan in the "Heartland" stage. Things remained in that stage until the Allies gathered sufficient strength to push the Germans back into Germany. Thus, the history of Great War II. is in reality a living story of how Hitler only just failed to attain his first objective. Once that had been gained the rest would have been comparatively easy going.

The task of the German commerce raiders and the U-boats was to whittle away British mercantile ships, and reduce the Navy as much as possible. Whereas Germany moved her armies exclusively along land routes, Britain and France, by the nature of their Empires, used the High Seas. If Hitler succeeded in denying the use of the High Seas to Britain, that country must fall as a ripe plum into his "Heartland" lap. France could be attacked both by land and by sea. She was thus doubly vulnerable. Moreover, if France were separated from Britain, the German air force and submarines could outflank Britain in the south.

On the battle between the convoys and the commerce raiders, which includes submarines, the whole outcome of Great War II. depended. Although the British and French navies were ten times larger than the German naval tonnages the Allies had to dissipate their fleets over the sea lanes. This task was made all the more difficult by the fact that Britain had too few destroyers to make convoy work fully effective, she was disgracefully short of cruisers, and had only a token naval air force. There was little excuse for this state of affairs. It was well known that in Great War I., in 1918, Britain's 527 destroyers were by no means enough. When Great War II. started in 1939 the British Navy contained 178 destroyers. Responbility rest with three Prime Ministers—Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain.

Despite the fact that the Allies were able to destroy about three U-boats every week, by the end of March, 1940, Britain and France had lost a total

of 211 merchant ships on the High Seas. Neutral countries had lost a similar total. This damage had been created by a U-boat force which totalled sixty when Great War II. started. Britain was able to make up five-sixths of her shipping losses from captured German vessels, transfers from neutral countries, and by new construction. The U-boat menace persisted for four years, until 1943, when new scientific inventions did much to reduce the effectiveness of these under-water craft. During that interval Britain very nearly lost the war because her sea losses were so great she nearly did not have the ships in which to transport the vast armies required.

During the "phony" period of Great War II. the British Navy controlled all the seas round Britain, including the Straits of Dover and the waters between Iceland and Scotland. German vessels were contained in the Baltic and the territorial water of Norway, used in violation of the Geneva Convention. The German Mercantile Marine totalled 4,500,000 tons when the war started. It was fifth-largest in the world. About 500 German ships were immobilised in neutral ports when war started and many eventually fell into Allied hands. Britain and France had seized about 100,000 tons on the outbreak of war. By the spring of 1940 a further 200,000 tons of German shipping had been scuttled at sea by their crews to prevent capture by the British or French navies.

There is no doubt that the Germans felt the British blockade at the start of the war. In the first year nearly 800,000 tons of German-bound contraband was detained. In fact, by the beginning of January, 1940, German overseas trade fell to a mere trickle which leaked past what must be credited as an incomparable economic intelligence service centred in the Ministry of Economic Warfare in London.

NORWEGIAN NIGHTMARE

It is probable that Hitler anticipated difficulties with the British blockade and he laid plans to defeat it, at least four years before Great War II. started. In 1938 Goering paid a visit to Norway given local publicity as essentially a holiday jaunt. During this vacation Goering put the finishing touches to the Norway Plan. In view of its ramifications and the number of persons who had to be implicated it has yet to be explained why the British Intelligence Service never discovered any aspect of it. If they did, it has yet to be explained why no action was taken to counter the plan. In fact, the plan started to unfold with methodical efficiency on April 9, 1940, when at 5 a.m. the German Ministers at Oslo, Norway, and Copenhagen, Denmark, woke up their respective Prime Ministers and presented them with identical memoranda addressed to their respective Governments. These Notes stated that Hitler intended to forestall alleged Allied plans for landings in those two countries by gobbling them up himself, for their "own protection." Goebbels, in fact, broadcast a message by radio that Norway and Denmark were "taken under the protection of the Reich to forestall Allied occupation."

While the diplomats were being awakened shortly after 5 a.m. all over Europe to receive this startling news, the German military machine had been set in motion. Denmark was quickly occupied without any organised resistance. It served as a springboard for the Norwegian adventure. Norway rejected the German ultimatum, despite a gruesome film which the German ambassador in Norway had generously shown free to the Norwegian poli-

ticians and civic representatives the night before. The film depicted what happened to people who did not co-operate. Nevertheless, the Germans played all their aces at the start. Pre-packed troop-carrying merchantmen had openly docked alongside the wharves at Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, Egersund and Narvik. They had disembarked at zero hour marines disguised as merchant seamen who proceeded to occupy key positions in the areas concerned. When the citizens of those towns got down to breakfast on April 9 they found themselves already being "protected" by the Germans who were shooting non-co-operators and lobbing hand grenades around, which awakened Norwegian soldiers. Furthermore, troops were landed in Oslo Fiord, and the Luftwaffe was busy bombing Christiansand. By the afternoon of the 9th Oslo was occupied and the radio station taken over. A puppet Government was already in being under the leadership of Major Vidkun Quisling. This individual attained fame, not so much for his leadership, but by introducing into the English and associated tongues a new word which implied even more than the word "traitor" had packed into its meaning.

Outside, in Oslo Fiord, German naval units attempted to force their way up to the capital. The German air force bombed the aerodrome and the railway station as well as a number of places in southern Norway. The Oslo coastal batteries, however, sank the *Blucher* and the cruiser *Karlsruhe*. Moreover, a Norwegian minelayer sank a German destroyer. All this happened the day after British naval units had laid minefields in Norwegian waters to prevent blockade leakages through these narrow territorial waters.

A fair-sized British fleet was cruising in Norwegian waters level with Bergen the day before the German operation as protection to the minelayers. Apart from one or two local skirmishes in a blinding snowstorm no large-scale interception occurred but these unrecognised glimpses of Hitler's plans came close to revealing his scheme for the lightning seizure of Norway. In fact, on the night of April 9 British destroyers had not only blockaded Narvik fiord, but had entered the fiord and crippled the German naval units and supply ships inside. A series of subsequent actions took place, both by sea and by air. By April 10 Hitler had already paid part of the price of his Norwegian campaign—the virtual elimination of the German Navy. He lost half his cruisers and a high proportion of destroyers and many smaller craft. Moreover, Britain instituted determined attacks on German troopships crossing the Skagerak. Over a dozen large ships were sunk and thousands of German soldiers were drowned. In fact, the Germans were forced to reinforce Oslo by air. For this purpose they made concentrated use of the local aerodrome. Had the Allies bombed that and other key places in the vicinity it is possible that the German build-up in troops would have been seriously reduced. As it was, Allied landings at Andalsnes and at Namsos in South Norway were carried out too late and with too few troops. For some time it looked as if Allied operations in the Narvik area would prove successful. The Germans were driven out of the town. However, events in France had reached a stage where secondary diversions could not be entertained. On the night of June 7, two days before Dunkirk, the British troops in Narvik were withdrawn and Narvik was abandoned to the Germans after demolitions. Hitherto, British and German ships had loaded iron ore at this port side by side. The 2,000,000 tons of iron ore loaded into British ships annually was now at the disposal of the Germans, in addition to their own supplies—as soon as they had repaired the damage to the wharves.

The lightning campaign in Norway had been won by Hitler for two reasons—careful long-term preparation and air power. The German surprise had been complete. The Allies were forced to take action against an accom-

plished fact. Efforts to land troops proved a hopeless task without air-cover. Not only had the Allies no effective means of disrupting German air supremacy, but they were even deprived of the full use of naval power. It was found impossible to keep the Skagerak cut indefinitely. Moreover, large naval ships were unable to operate owing to German air supremacy. Small craft and submarines proved only temporarily effective while German air patrols were being organised. The Allies had no airfields in Norway, and their nearest fighter cover was in Britain, 300 miles away. Efforts to operate from frozen lakes were thwarted by German bombers which broke up the ice. German air-power proved so overwhelming it was found necessary to withdraw the Allied force two weeks after it arrived, to save it from destruction. The significance of the aeroplane had in this manner thrust itself to the forefront in Allied strategy. Apart from this sharp lesson, Britain gained 1,024 Norwegian ships and over 200 tankers. The last-named subsequently carried nearly half the aviation spirit which enabled the Royal Air Force to win the Battle of Britain. Hitler got 1,300 miles of coastline running far into the Arctic, thereby outflanking Britain's blockade. In this deeply indented coast he also acquired useful submarine bases at the expense of the loss of Norwegian territorial waters. It had cost him 60,000 German troops, in addition to half the German navy, a large number of other ships and much material. The campaign had lasted two months, longer than any other blitzkrieg invasion Hitler had so far undertaken.

FALL OF FRANCE

The public came-to from these various curtain-raising diversions to discover Finland battling against Russia in an exclusive war of her own which failed to link up with any other aspects of Great War II. At this time, sympathy was all on the side of Finland, and Russia was a rough bully who was not getting, by any means, the military results expected. Nevertheless, it is impossible to discover what plans exactly were in the minds of either the British or French authorities when the first spring days broke the monotony of the winter of 1939 along the frontiers of France and Germany. An era of bloodless victories appeared to be dawning. Not one more soldier than was absolutely necessary was to be sacrificed. There were to be no risky offensives. In fact, conditions dangerously resembled the official state of mind which pervaded policies in the early phases of Marlborough's campaign in the Netherlands in 1702. It was perhaps significant that another chip of the old Marlborough block was First Lord of the Admiralty.

Early in April, 1940, the general public showed signs of restiveness at the lack of exertion displayed to rearm the country. Unemployment was still rife, although in Germany it was non-existent. Statements had been circulated claiming that industry should not be disorganised by war through turning the whole country into an arms factory. On April 3, Chamberlain sought to encourage the people. He made a statement which ran: "Whether it was that Hitler thought he might get away with what he had got without fighting for it, or whether it was that, after all, his preparations were not sufficiently complete, one thing is certain—he missed the bus." He added: "We can face the future with a calm and steady mind." This statement, coupled with the disastrous Norwegian campaign, which started six days later, was more than the British public could stand. For ten years they had shown

astounding patience. This time, they turned Chamberlain out of office and, on May 10, replaced him by Churchill. It was the first sane act in a decade which at times appeared to be 100 per cent. mad. Thus ended a period of Chamberlainism, Baldwinitis and MacDonald idealism.

There was no time to consider the merits or demerits of past policies. Events swirled round the tight little island of Britain with such fury, all hands were compelled to concentrate on the present if they were to save the future. While in opposition, Churchill had never ceased to belabour the Government of the moment regarding lack of preparation to counter the dictators. Churchill's new Government made plans to do in 1940, with the enemy at the door, what ought to have been done years before. Britain's whole economic system was militarised with utmost haste. Parliament eagerly voted the Government complete control over the manpower situation. The country started to make in earnest the munitions for which little arrangement had previously been made. Events were such that the entire population of Britain thankfully submitted to a twenty-four-hour seven-day production basis. As Churchill himself put it: Britain must mobilise for total war with the aim of "victory at all costs; victory in spite of all terrors; victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival." Churchill took upon his shoulders the responsibilities of a thousand situations not of his own creation. Having vainly prophesied the precipice ahead, here he was called by the people at the last moment to rescue them from dangers he had forseen for ten years. He bluntly admitted he had nothing to offer but "blood, toil, tears, and sweat." This became alarmingly obvious, for on the very day he became Premier, Hitler invaded Luxembourg, Holland and Belgium.

The Belgian Government had resolutely refused to depart from a role of strict neutrality. This made Hitler's plan all the easier. Before little Belgium could be reinforced by the Allies he planned to overwhelm her. It made the British plan so full of "ifs," it was almost a foregone conclusion that their help would come too late. In Eastern Belgium there is a formidable river and canal line of defence which provides the key defence for northern France. When Hitler struck at Holland and Belgium the dice were already loaded in his favour. The Anglo-French plan of action for the contingency which had now arisen, arranged for the British to make a rapid dash through Belgium to help the Belgian Army hold the river and canal defences of eastern Belgium. At the worst, it was hoped to stem the German advance along the line of the Meuse, from its mouth to Sedan, where the Maginot Line started. Part of the French forces were also involved in this plan. From Sedan, the pivot of this movement, French armies held the Maginot Line south to Switzerland. Once the German advance was stopped, reserves would become available to wear the enemy down and fling him back into Germany. Belgium's decision to remain neutral until attacked wrote her own death warrant. In fairness to the soldiers who became involved in this plan, it should be pointed out that they were in no way to blame for what took place. One might as well blame an army of bow-men for not stopping an opponent equipped with machine-guns.

The role required of the British forces in Belgium demanded the most ultra-modern forms of equipment and transport mechanised to the last degree. Admittedly, the British force were using mechanical transport, but up to a standard little better than 1918. Moreover, they were asked to make this risky operation without proper air-cover. It was the sort of plan which, at a staff college, would be returned to a student covered with red ink raspberries. Its only defence is that it was the best of a collection of even worse alternatives. Along the Belgian frontier France had erected no satisfactory

defensive line. Moreover, inside the French frontier, west to Paris and the Channel Ports, there was no really good natural line of defence. This route had been, in fact, a standard line of approach for German strategists ever since the famous Schlieffen Plan.

The Schlieffen Plan was an ambitious scheme whereby France could be conquered in forty days. The basic plan required an advance through Belgium, pivoting on Metz. By the twenty-second day this gigantic wheeling operation was designed to reach roughly along the Belgium-French frontier. By the thirty-first day it was timed to approach the River Aisne. At this point a powerful enveloping force was to be detached and swung across the Somme at Amiens, curling round Paris and the French armies from the rear. At this point in the plan a secondary attack was arranged to develop across the Moselle in the south, thereby fixing the remaining French armies. This plan had always been a French nightmare. It was used by the Germans in Great War I. and only just failed when the gigantic wheel had reached the Marne.

In four days, the Dutch capitulated. Their air force was wiped out. Rotterdam was in ruins as a result of bombing. Half the Dutch Army was destroyed. The community had been riddled by fifth columnists and internal undermining. German parachute and glider troops had secured key positions in Holland. Soldiers, concealed in barges, had occupied vital bridges. While this disaster was taking shape across the Rhine, British troops were developing their plan. The too-small British Army got across Belgium too late. There followed a series of withdrawals and delaying actions, made that much more difficult by German air superiority. Moreover, by fair means and foul, the Germans always managed to acquire the vital bridges they needed. Stubborn Belgian fortresses were enveloped and left behind in the advance, to be reduced at leisure. Moreover, the suddenness of the German attack had upset the Belgian mobilisation. The line of the Albert Canal was forced, almost before it was fully manned by the defenders. Strategic bridges fell into German hands intact. There remained a secondary defence line from Sedan to Namur, thence along the River Dyle to Antwerp. Along this line there developed a battle between ten British divisions, aided by fifteen Belgian divisions, pitted against the potential strength of 240 German divisions. Moreover, the Germans had produced an army as ultra-modern as the Allies' was out-dated. The respect for the knock which a Panzer division can give came later in the deserts of Libya. The Belgian defences crumbled before the battering of Hitler's modern armies. Moreover, the German build-up beat the Allies for vital points. The British had been confronted with a dash involving distances up to 150 miles. The Germans had only a few miles to go. Every detail had been planned. Special pipe lines delivered fuel along the roads. River obstacle after river obstacle was grimly held by the British forces. The situation, however, was such that it seemed improbable that the hastily erected defences along the French-Belgium frontier could hold the German tide. It looked as if the Schlieffen Plan would again be put into operation, this time successfully.

Before launching their attack, it is now known that Hitler had mobilised nearly 7,000,000 men. They were organised in 240 divisions. About 150 divisions had been massed on the French, Belgian and Dutch frontiers. Actually, seven modern German divisions sufficed to reduce Holland. The French had 115 divisions, the British ten in France, and the Belgians from sixteen to twenty. The Dutch had fourteen divisions. German strategy was shrewd. They had so far given every indication that once again they were about to put the Schlieffen Plan into operation. In reality, they had concentrated their

main weight for a break-through at Sedan. In order to puzzle the Allies, the Germans had arranged to draw their armies deep into Belgium.

While the British Expeditionary Force was steadily retreating from Louvain, accompanied by the Belgian Field Army, under King Leopold, the Germans struck at Sedan. They had secretly concentrated for this attack through the Ardennes, a difficult mountainous woodland area for military operations. Sedan had been selected as the pivot of the Allied advance into Belgium because of these geographical advantages. A successful German blow at this spot would unhinge the entire Allied operation. The German plan was working perfectly. The Allies had been deceived by the thrust at Belgium into moving their armies to neutralise the Schlieffen plan. Their main armies had been drawn to the north for that purpose. Now was the moment in which the Germans delivered the main assault—a tremendous left punch with all that they had been able to concentrate into the area selected. On May 14, Hitler hurled the full might of his Panzers against Sedan, backed by squadrons of dive-bombers. The last-named were a new horror of war. Troops had not been told how to deal with them. They failed to realise that their sound was often worse than their bite.

No less than seventy divisions had been massed in depth by the Germans against ten divisions under General Corap. This general received reinforcements amounting to about eight divisions, but his forces were hard hit by May 15. His infantry, with equipment inadequate for that task, was disorganised in their efforts to stop the German Panzers. Many guns had been lost, and rear services were no longer functioning. General Giraud took over when Corap was taken prisoner, but he could do no more than order the disorganised fragments to continue to retreat to the River Sambre. A gap thirty miles wide had thus been wedged open by the Germans at Sedan. As fast as French Headquarters ordered reserves to fill the gap it became wider. By the 16th it was forty-five miles wide—from Maubeuge to Rethel.

When General Weygand took charge on May 20, 1940, the Allied armies were hopelessly split into two. An armoured German spear-head had arrived at the mouth of the Somme. Thrusting, via Cambrai, Amiens, Abbeville, the Germans crossed the Somme, swung north up the coast against the flank of the French First Army, the British Expeditionary Force, and the Belgians. The Allied situation was ugly.

The Germans had penetrated virtually to the Channel ports along a narrow corridor. In theory, they had placed themselves in a very dangerous situation liable to attack along the wide flanks of the corridor. Had the Allies had modern equipment, designed especially for tank-smashing, undoubtedly the German situation was precarious. They would have been cleaned up in Great War I. under similar conditions. In reality, the Germans possessed such terrific defensive and aggressive punch the out-dated Allied armies were powerless to save a situation which grew from bad to worse. This was especially the case of the Allied armies now encircled in the north. From May 24 to 27 the Belgian Army had borne the brunt of incessant attacks. On May 28 King Leopold, leader of the Belgian Army, capitulated. The British Expeditionary Force was left fighting alone on foreign soil. The French sacked fifteen generals; but drastic action of that nature in the hour of grim disaster could not retrieve errors of judgment made five years previously regarding the mechanisation of the French armies. The French had their Maginot Line and an army which was out of date. The Germans had a modern army operating in rear areas behind the French Maginot Line. Many French generals put up some remarkable last-ditch stands. The French First Army, for example, was still fighting, far away to the north, astride the

River Lys. Two-thirds of that army was cut off and compelled to surrender under General Prioux. The remainder struggled toward the Channel beaches at Dunkirk, alongside British troops.

There occurred at Dunkirk a miracle which grows with the passing of the years. While 50,000 French and 20,000 British held the Dunkirk bridgehead, some 340,000 Allied soldiers were evacuated to Britain by little ships, big ships, row-boats, river launches, and the mobilised ferry services of every British Estuary along the south coast.

From the moment when 1,000 German dive-bombers pounded the French forts at Sedan for twenty-five hours to the last drama at Dunkirk, military historians admit that the German plan went with a brilliancy unheard of in Great War I. The initial break-through was made by infantry-engineer assault teams. Through the hole they made, German armoured divisions poured, to disrupt the undefended rear services of the Allies. Once the break-through had been made, the Germans exploited the situation to its limit. The Germans used up to 7,000 tanks, organised in ten armoured divisions. Six motorised infantry divisions took over the ground captured by the tanks. The tanks, moreover, were accompanied by anti-tank guns. These were of a type far in advance of those used by the Allies. They formed an impassable barrier lining the corridor to the coast. Allied tanks, used in small pockets, were not sufficiently armoured to resist the German anti-tank guns and failed to break through. Indeed, the German boldness bordered on recklessness. Fast scout cars moved so fast, accompanied by motor-cyclists, they often crossed bridges before the Allies.

Behind them was a gigantic force of German troops. First, the motorised infantry, then the infantry on foot, moving by forced marches. Their watchword was speed. In contrast, the Allied armies fought on a time-scale of Great War I.

Had the Allies had anything approaching equality with the Germans, the German tentacle to the coast could have been ripped to pieces and utterly destroyed. If Lord Gort had had even three armoured divisions—45,000 men—instead of 300,000 non-mechanised troops, he would have been in a position to offer bitter and prolonged resistance. He might, in fact, have pierced the German corridor. Had he had six armoured divisions—90,000 men—there is every reason to assume the German plan would have been thwarted. Six armoured divisions demanded 2,000 tanks. The cost would have been £40,000,000, roughly the cost of one day of war to Britain and America. Instead, the generals in Britain who advocated just this policy were sacked or side-tracked. In France the politicians spent £400,000,000 on a Maginot Line which was out of date before it was completed. For the same price the French Army could have contained over thirty armoured divisions. De Gaulle advocated this policy. Admittedly, he was not sacked. Instead, Petain called him "witty" for advocating such a thing. The decision in peacetime rested with Petain—his error was borne by the whole French nation. When this test came in 1940 France had only four armoured divisions of a type which were already obsolescent.

The odds in the air were even worse than on land. The Germans could put 1,500 fighters and 3,500 bombers into the air over France. The Allies had, all told, 700 fighters and 600 bombers. The French air force fought bravely. It lost 750 out of its total of 1,000 machines. Casualties amounted to nearly one-third of its effectives. Dunkirk was only made possible by concentrating every British-based aircraft over the embarkation area for nine days, from May 20 to 29. Even then, air-cover was only just sufficient. The Germans had diverted a large part of their air force south of the Somme

to forestall a counter-offensive by the main French Army. Thanks to this, and a lucky fog, air-cover was provided under which some 665 assorted ships and boats moved 110,000 troops in two days to England; followed in another four days by 160,000 troops.

The Battle of Flanders was over. It goes down to history as the quickest and largest military disaster of all time. It made inevitable the French defeat in the subsequent battle of France. After Dunkirk, the French were confronted by the fact that they had lost twenty-four infantry divisions, one armoured division, two cavalry divisions, three light motorised divisions, There was left only forty-three infantry divisions, three cavalry divisions, three armoured divisions, most of which had already suffered material and moral losses. In fact, the armoured divisions had lost two-thirds of their tanks. In the Maginot Line there were seventeen divisions of second-class troops. The French Army had thus lost some two-fifths of its fighting strength and most of its armour in three disastrous weeks. It was left to Weygand to devise new methods of fighting to replace peace-time theories based on Great War I. He wisely introduced defence in depth, consisting of defended areas and "hedgehogs." His methods were sound, but his armies had already started to disorganise. There was neither the time nor the equipment to resist the almost unlimited German reserves.

After a series of Cabinet reshuffles the French Government, on June 22, accepted the armistice terms imposed upon them by Hitler. Efforts on the part of Churchill to encourage a French Ministry to continue the fight from Africa failed. France fell largely because she had allowed her armies to get out of date, and partly due to fifth column activities. The political structure had become rotten. In fact, many French political figures now openly sided with the Germans, including Petain, Laval, Darlan, and numerous minor figures. The Third Republic dissolved into endless streams of French refugees.

A bastard government, headed by Marshal Petain, now eighty-four years old, was responsible for signing the armistice. Two days later, a second armistice was signed in Rome. Mussolini, the Italian jackal, had seized this opportunity to declare war on France to obtain his pickings. On June 25, the French Army, supreme in Europe from 1918 to 1932, ceased to exist. France was not only disarmed but also dismembered. The German Army occupied two-thirds of France, including the industrial areas as well as the Channel and Atlantic coasts to the frontier with Spain. Petain vested in himself all governmental powers as dictator of France under Hitler's thumb. The seat of Government was centred in Vichy since the Germans occupied Paris. France was the wealthiest country in Europe. The Germans descended upon her to loot everything and to destroy utterly her greatness. Her role as slave-nation to the Herrenvolk would be notified her at a peace conference whose date was unspecified. Few noticed it when General de Gaulle started the French National Committee in London. He called upon all Frenchmen to repudiate Hitler. France would be saved. It was the only sign that France was not completely dead. His radio broadcasts poured across France.

When France fell, Britain was utterly alone. Thus ended an Alliance with the French people which had started in the days of King Edward VII. It had been fostered, admittedly, from reasons of mutual security against Germany, first the Kaiser, then Hitler. The bond had held for thirty historical years. It was essential to Britain to have friendly shores across the Channel. Plans and counter-plans had been made to this end. The midnight oil had burned to this end. Yet, in the end, the two nations had been caught by their own unpreparedness. They had seemed too secure. Dazzled

by their own power, they had failed to take note of the candle lighted in Germany by an ex-painter. When Europe caught fire the "Entente Cordiale" could not put it out. Indeed, to some extent the cordiality had showed signs of being "put out" itself. Great War I. had been won by a hairsbreadth, despite mutinous French armies and military disasters. But there had been no disaster of the magnitude of the Fall of France. An entirely new situation had arisen. It shook the whole world—especially the remaining democracies. In America, folk stopped saying: "It isn't our war." Instead they said: "When do we join in?"

If the democracies were stunned by the blow when the lights went out in the Third Republic, Britain was rocked. A little island off the European mainland was confronted with hostile shores that encircled her from Finland to Spain, via Norway. In 2,000 miles of European coast there were now no neutrals—only Germans. This simplified the blockade. What did not simplify the blockade was that an already inadequate Navy had lost the partnership of the French Navy. Darlan, the commander in chief French Navy, openly sided with Germany. The burdens of the British Navy were increased an unspecified amount by the entry of the Italian Navy on the side of Germany. There was, moreover, a weak German Navy which in its weakness had now assumed a definite threat. If Germany could add the French Navy to her units the situation would indeed be final. Some French warships lay in British ports, including Alexandria. French admirals were given the choice of five courses to prevent their ships falling into German hands. At the French naval base at Mers-el-Kebir, near Oran, the French admiral rejected all five courses. It was the unpleasant task of units of the British Navy to render his ships impotent only a month after Dunkirk. Early in July no French capital ship remained in danger of being useful to the Germans.

Although her Empire rallied round, the fact remained that the narrow seas between the tyrants of Europe and the people of Britain was almost exclusively their own problem. It was made all the more difficult by the fact that from the start of Great War II. until October, 1940, a spy named Tyler Kent had passed secret information to the Germans with impunity. This man was clerk to Mr. Joseph Kennedy, American Ambassador in Britain. Every move, even the most confidential details regarding Britain's military and industrial strength was passed on to the Germans. This man was entrusted with secret cipher messages between Roosevelt and Churchill. Canadians and New Zealanders immediately came to Britain's aid. Part of the New Zealand Division was diverted from the Middle East. This sturdy little division, which was subsequently to earn praise even from Rommel, spent the Battle of Britain on the South Downs awaiting an invasion which never came.

The loss of equipment in France had been complete. There were soldiers, but no weapons. Museum specimens were hastily resurrected. What few tanks remained were collected and shipped to the Middle East. At one period there were only five tanks in the coastal area south of London. The courageous decision to send all available tanks to the Middle East was made by Churchill. It saved not only Britain, but the Middle East, and the world. This action was destined to usher in a turning point in the war. Meanwhile, the crash of German bombs on British cities grew in a crescendo. London was only fifteen minutes hop from a hundred enemy aerodromes. Churchill's immediate problems related to his own right tight little island and extended to the whole of Africa, including the Mediterranean which might be ripped up any moment.

Churchill's first task was the not-unpleasant one of spurning a peace offer

from Hitler who could "see no reason why this war must go on." Hitler kindly proposed to offer Britain peace on Germany's terms. Churchill gave him the answer: "We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the Old." Hitler had made a serious error in judgment.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

It is possible that Hitler really imagined that once France was beaten Britain would be anxious to make a negotiated peace with the emphasis on the German aspect of the negotiations. In that case Hitler's first serious blunder is understandable. Instead of staging the Battle for Britain as soon as France had fallen he paused for two months. Had he pressed home his attack on Britain it is doubtful if he could have failed. Apparently he had no plan. The thoroughness of his plans seemed to end when France was beaten. The rest was improvisation. The Germans are as bad at improvisation as British folk are good. This error not only cost Hitler the Battle of Britain but the whole war. Just as in Great War I. the Kaiser lost the war at the Battle of the Marne so, in 1940, Hitler lost Great War II. at the Battle of Britain. He lost it by sixty-four precious days spent in preparation.

When France fell and Churchill had emphatically spurned Hitler's peace offers German strategists were determined to gain a quick decision and end the war by the autumn of 1940. An invasion of Britain was essential. Invasion could not take place, however, until German mastery of the air had been attained over Britain. The invasion, therefore, was to be staged in three phases—battle for air mastery—battle of the beaches—advance into Britain. The Germans made every effort to get things organised, but they were not ready to begin the opening phase until August 8, 1940. The opening phase was the battle for air mastery. Once that was attained, British coastal convoys would be paralysed, units of the Royal Navy would operate at great odds, and the German Army could effect landings at selected points in Britain. The Luftwaffe was to seize mastery of the air and then exploit it. As soon as aerodromes had been put out of action, communications, harbours, could be destroyed without hindrance. British military forces would then be incapable of full resistance, the civil population would have its morale destroyed, leading to internal disruption. It was the old story of Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France. Although the German effort to conquer Britain is referred to as the Battle of Britain, no other phase developed but the bid for air-mastery.

Hitler's effort to gain mastery of the air over Britain was organised in four stages—August 8-18, August 19-September 5, September 6-October 5, and October 6-31. Stage one opened with massed bomber formations operating in daylight escorted by fighters. A total of twenty-six attacks were made. Shipping was given priority in this phase. On August 8, 160 German

aeroplanes fiercely attempted to destroy British convoys in the Channel, near the Isle of Wight and Bournemouth. This was followed by dive-bombing attacks on Portsmouth and Dover, as well as other coastal towns, and the Thames Estuary. Totals up to 400 aeroplanes were used in these attacks. By August 12, when large-scale attacks were made on Portsmouth, Dover and the Isle of Wight, Allied fighters had shot down 182 German aircraft. Goering, therefore, switched the attack to fighter aerodromes in south and south-east England. By August 18 these tactics had cost the Luftwaffe a further 425 machines. In ten days from the start of the attack the Germans had lost a round total of 697 aircraft for the loss of 153 Royal Air Force machines from which sixty pilots had been saved.

It was becoming painfully clear to Hitler that it was not going to be easy to crack the Royal Air Force. In fact, he had badly misjudged British fighter strength. The heavy losses forced Goering to discontinue the attack for five days before launching stage two—the attack on inland aerodromes. The size of fighter escorts was increased and smaller bomber formations were used. In fact, at one stage five fighters were allotted for the protection of every bomber. In the second stage thirty-five major attacks were delivered against inland aerodromes and aircraft factories. Residential areas were also attacked in Kent, Essex and the Thames Estuary. On August 30 and 31, 800 enemy aeroplanes tried to put out of action a group of nine key aerodromes in southern England. These attacks petered out on September 5, when the Luftwaffe had lost 562 aeroplanes against 219 on the part of the Royal Air Force with 132 pilots saved.

In these first two stages, British air defences had been hard pressed. A total of 4,523 fighter patrols had produced a daily average of 156 patrols. Moreover, it was uncertain whether the southern aerodromes could withstand the onslaught much longer. Plans had actually been made to move the aerodromes north of London. However, results from the enemy point of view were so disappointing, another sudden switch was made, introducing stage three. The switch this time was to London. On September 7, 350 enemy aeroplanes attacked in two waves east of Croydon. The plan was to destroy the docks. German radio stations broadcast a running commentary on the raid with a nice blend of wishful thinking and imagination. A total of 103 enemy machines was destroyed. Further attacks were organised on September 9, 11, 12, 13, and 15. It was on the 12th that Buckingham Palace was bombed by a single machine, which used cloud cover to make its approach. On September 15 Goering made his most determined effort. The air battle which then took place was fought out in a huge cube of air about eighty miles long, forty broad, and six miles high. Some 200 individual combats took place, involving no less than twenty-one Spitfire squadrons. A number of victories was won by British, Polish and Czech pilots against greatly superior enemy forces. The battle continued all day, except for a lull at midday of one and a half hours, when the orderly arrangements of the German midday meal were given precedence over London. The afternoon engagement was even more decisive. British Fighter Squadrons ripped through the German air hordes like a knife through calico. The Hun retreated in headlong rout, after losing 185 aircraft for the day's effort, as against twenty-five British losses.

From September 11-October 5 the Luftwaffe delivered thirty-two major daylight attacks, of which fifteen were against London. German pilots, however, were showing signs of deteriorating morale. Attacks came from increasingly high levels with prodigious fighter escorts. This interlude against London was a tactical error. It enabled the southern aerodromes to reinstate themselves. By the first week in October these aerodromes had completely

recovered. Increasing toll was thus taken of the German air force. The third stage in the Battle of Britain had made great demands of endurance on the Royal Air Force. A total of 6,077 day patrols had been flown, often under great difficulties.

The fourth and final stage in the Battle of Britain began on October 6 when the demoralised German air force completely changed its tactics. From now on Goering's depleted bomber force was withdrawn. Fighter-bombers took their place, but confined their attacks to the hours of darkness. London remained the main target, but operations were conducted from very great heights. Many German machines, in fact, jettisoned their bombs at the first signs of danger. During the month of October the Battle of Britain died away. By the end of the month British victory was final and complete.

Hitler permitted a veil of silence to fall on his defeat in the air in the skies over Britain. It had left a gap of 2,375 aeroplanes in the Luftwaffe strength at a cost to Britain of 375 pilots killed. Goebbel's "final conquest of the last enemy, England," had cost that country five ships sunk, five damaged, intermittent damage to a number of aerodromes, considerable damage to the London Dock area, destruction of some thousands of houses, some 14,000 civilians killed and 20,000 wounded. Hitler failed to achieve his end. He was unable to put into action subsequent operations which depended upon air mastery. But he did succeed in raising British morale to a degree which had seemed impossible in the depressing days which had succeeded Dunkirk. Mr. Churchill summed up things with his famous tribute to the Royal Air Force: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

In the plaudits which acclaimed the victory in the air over Britain in those critical autumn days of 1940 two names were omitted—Air Vice-Marshal Tedder and Reginald J. Mitchell. In 1938 it fell upon Tedder to decide the basic air policy for Britain. Which was it to be—dive-bombers in close co-operation with land forces, or fighters? Tedder had studied the German policy. They had backed the dive-bomber. Indeed, it won them Poland, Holland, Belgium and France. But there was one weakness. The German Luftwaffe could be destroyed and rendered impotent by a nation with superior fighter strength. Tedder decided for fighters. Had he made the other decision the Battle of Britain would have been lost. His contribution to the Battle of Britain was made two years before it was fought. He deserves public recognition for his share in that decisive battle. If Tedder arranged the policy, it was Mitchell who provided the fighter. He sought no glory, but he dedicated his life to designing the best possible fighter. Had he not created the Spitfire, despite the usual official obstructions, German historians would have had a pleasanter task. This man of genius fulfilled his destiny, but he did not live to receive the honours which were due to him. Let us then praise these two men who made possible the work done so heroically by the young pilots of the R.A.F., who, for eighty-four days of continuous action, decided the fate of the world. Their slowly changing patterns of vapour trails, traced by scintillating specks of destiny miles above the earth, kept the German armies waiting in vain at their invasion ports in France, Belgium, Holland, and Norway.

AFRICAN TUG-OF-WAR

When the Battle of Britain was at its height, ships were already leaving ports in Britain laden with precious tanks and equipment for the Middle East. This movement increased from a trickle until, by the end of September, 1940, Churchill had inaugurated a policy of heavy reinforcement for the small Allied forces in Egypt. Reinforcements were also sent to the British Fleet based on Alexandria. These moves were instituted only just in time. Mussolini was now free from French threats in North Africa. He began to move a large Italian Army across Libya to the Egyptian frontier to take over the Suez Canal. Up to the fall of France the German Juggernaut had kept its course quite well. It had received a nasty skid when the acquisition of Poland had produced a war. If ever there was a man who preferred peace in which to further his plans rather than war it was Hitler. But, eventually, the boa-constrictor had had to fight. Even so, it was not until his defeat in the Battle of Britain that Hitler's wheels of conquest took a definitely wrong turning. This British victory had smashed the whole original plan. He was unable to break off hostilities and consolidate his gains. He became bogged in a morass of temporarily successful military operations which failed to bring the war to an end. He was, therefore, unable to begin the next phase—the attack on Russia and the consolidation of the "Heartland." Britain held on to his flank with the pertinacity of a bulldog. If she refused to be beaten on the home ground he could surely do so by rupturing her jugular vein—the Mediterranean.

Hitler had now played six cards in Great War II.—attack on Poland, Norwegian Trojan Horse, occupation of Denmark, attack on Holland and Belgium, and the bludgeoning of France, followed by the attempted invasion of Britain. We had parried only number six. Small though results appeared, our first parry was not destined to be our last. Every move that Hitler now made produced a British counter-move. Churchill's swift decision to reinforce the Middle East was the first counter. It was effective because he made the decision before Hitler.

During the interval, when the belligerents were stoking up in the Middle East, Hitler played his seventh card—a blockade of Britain by sea. He used submarines, aircraft, pocket battleships, and armed merchantmen. This seventh thrust proved the most dangerous of all. It was destined to try naval experts throughout 1941 and 1942. It very nearly succeeded. Hitler's plan was made that much easier owing to the fact that Chamberlain had signed away all rights on the Irish Treaty Ports in a burst of peace-time generosity which subsequently cost many British lives.

One by one the German capital ships were eliminated or rendered impotent. *Graf Spee* had already been eliminated. *Gneisenau, Scharnhorst* and *Prinz Eugen* were bottled up in Brest for many months and then in the Baltic. The crack battleship *Bismarck,* after sinking *Hood,* was sunk in her turn in the Atlantic off Ireland after a chase which started in the Arctic. She was disposed of on May 27, 1941, by concerted action on the part of the Royal Navy and the Air Force. *Scharnhorst* was sunk in a brilliant action, fought out in the mists of northern waters, when attempting to intercept a convoy to Russia on December 26, 1943. From time to time packets of German destroyers were dealt with, either from the air or by surface craft. A typical action took place on December 28, 1943, in the Bay of Biscay, when eleven German destroyers were making a rendezvous with Japanese blockade runners. Three of the destroyers were sunk and the rest damaged.

Hitler's card number seven—the war at sea—provides the theme song for the rest of the war. On occasion, it swelled to a strident danger, and other times it sank almost below audibility. But it was there all the time. Ingenious inventions eventually disposed of the submarine danger sufficiently to make possible the enormous troop movements by sea without which victory could not have been attained. Our early problems, caused by lack of naval craft, were alleviated by swapping naval base rights in the western Atlantic for fifty American destroyers and other craft of Great War I. vintage.

Having made up his mind that he must clean up the Mediterranean in order to undermine British strength, and in order to safeguard his flank for his Russian adventure, Hitler played cards eight, nine and ten. These were the sort of cards a fellow kept up his sleeve for a long-odds gamble. They could not produce quick results. If they turned out winners the prize was the whole world, not excepting the United States of America. Card number eight, as well as the other two, were connected with the Mediterranean. Mussolini was, therefore, told to hustle his large and luxurious army towards Egypt, by way of the Libyan Desert. He was promised German help. The Nazis also promised to assist with card number nine, by which Mussolini's peace-loving armies were to be stiffened by the addition of German Panzer divisions. Moreover, the Luftwaffe was to concentrate on the Mediterranean with bases in Italy's toe. Mussolini was also told that while these cards were being played an extra special ace, number ten, would be played. An upper thrust was to be instituted by way of Greece, Crete, the Dodecanese, Syria and Palestine to Egypt. Turkey almost certainly would become involved. By the time Mussolini got to Alexandria, Hitler would walk in via Palestine. This blow would rock Britain sufficiently for the victors to be able to ignore her as an adversary. Hitler, Mussolini and Co., Unlimited, would then set forth in Alexander's footsteps to mop up India and link up with Japan. This scheme was to be inaugurated by card number eleven, a super ace, which involved the swift crushing of Russia in three months, followed by the capture of the Caucasian and other oil centres. Japan was to attend to the fuel area in the Dutch East Indies.

Mussolini trotted dutifully beside his Fuehrer but was never able adequately to explain to Hitler the complete loss of Abyssinia, Eritrea, and other areas running with the Red Sea. The elimination of Mussolini from Abyssinia was an important factor in the struggle in the Mediterranean. If Britain had been forced to fight the long evenly-balanced campaign in the western desert with her southern flank endangered, her armies would certainly have been unable to weather some of the major crises. Subsequent to revolts and risings against the Italians late in 1940, British troops attacked Abyssinia from the Sudan and Kenya on January 20, 1941. In a campaign remarkable for its speed, and against Italian forces several times greater than the British invaders, the whole area was wrested from Mussolini by the middle of May. The Duke of Aosta surrendered on the 24th of that month. Thereafter there was little left to do but clean up isolated groups in the hills. On April 4, Addis Ababa had fallen and Haile Selassie returned to his capital. An equally swift anti-climax returned Somaliland to its rightful owners. In August, 1940, Mussolini had invaded that country at a time when only token British forces had been able to offer resistance. On March 16, 1941, Berbera, the capital was recaptured, after seven months of enemy occupation, by Indian troops and Arab Somali units, landed under the protection of British warships. Lead by British officers, the capital was captured within a few hours. The Italians were quickly turned out of the remainder of the country. In this

way an important area of land bordering the Red Sea returned to British hands. It eliminated, in conjunction with the subsequent occupation of Abyssinia, a stretch of coast where enemy submarines and merchant raiders had been able to refuel and undertake repairs dangerously close to a focal point of British shipping. The armies occupied in the conquest of British Somaliland and Abyssinia were able to move north to assist in the Libyan campaign at a critical moment.

After the fall of France, in June, 1940, initiative in North Africa rested with Mussolini. Once France was out of the war, 200,000 Italian troops were released from watching the Mareth Line in Tunisia, which had been built by the French before the war. Apart from any reinforcements from Italy, the Italian Army in North Africa was enormously superior in men and equipment to the small forces which Britain could muster to bar the way to Egypt. It has never been explained why this superior Italian Army made no move against Egypt until September. On September 12, this army crossed the Egyptian boundary. By the 18th it had reached Sidi Barrani, some seventy-five miles inside the frontier. Again, it has never been explained, even inadequately, why Mussolini's legions sat at this place for three overwhelming months organising their water supply and building up stores. It lost Italy an easy conquest of Egypt at a time when she still retained powerful forces in Abyssinia. In fact, it was this delay which made it possible for Britain to build up her own strength in the western desert to an extent where, if still outnumbered, at least it made defence possible. It may be that Mussolini was pre-occupied with a little war he had instigated against Greece, which had been signally unsuccessful.

On October 28, 1940, Mussolini opened his attack on Greece after the usual gesticulation and verbal acrobatics. Although the Greek Army was small and equipment out of date this sturdy little nation made Mussolini look a bigger fool than ever before. By November 13 the Italians were in full retreat in Greece. By the 17th the Italian invaders had been ignominiously booted out of Greece. Indeed, the Greeks had invaded Italian-held Albania. By December 6 Mussolini was unable to conceal the fruits of his attack on Greece, when he received a major set-back with the fall of Santi Quaranta, on the Albanian coast. Marshal Badoglio resigned as an expression of resentment at the misadventure Mussolini was riding. A couple of days later Admiral Cavagnari, chief of the Italian naval staff, resigned for similar reasons. But for the fact that Hitler rushed to the Balkans, Mussolini's campaign against Greece would have provoked a major revolt among the Italian populace and the probable withdrawal of Italy from the war. Nevertheless, Mussolini's difficulties in Greece continued until, on April 6, Germany instituted overwhelmingly powerful operations against Yugoslavia and Greece.

Early in December, 1940, the first fruits of Churchill's courageous decision to reinforce the Middle East started to be harvested. On December 9, the British forces were sufficiently strong to launch an attack on the Italian luxury army clustered like gorged locusts round Sidi Barrani. The Navy and the Air Force introduced the first combined operations in that area. The British proceeded to drive a wedge between Sidi Barrani and Buq-Buq, preceded by widespread aerial bombing. Several thousand Italian prisoners were taken and eighteen Italian aeroplanes destroyed in the first day. Picked New Zealand troops took part in this attack. Sidi Barrani fell on December 11, and 20,000 prisoners were captured, together with tanks and much equipment. By the 17th, British forces were closing in on Bardia. This town fell on January 5, 1941, after Australian troops had stormed the outer

defences. The British advance continued. Tobruk fell for the first time, on January 22, 1941, with 14,000 prisoners captured. By February 6 the tide of battle had carried the British Army, under General Wavell, to Benghazi. The loss of this town was a setback to Mussolini which could not be toned down. It had been the main base of his African armies as well as the main air and naval base. From it all supplies for the Libyan and Abyssinian campaign had been distributed. Moreover, the loss of Benghazi put the Italians out of contact with Eritrea and Abyssinia by air. Thus, the whole province of Cyrenaica fell into British hands.

The beginning of 1941 had indeed introduced a feeling of confidence into the communities of the Empire and Britain herself. Imperial forces had advanced victoriously on four fronts—Libya, Abyssinia, Somaliland, and Eritrea. Italy was in a state of revolt. There was every indication that Mussolini would be deposed. Moreover, the British Navy had staged a comeback in the Mediterranean which had not been anticipated.

When Mussolini had stabbed France in the back, the British Navy was spread thinly at all the critical points at sea. Signs of overstrain in the Atlantic made it impossible to reinforce either Gibraltar or Alexandria naval units until late in September. Moreover, Italian land-based bombers had made the Sicilian narrows too hot for the Mediterranean to be regarded as a safe sea route. More and more equipment for the Middle East had to be routed 11,530 miles, via the Cape. Three months were required for this journey, as compared with four weeks by the Mediterranean. This extended route, via the Cape, added an additional task for the Navy at a time when it was obvious that the Mediterranean was about to develop into a strategic area. For some reason, never explained, Mussolini attempted to control this sea by means of his air force rather than his navy. His navy was stronger than the British. In fact, at one period he had four or five capital ships compared with two British. Strong aggressive action would have seriously jeopardised British efforts to build up and supply armies in Egypt. During this period in the Mediterranean the British relied largely on bluff. They hid their weaknesses by courageous aggressiveness, which intimidated the Italians. Whereas powerful Italian task forces repeatedly refused battle, small British forces, often consisting of light cruisers, advanced to attack far superior Italian fleets. This policy worked more successfully than could have been hoped. Indeed, this success continued despite the fact that incessant bombing made the naval base at Malta more and more useless for that purpose. By the end of 1941 that base was no more than a naval outpost for minor craft, used to raid Italian communication lines to Africa. It must be borne in mind that during the first eighteen months of operations in the western desert the naval situation was often uncertain, always overstrained, and, in theory, Mussolini held the initiative. Brilliant strategy and superb seamanship, however, was such that Mussolini was never allowed to realise this fact.

This illusion had been assisted by a daring raid on Taranto, carried out by the Fleet Air Arm on November 11, 1940. At this Italian naval base three battleships and two cruisers were put out of action by aerial torpedoes. It gave the Italians a nasty feeling at the pit of their stomachs. If Mussolini, like Kaiser Wilhelm, hated to see the paint scratched on his lovely capital ships, possible for the same reason Mussolini was equally loath to endanger the paintwork in battle.

When General Wavell's Army had captured Benghazi, a total of 135,000 Italians had fallen into his hands during this first British military victory of the war. Graziani made no bones about withdrawing from Benghazi, and

conducted his fleeing army right back to Tripoli, where his soldiers infected this base with panic. Here was opportunity to clear the Axis out of North Africa before they had become properly installed. Unfortunately other factors made this impossible. On February 12 the German air force arrived in the African area of operations for the first time. By the end of the month the first of Rommel's troops landed in Tripoli. In some thirty days this force had concentrated in the forward area as a light motorised division. It was to become the 21st Armoured Division. These indications that Hitler intended to take a part in the African tug-of-war with a powerful army with equipment superior to the British came at a time when British armies were urgently required elsewhere.

It had become obvious that before real headway could be made in North Africa, Mussolini's holdings east of the Sudan must be liquidated. It thus became necessary to assemble armies to reduce the vast area of Africa that lies north of Kenya and East of the Sudan. In that area lies Eritrea, Abyssinia, British Somaliland, then in Italian hands, and Italian Somaliland. This chunk of Africa is, in shape, roughly a square with sides 1,000 miles long. There was quite a large Italian army in this area, totalling nearly 250,000 troops. Whether or no the elimination of the Axis from North Africa would have automatically eliminated those forces is a point in strategy open to argument. Even if this would have been the case, there were other claims on British troops in the Middle East based on the demands of grand strategy.

In October, 1940, Hitler had peacefully absorbed Rumania. Germany, thus, had a common frontier with Russia, from the Black Sea to the Baltic. On March 1, German forces in Rumania crossed the Danube into Bulgaria. The warders had come. Bulgaria went quietly. Hitler was now knocking at the frontiers of Greece. It could hardly be expected that he would stand aloof to watch the tiny Greek army mangle his "dear friend and partner's" much-vaunted Italian army. Moreover, Hitler wanted Greece in order to secure his southern flank before launching his attack on Russia. If Greece also was prepared to enter the Nazi prison quietly, the Russian campaign could start early in April before Stalin was ready to parry the sledge-hammer. This was a definite move to acquire the "Heartland," if not the so-called "World Island." Hitler's policy in the Balkans, therefore, became a matter of grand strategy, demanding priority on the part of the British. The nearest available troops were, at that moment, in Cyrenaica sending the Italians scurrying for the home base. It required courage to make the decision to abandon this priceless opportunity to clear the Axis out of North Africa and institute what appeared to the public to be a side-show in Greece. No explanations could be given. For what appeared to be at the time an inexplicable reason the British tide of advance halted west of Benghazi, and then started to withdraw toward Egypt. During March, 1941, an advance guard of 60,000 troops was sent to Greece. On March 24, German armoured forces pushed the British advance guard out of El Agheila, a town west of Benghazi. By April 18, the British forces had been pushed back to Tobruk and Sollum, a distance of 450 miles. Tobruk became a beleagured outpost guarding any further German advance to Egypt. Once again the Suez Canal was in danger. In fact, forces ear-marked for the campaign in Greece had to be held in Egypt in case of eventualities. Fortunately for the British advance guard in Greece, which, in fact, now became the main body, Hitler suffered an unexpected setback when the Yugoslavs refused to enter the European prison without a fight.

Under pressure, the Yugoslav Government had signed an "agreement" with Hitler on March 24. This caused such a revolt in Yugoslavia, the Army

denounced the agreement on March 27, and refused to demobilise itself. On April 6, at dawn, forty German divisions burst into Yugoslavia and Greece. Although in theory the Yugoslav Army consisted of thirty-two divisions, it was hopelessly out of date, contained no armour, little artillery, and was not mechanised. The Luftwaffe put every airfield out of action in Yugoslavia, finishing up by flattening Belgrade. A swift German blow struck Yugoslavia, via the Strumitsa Gap, from Bulgaria. Thus, Yugoslavia was isolated from the Greeks and could be dealt with at leisure. Five days from the first blow the Yugoslav Army was unable to offer organised resistance. Sporadic resistance continued, however, until April 19, 1941, when the Yugoslav Army disrupted into formations which escaped to the mountains. In this manner partisan warfare started in the Balkans. It was destined to play an increasingly significant role during the concluding phases of the war.

On the day that the Nazi storm broke over Greece and Yugoslavia, April 6, the British force had been on Greek soil for periods up to a fortnight or three weeks. In fact, the British Navy used the convoys sailing for Greece as a decoy to entice Mussolini's fleet into blue water. In the naval battle of Matapan the Italians fell neatly into a trap which eliminated the heavy cruisers *Fiume, Zara, Pala,* with the loss of 3,000 Italian sailors. British losses were two aeroplanes. This force had had to be cut down drastically owing to developments in Libya. It now consisted of the 1st Armoured Brigade, the New Zealand Division, 6th Australian Division. It had been intended to include the Polish Brigade Group and the 7th Australian Division. The former was retained in Egypt owing to the situation there. The 7th Australian Division was already winning glory in its indomitable withdrawal and subsequent defence of Tobruk.

By the beginning of April, the 1st Armoured Brigade and the New Zealand Division were in the forward areas. The Australians were arriving and had started to move forward. They were confronted by the potential deployment of thirteen German divisions. The Allied line ran in a huge convex arc, roughly, from positions well north of Mount Olympus, northwestward to Phlorina, thence to the high mountains on the Albanian border, and through southern Albania to Tepeleni and the Adriatic Sea. The British front ran from north of the Mount Olympus area to the mountains of Albania. Further west, the Greeks were already locked in victorious battle with the legions of Mussolini. Military prudence now dictated that the Greeks withdraw into Greece, thereby shortening the line by nearly one-half. However, the Greek commander in chief, General Papagos, felt that a withdrawal would have a disastrous effect on the morale of the Greek Army after its initial successes. Moreover, it was impossible to make a quick withdrawal, owing to the low mobility of the Greek Army. Thus, the very fact that the Greek Army had succeeded was to be its undoing. Two British divisions and three Greek divisions were given the task of stopping thirteen German divisions attacking Greece itself. In Albania fifteen Greek divisions were locked in battle with twenty-eight Italian divisions.

The Greek Army was poorly equipped. Worst of all, it had no anti-tank guns. The transport was ox-drawn.

In contrast, the British force was not more than ten years out of date. It was well equipped in comparison with the Greek forces. Its main handicap was the fact that all supplies came over a long sea route to various Greek ports, which were within bombing range of the Germans. Moreover, its land communications were over indifferent roads subjected to increasing air attack. A final complication was that one inadequate railway was asked to carry the responsibility of serving a modern army through difficult country.

Perhaps the greatest disability under which this British Army laboured was that once again British troops had been asked to undertake an operation with totally inadequate air-cover. This factor was not made any the better in Greece, and subsequently in Crete, by the fact that fighters arrived without propellers and propellers without fighters.

The Germans held the initiative throughout the operations. Having disposed of Yugoslavia, they neatly sliced a route to Salonika between the Serbs and the Greeks. This compelled the British to pull back their front to the area in the immediate vicinity of Mount Olympus. The Greek Army in Albania, moreover, was compelled to stage a withdrawal in the face of enemy attack. The Germans dislodged the new line by heavy dive-bombing combined with the threat of armoured thrusts. The British front was forced to withdraw across the Larissa Plain in a series of dogged rearguard actions. It became obvious that the British Army must stage another spectacular evacuation by sea. The Greek Army surrendered on April 23. By this time the British force was fighting rearguard actions 100 miles from Athens. The King of Greece had fled to Crete. The Germans entered Athens on April 27, 1941. The British Navy moved in at nights to open beaches south of Athens and evacuated 44,865 survivors of the original force of nearly 60,000. As at Dunkirk, all equipment was lost, except the clothes and portable weapons of the individual soldier. Some of the abandoned lorries and cars repaired by the Germans were subsequently recaptured in the Western Desert.

Some aspects of the conduct of the short campaign in Greece are open to criticism. There was lack of co-operation between the Air and the Army, possibly due to shortage of aeroplanes. There had been insufficient preparation and discussion with the Greek authorities. If this campaign had been welded into a whole and linked up with the Greek defence against Mussolini's attack, certain basic strategy in the original concept could well have been modified. In the light of subsequent events it was basically unsound in the defence of Greece to have virtually the entire Greek army hopelessly locked in battle in Albania. From the British soldier's aspect this dash to Greece was once again a painful repetition of "too little and too late." Nevertheless, the campaign was an outstanding success on the score of grand strategy. Hitler had got Greece. However, it had taken him the best part of a month, whereas he had planned it would take a few days. His scheme to start the attack on Russia had, therefore, to be put off. It was, in fact, put off for six weeks. Delay in Greece gave Stalin time to make his dispositions. He was able to stave off defeat in 1941 and survive until the winter. Next spring Russia arose like a giant refreshed to parry still dangerous German attacks. If it is an overstatement to say that the British campaign in Greece saved Russia, at least it gave her the opportunity to save herself. Assuredly, if Russia had been knocked out, Britain would have been incapable of withstanding indefinitely the onslaught of Hitler's legions.

Despite the delay in Greece, Hitler was determined to carry out his plans for his advance eastward. If successful, they would assist him in two ways—by threatening the Russian southern flank, and by threatening Egypt from the north. He planned to skip from Greece, in an island-hopping campaign, to Syria, thence to Iraq, where a pro-Axis coup d'etat was already cooking. His route lay via Crete, the Dodecanese and Cyprus to French Syria which was already in a half-rotten pro-Axis relapse. If necessary, his land armies could demand access to Syria through Turkey, who would be virtually compelled to be accommodating. Three thousand German aeroplanes made a good basis for a bargain. Crete had other uses than that of a stepping stone. It lay athwart the eastern Mediterranean and afforded number one

site for a Luftwaffe lair from which to bomb the British Fleet and sea routes to Egypt.

Hitler was not the only person who appreciated the merits of Crete. For over a year it had been used by the British as an outpost naval base and aerodrome. During that period a brigade of British troops had occupied the island. For some reason never explained they had done little to put the island in a state of all-round defence. Even key areas had received scant attention. This omission undoubtedly contributed in no small way to the loss of Crete. It was a tragic instance of "it can't happen here" state of mind. The British High Command must take the blame for this omission.

Crete lay 180 miles south-east of Greece. It could be approached by a necklet of islands extending from the Peloponnese and Athens, or by direct sea routes. In fact, British and Greek forces evacuated from Greece were ferried to Crete as a last-minute stop-gap to plug the impending Nazi torrent. Many of these troops arrived in tatters, without equipment of any sort. There were not even sufficient rifles to go round. There was no artillery, no anti-aircraft guns, only shovels. General Freyberg, of the New Zealand Division, was placed in command of this motley band of heroes whose task it was to defend Crete against the first wholly air-borne invasion of history. They consisted of 28,500 British, Imperial and Greek troops and 5,000 Cypriots. The first German parachutists began dropping in on Crete on May 20, 1941. On that day, about 1,200 landed. Wave after wave followed in succeeding days, augmented by gliders and sea-borne troops. The last-named, however, suffered severely at the hands of the British Navy. In fact, British resistance was determined both on land and sea. The Navy lost two cruisers and four destroyers, as well as their base, which fell into the hands of German glider troops. By May 30 the Germans had managed to gather a force of 30,000 in Crete, compared with 28,500 assorted British, Dominion and Greek troops. The Allies were fighting with total lack of air cover. They had never had adequate equipment, and supplies were intermittent.

The decision to evacuate Crete came on May 29, 1941. The evacuation took place under constant air attack, which followed the troops in their journey back to Egypt. In two days the British Navy managed to take off 14,850 survivors, leaving a further 13,000 British to be taken prisoner. A number of British soldiers fled to the mountain area, linked up with partisan communities, and created a nuisance force operating against the Germans for several years.

During the air drama in Crete, Hitler had been stirring a witch's brew of trouble in Syria and Iraq. German technicians and personnel began to arrive in Syria by air, like locusts. Moreover, with Vichy connivance, they refuelled and flew on to Iraq, where, on May 2, Raschid Ali, Nazi sympathiser, openly proclaimed pro-Axis tendencies and staged a war against the British. Battles occurred at Basra and at Habbaniyah, a key air centre. The pipelines to the Mediterranean were cut and British oil supplies ceased to flow to ports in Palestine. Moreover, Vichy granted permission for German forces to be given passage across Syria to aid the Iraqi rebels.

The Iraq situation was indeed ugly when the invasion of Crete was at its height. However, British forces gradually attained an ascendancy. Moreover, the severe resistance in Crete had taken the sting out of the German parachute strategy. Losses had been so great, and the delay so unexpected, there were insufficient parachute forces left to overflow into Syria. Hitler had, therefore, to call off his magic carpet flight to the East. Another reason for the decision was that time was slipping away. There had been one delay after another. Unless he got going with his Russian scheme quickly he would

be forced to call it off until the following spring. On May 31 an armistice was signed between the Iraqi rebels and the British. The danger in Iraq was surmounted. Nevertheless, it would always remain until the British put the French Syrian house in order. This meant yet another campaign at a time when British strategists were not looking for further headaches.

On June 8 British and Free French columns struck into Syria from Palestine and Transjordania. It had been hoped that no serious resistance would be met. Nevertheless, the Vichy rot had already soaked into Syria. Pro-Vichy senior officers had been hastily appointed to key posts. General Dentz, who commanded the Vichy forces in Syria, offered determined resistance and asked for German help. The campaign was thus protracted in a manner painful to many Frenchmen and all British folk until July 11 when an armistice was signed. The German hold on Syria was broken once and for all. The outer fringes of the Middle East settled down to their noon siestas, which were never again seriously disturbed. Moreover, there had been "grape-vine" rumours of the likelihood of big things "breaking" in Europe. In fact, as early as June 16 there had been conflicting stories about Soviet and German discord.

In the lull which occurred, before the storm broke on the Russian front, the British had time to congratulate themselves on the remarkable success of the timing of their various strategical moves. During this period in the Middle East, from the time of the Italian advance on Sidi Barrani, on September 18, 1940, to the occupation of Syria, early in July, 1941, Wavell could reckon on 200,000 fighting men. Mussolini had concentrated nearly 300,000 in Libya early in the period. Moreover, Hitler had many more checkers to play with than had the British. Wavell was faced with the task of concentrating his ten divisions at one key spot at a time, using them fast, and moving them faster. It was a logistic nightmare for which the operations branch at British Headquarters, Middle East, never received its full share of tribute. In December, 1940, Wavell threw his full pack at the Italians in Libya. He chose his moment nicely, when suitable weather conditions could be expected. Graziani and his Italian hordes were sent scudding back to Tripoli with the fear of God behind them. In this manner, Wavell was able to put a buffer zone between Egypt and the Italians, amounting to 800 miles. On the east, Suez was guarded by Palestine, in British hands, and not then threatened; French Syria, which was then neutral; and Turkey, who was sitting tightly on the fence.

Wavell's next headache was the possibility of a collapse in the Balkans followed by a coup d'etat in Turkey and a threat to Egypt from the north. His role would then have been a stubborn defence of Egypt with a fighting retreat southward, via the Sudan, to Kenya. The Italians barred the way in Eritrea, Abyssinia and the Somalilands. Wavell was thus forced to switch a maximum strength of his fighting troops against the Italians in East Africa. They were duly ferreted out of their strongholds bordering the Gulf of Aden. Indeed, this success unexpectedly permitted Roosevelt to declare the Red Sea not a war zone. Much-needed American supplies could thus steam direct to Suez.

In the middle of the East African operations, every man who could be spared was pitchforked into Greece. It was an additional complication which very nearly upset the time machine. Indeed, the closeness of the timing, almost to seconds, was disclosed when German tanks played havoc with the British advanced lines at El Agheila, west of Benghazi, where the British had reluctantly stopped chasing Graziani. The latter's own momentum had taken him back the remaining 500 miles to Tripoli. If the new danger from German

Panzers in Libya could reach Alexandria, Wavell's whole plan was torn to shreds. With only seconds in hand, Wavell rushed back every soldier who could be spared from the East Africa operations. Fortunately, the Abyssinian task was almost completed. The Italians had proved less stubborn than had been expected. British troops marched on to their transports at Massaua only just in time to halt Rommel at Sollum. Some idea of the repercussions of this breath-taking type of strategy may be had from the fact that Wavell's own staff was scattered all over the Middle East. Wavell himself was at Cairo. Maitland Wilson, his second in command, was in Greece. Richard O'Connor, his operational expert, was in a German prison camp, having been captured in Libya. The blunt naked truth is that in a score of ways Mussolini had it in his power to upset completely this exceedingly tricky gamble with logistics. Had his forces displayed one-tenth of the aggressiveness shown by British troops at Dunkirk, at Mount Olympus, or in their first advance to Benghazi, the task of writing the history of Great War II. would have been left to Signor Gayda, Goebbels, and some creature of Tojo's. For ten months Mussolini held all the aces in the Middle East. Moreover, he was the only Axis partner on the spot to play them. His failure to do so lost Hitler his attempt on Britain's jugular vein. Hitler had now failed twice. Nevertheless, his second failure was not yet apparent. It was destined to resolve itself into a ding-dong trial of strength in the western deserts, lasting another two years.

BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

Hitler's intention to launch an attack on Russia received definite confirmation on May 10, 1941, when Rudolf Hess, deputy-Fuehrer, descended at the end of a parachute in Scotland. He landed in a corner of the property of the Duke of Hamilton. His arrival was watched by a surprised searchlight unit who promptly arrested him. There has been no official statement as to the antecedents of this effort to convert the war into comic opera, or at least, into a film thriller. Semi-official statements indicate that for some time Hess had been writing to pro-Axis sympathisers in Britain, especially one individual of high title. The letters, however, never reached their destination. The British Intelligence Service collected them by arrangement, and answered them. Hess's suggestion to land in Britain by parachute received warm approval. Hess duly set forth on a fantastic thriller at a time when folk in Britain wanted some sort of side-show of this nature to boost their morale. Not only did Hess's plan receive approval, but he was given a course, and told that an escort of Spitfires would be provided. Hess was an experienced pilot and duly arrived off the Scottish coast in a Messerschmitt. This explains how he managed to cross the coast unmolested. He duly emptied himself out of his aeroplane when over the specified area, but broke an ankle when he landed. Whatever plans he had made were thus upset. He fell an easy prisoner to the searchlight crew, who were delighted to have their monotony broken. German sources proclaimed that Hess was insane. Hess declared he had come to England to persuade the British to join Hitler in an attack on Russia, which, he said, was due to take place very shortly. When the people of Britain heard this, they endorsed German claims as to the insanity of Hess.

Russia had given no indication that she was about to turn and rend

Germany. In fact, she had continued to indicate an impartial dislike of both the British and the German policies. It was manifest that Russia did not desire any sudden departure from her own policy of defensive isolation. She was not ready for a major war and did not wish to become committed. From Hitler's point of view Russia was a strong nation—a potential threat to his eastern flank. Moreover, she stood in the way of Hitler's world-conquest plans. She had to be eliminated some time—why not at once, before she became impossible to eliminate. He wished to avoid at all cost any chance that a strong Russia and a strong British-American alliance would co-operate against him at some date in the future. Hitler, therefore, modestly decided to knock out Russia in six months, before Britain had time to grow strong. In the spring of 1942 Hitler then planned to turn west and knock out Britain once and for all time. Thus, the Russian adventure had its attractions. Moreover, the defeat of Russia would give the "Herrenvolk" an unlimited labour reservoir and illimitable acres from which to obtain food supplies. It would, moreover, endanger vital British possessions in the Middle East, including Mesopotamian oil.

Hitler argued that quick, complete destruction of Russia would not only win his war, which stubbornly refused to be won. It would also give him command of the world. Japan would come into the war, America would go under in a paralysis of isolationism. The catch was that if he failed to knock out Russia in a maximum period of one year, Hitler would automatically lose the war. An undefeated Russia would impose upon Germany an encirclement that so much had been staked to prevent in 1939. Hitler, therefore, accepted a limited period of encirclement when, on June 22, 1941, he launched his attack on Russia, accompanied by Hungary and Rumania.

There is no doubt at all that Hitler had under-estimated the ability of Stalin. He had done worse than that, for he had grossly under-estimated the strength of the Russian armies. Hitler had assumed that Stalin would sink into complacent inactivity after the manner of previous easy victims. Stalin had been a keen observer of Hitler's frontier-post-pushing tactics. Indeed, Hitler was up against a shrewd, hard opponent who had gained, in sixty-two years, a name for cunning in the rigorous school of life set by Caucasian mountain chiefs. He had not been named "Man of Steel" for nothing. He came from stock which had inherited a thousand years of bitter struggle for existence. Hard at core, suspicious and crafty, this son of Russian Georgia was more than a match for a ranting, upstart painter who had seized power under exceptional conditions in western Europe.

When Hitler attacked France, he had thrust his tempered tank spear-heads into the cracks which became apparent in out-of-date horde-armies which had scarcely progressed beyond Great War I. phase. It was only at the last moment that Weygand had tried to institute modern counters to the German ultra-modern attack. He failed, partly because the French armies were already demoralised, and partly because his methods demanded plenty of space. When Hitler "sooled" 80,000,000 Germans against 200,000,000 Russians he found that Stalin and his military officers had also been studying *Armoured Warfare*, by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, the British inventor of the tank. This book was written in 1932, and gives the fundamental tactics for the use of tanks in modern war. General Fuller received the recognition one might expect of the fantastic "thirties"—he was sacked for anticipatory thinking. His book, however, had been widely studied both in Germany and Russia. The former had, in fact, found the theories so sound they had adopted them to beat France and the British Expeditionary Force in round one of Great War II. Stalin was sufficiently impressed with the sound

logic of the book to make it priority study book number one for all Russian officers. It thus took its place side by side with Clausewitz's *On War* and Donhet's *Command of the Air*—except in the British Army.

Russia was peculiarly situated geographically to utilise to the full the policies required to conduct a successful military defence in modern war. These requirements demanded a defensive frontier area filled with anti-tank traps, obstacles, and anti-tank guns. Behind this front area, which might extend, perhaps, fifty miles deep, there lay a defence area which was broken up into a series of defended posts. These posts came to be known as "hedgehogs." They were dotted about the countryside in suitable geographic layouts. Each was self-contained. Each commanded key communications, such as roads, or railways, or rivers, or all three. These "hedgehogs" were dotted around in depth. The depth might extend two, or even three, hundred miles. In fact, a whole country could be converted into "hedgehogs." An enemy might reduce one or several, but there were always others. Moreover, as an enemy drove deeper into the "hedgehog" area his lines of communication became endangered by uncaptured "hedgehogs," until, eventually, he was forced to slow down and stop. At this moment, the defenders delivered a powerful counter-attack which drove him back to the frontier, or anyway part of the way. Russia was peculiarly suitable for defence in depth because one thing Russia had got was depth.

One wonders if Hitler had put a yardstick across Russia before he recklessly condemned millions of Germans to die of weariness marching over never-ending steppes. A distance of 1,000 miles separates Leningrad from the Ural Mountains. It is six or seven hundred miles from East Prussia to Moscow. From the Black Sea, at Odessa, to Leningrad is just under 1,000 miles. The further east one goes into Russia the greater the north-south limits. For example, from the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, on the same latitude as Odessa, to the northern shores of Russia the distance has opened out to 1,500 miles. In fact, the farther an invader goes east into Russia the greater the front he has to cover. Indeed, it would need a China, with her 300,000,000 people industrialised to the "nth" degree, to cope with Russia's unlimited acres. History has shown that efforts on the part of European Napoleons to penetrate Russia have always ended with impossible logistics. It was against this country that Hitler optimistically launched his legions.

Stalin realised his armies required at least another year of preparation before they could hope to cope with Hitler's industrially modern equipment. He was, therefore, compelled to buy time with space. Fortunately, Russia was lavishly supplied with space. His strategy was to conduct a series of delaying withdrawals without endangering, in a wholesale manner, a large proportion of his fighting armies. There is no more difficult task. The attacker holds the initiative under these conditions. Stalin appreciated, however, that the farther the German armies got into Russia the longer their communications and the longer the front. He hoped that a combination of skilful withdrawals, coupled with a scorched-earth policy, would succeed in bogging down the German war machine in its first experience of a Russian winter. Stalin was prepared to pay his price—the loss of many industrial areas in western Russia, the loss of the Russian granary in the Ukraine, and even the loss of Moscow and Leningrad. He was fighting frantically for time: time to get his new factories in the Urals humming out tanks and guns and shells: time to convert Russia from peace to war: time to clothe up to 20,000,000 soldiers in appropriate uniforms: time to train them: time to move them to strategic areas. Under these conditions opened

Hitler's adventure in Russia. The battle of the giants was on. From June 22, 1941, onwards to 1944 the Russian campaign provided the main theme of Great War II. The rest might best be described as "noises off." The "noises off" contrived, however, to increase in intensity, until by the end of 1944 they provided in the west a role less than, but comparable with, the Russian campaign.

When Hitler launched his attack on Russia on June 22, 1941, his frontier ran with that of Russia from East Prussia, through the centre of Poland to the Rumanian borders, to the Black Sea. There were no troublesome buffer States in the way. Hitler, therefore, was able to launch a series of co-ordinated thrusts. The Pripet Marshes of eastern Poland roughly divided the battle front into two. These marshes are impassable to large armies. Hitler's main thrust developed toward Moscow, just north of these marshes, via Bialystock and Minsk, to the Dnieper River between Bobruisk and Borizov. An attack south of the Pripet Marshes was directed south of Kiev, assisted by an advance by Hungarian and Rumanian troops toward the lower Dniester. Two other thrusts overflowed into the Baltic States of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia from East Prussia. Farther north, Hitler had persuaded the Finns to take up cudgels against their recent enemy once again. A Finnish Army, stiffened by German divisions, kept the Russians occupied north of Leningrad.

The scheme developed by Hitler's military experts was a model of envelopment, skilfully using every advantageous geographic feature. Success was designed to be achieved by the skilful use of overwhelming force in aeroplanes, tanks and mobile infantry divisions. In fact, the Germans at this stage had overwhelming superiority in numbers. There was brilliant co-ordination of numerous large and small drives, conducted simultaneously almost to railway timetable schedules. Moreover, the thrusts were so arranged that trapped Russians, if they tried to break out, merely got from the frying-pan into the fire.

In the main trust towards Moscow, north of the Pripet Marshes, the Germans cleverly secured their flank on the northern fringes of these marshes as one finger thrust eastward. One hundred and fifty miles farther north another finger thrust eastward along a parallel course, clutching whole Russian armies in their grasp.

These German pincer movements all developed along a stereotyped plan, which, if it was to be admired for its attention to detail, was so "factory-made" it subsequently became possible for the Russians to anticipate the next move and take appropriate action. The first stage of a pincer movement consisted in the bombing of Russian air bases, railways, roads, command posts, and other key localities. Heavy tanks then broke through the frontier-defended areas, thus opening the door for following tanks. These following tanks then struck into the open areas behind, fanning out to envelop and disorganise. Behind, came motorised infantry and regular infantry which were rushed through the gap. Detachments of infantry peeled off from the main drive to attack the flanks of the Russian armies squeezed between the tank fingers on either side. Efforts on the part of the Russians to develop counter-attacks were spotted at once by German observation aeroplanes. The counter-attack was then destroyed by a German tank attack. As the Russians ran out of supplies, the Germans cut them into smaller pieces until, finally, there was no organised resistance left. This recipe was repeated ad nauseam to the gates of Moscow.

Hitler had been able to concentrate 220 divisions against Russia, and 80 per cent. of the German air strength. This had meant abandoning for the

time the persistent air raids on Britain. The lull enabled Britain to put her damaged cities in some sort of order and get on with her main task of turning out modern tanks and other equipment, including more aeroplanes. The Russians were able to confront this vast army with a total of 165 effective divisions in position behind the frontier. A majority of the Russian armies had been placed to bar the route to the Ukraine. Behind this army, the Russians set about mobilising their vast manpower, up to a total of 12,000,000 men with potential reserves of manpower almost inexhaustible.

Scarcely a week had passed before the German onslaught had overrun the first line of the Soviet defences. Some idea of the size of the armies locked in battle may be had from the fact that 9,000,000 men were fighting on a front 2,000 miles long, from the Arctic to the Black Sea. By the middle of August the Russian high command admitted the loss of 4,000 aeroplanes, 5,000 tanks, and over half a million men. Nothing in history had ever come near these figures. It had now become clear that the Germans had instituted three main drives on Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. By July 16 the Germans were 260 miles short of Moscow. Hitler was destined to receive a setback in this sector which must have given him furiously to think. The Red Army had now completed mobilisation.

Early in December, 1941, German troops had penetrated the outskirts of Moscow. This had involved ferocious fighting with huge losses on both sides. From time to time Hitler had announced that the Russians were beaten, but subsequent events always disproved his wishful thoughts. Undoubtedly Moscow was in great peril. All but four of its eleven main railways had been cut. Zero weather, however, was slowing down German efforts. The intense cold ebbed their ability to strike; until, on December 6, the Russians launched an offensive. On December 8 Hitler had to admit he was unable to take Moscow. The Germans abandoned their drive on that city. The Russians had made plans to institute a winter campaign. Despite an admitted loss of 2,500,000 soldiers since the Germans first attacked, the Russians were able to turn from the defensive to the offensive. Within a few weeks they were attacking from Finland to the Crimea. By the end of January, 1942, the Germans had been forced to withdraw to a winter line, with bastions at Rzhev, Vyasma, Bryansk, and Orel. It was more than a slap in the face for Hitler. He could, however, stress his gains in the south. By October 19, 1941, his armies had reached Taganrog, on the north shore of the Sea of Azov. German troops had wrested the Donetz Basin from the Russians, and, on October 24, had captured Kharkov, the industrial hub. By November, German armies had instituted a drive toward the Caucasian oil-fields. The Crimea had been overrun. The Russian's however, were able to slam the door on Hitler's legions in the Caucasus. Kerch was recovered from the Germans and the general situation, though serious, was brighter.

Repercussions from the battlefields of southern Russia affected the British policy in the Middle East. If the Germans had succeeded in driving through to the Caucasus, British forces would have had to fight a defensive battle in that mountain area. A German breach in that area would have imperilled the British, not only in Egypt, but also in India. At this juncture, British forces had stemmed the German advance toward Egypt at Bardia, inside the Egyptian frontier. Tobruk had been besieged for some months. Once again grand strategy demanded that as much ground as possible be regained westward, across the Libyan desert, so that another fighting withdrawal could be staged if troops had to be rushed to the Caucasus.

On November 18, 1941, British, New Zealand and South African troops

started their second drive into Libya. They advanced fifty miles with little opposition. By November 22 a great tank battle was raging at Sidi Rezegh. This tank battle went in Britain's favour, and by November 27 the siege of Tobruk was raised. Unfortunately, a powerful Panzer force, which had been operating inside the British lines, cut back to Sidi Rezegh in strength. New Zealand troops suffered heavily in this action. The corridor to Tobruk was temporarily closed. The British trap had actually caught the main German force, but there was insufficient strength in the jaws to keep the trap firmly closed. It was not until December 17 that the Germans abandoned their last positions to the west of Tobruk. They abandoned the whole of Cyrenaica and by January 7, 1942, the British were once again fighting in the vicinity of El Agheila. It looked, a second time, as if the Axis was about to be booted out of Africa. Although the Russian situation resolved favourably, the British, however, were once more denied this pleasure. Calamitous events on the other side of the world had conspired to thwart them a second time of the fruits of victory in the Western Desert.

THE LITTLE YELLOW MEN

For nearly fifty years, Japanese fanatics had been pursuing a policy whereby Japan was to conquer the world. In 1931 that plan had taken concrete shape when Japan proceeded to wrest from China large slices of the mainland. The subsequent undeclared war against China had proceeded until it overlapped Great War II. This war, in fact, arrived at a time when Japanese armies in China had become bogged in the vast spaces of the mainland. Great War II. could not save Japan's face in China, but it could be used to exploit Japan's dreams of a South Seas Empire. If only Britain could be given a handful in Europe, opportunity might arise for Japan to walk into the South-West Pacific. When France fell Britain was at such a low ebb she had to agree to Japan's demand to close the Burma Road. By that time, French Indo-China had passed to a pro-Axis Vichy regime. The Netherland East Indies was being administered by a government sitting in London. Hitler was confidently boasting of dictating peace in Whitehall. Moreover, on September 27, Hitler signed a pact of military alliance with Japan, which also involved Italy. This pact virtually stated that if America declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy would give her military aid. In the spring of 1941, Hitler was ready to launch his attack on Russia. In April of that year, Russia signed a neutrality pact with Japan providing for a five-year truce along the borders of Manchuria and Mongolia. On June 26 Japan modestly absorbed French Indo-China, an area twice the size of the Japanese home islands, and the key to Singapore, the Malay Peninsula, and India. America virtually outlawed Japan as a result, and started mobilisation in the Phillipines. Britain reacted by re-opening the Burma Road. Both Britain and America lent Chiang-kai-Shek £50,000,000 spread over instalments starting from July, 1941. Moreover, a somewhat expected deadlock occurred in American-Japanese conversations in Washington. Instead, a conference was held in Manila between interested parties, which included America, Britain, China, and the Dutch. It did not include a Japanese representative. On October 16, Prince Konoye's Government resigned and gave place to what was virtually a military dictatorship, with General Hideki Tojo as Prime Minister. Until Japanese plans for attack were com-

pleted an envoy was sent to Washington to spin out the already abortive negotiations between the two countries. In view of insistence by the Japanese to a reply to certain proposals they had made, the Government of the United States had suggested a general settlement of all Pacific problems based on a non-aggression pact, a renunciation of privileges held by foreign Powers in China. Japan was offered a trade agreement and currency stabilisation. It was, however, stipulated that Japan must get out of Indo-China, and from China.

Five minutes before Japanese bombs started to wreck Pearl Harbour at 7.55 a.m., Honolulu time, on Sunday, December 7, 1941, the Japanese envoys walked into the office of the Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, and handed him a reply formally rejecting America's proposals in the negotiations.

The Japanese attack at Pearl Harbour made Great War II. 100 per cent. global. It was, in fact, the most complete World War of all time. Every major Power in the world was now involved. Although the United States of America had been giving help to Britain on an ever-increasing scale, there had appeared little indication when the people of America would cease to listen to the isolationists and start to take a realistic view of their peril. The Japanese, at Pearl Harbour, however, saved the American people from having to make up its mind. The powerful Japanese task forces, which had crept upon Pearl Harbour, crippled the American Pacific Fleet for ten months. On that fateful Sunday morning of December 7, 1941, two powerful task forces lay in the land-locked channels of Hawaii's great naval base. According to American custom many of the smaller craft were secured side by side. The fleet consisted of eight battleships and seventy-eight auxiliary vessels.

Shortly before 8 a.m., Japanese torpedo planes and high-level dive-bombers struck at the naval air station north-east of the naval anchorage. They then directed their attention on the fleet and the army airfields. Before effective air action could be taken 177 American aeroplanes had been put out of action. After a fifteen-minute lull the Japanese struck again. By 9.45 a.m. all eight battleships had been sunk or damaged, five destroyers had been sunk, and five larger craft seriously damaged. A total of 2,343 officers and men had been killed and 1,272 wounded. The Japanese had lost forty-eight aeroplanes and three midget submarines. They had only to follow up this attack to win the Pacific war in a week.

It has not yet been explained why the commanding officer at Pearl Harbour permitted a degree of unpreparedness quite incompatible with the tension prevailing between his country and Japan. Moreover, he had received warnings from Washington which should have put him on his guard. The result was disastrous to American naval power in the Pacific. Before the attack the American Fleet was comparable in strength to the Japanese Fleet. After the attack it was reduced to under thirty per cent. of the Japanese naval strength. Moreover, it occurred at a time when British naval strength was already over-strained in the Atlantic. Only two capital ships could be spared for the Far East, and these two, *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales*, did not reach Singapore until December 2, 1941.

Pearl Harbour must rank, with subsequent events at Singapore, as an indefensible disaster which admits of no excuse. Psychologically, Pearl Harbour did at least unite the people of America. Isolationists stopped talking. America was united for war as she had never been united for peace. Scarcely had the last Japanese bomb fallen on Pearl Harbour than the world's greatest industrial nation had switched from motor-cars to Bofors

guns, tanks, aeroplanes and landing barges. For years, President Roosevelt had been trying to prepare his people for the unpleasant realities of war. After Pearl Harbour the only criticism was that the war-machine was not in top gear quickly enough.

During the period that the American Pacific Fleet was crippled, the Japanese invaded Burma, including Singapore, the Philippines, and all the coral clusters of the western Pacific. Every British and American outpost in the south-west Pacific, was lost, north of a line Australia-Fiji-Pearl Harbour. The Dutch East Indies fell as a ripe plum. All its rubber and oil were lost to the Allies. Both Australia and New Zealand were in danger of imminent invasion at a time when the flower of the manhood of both Dominions were fighting in the African deserts. Britain had also suffered a naval reverse, nearly as disastrous as America's, when *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were sunk by air action in a risky enterprise without air support off the Malayan coast. In a subsequent action in the waters of the Dutch East Indies, Allied cruisers and destroyers suffered serious losses at a time when they could least be spared.

The war in the Pacific had the effect of curtailing the second Allied drive into Libya. Troops, necessary to round off that campaign, were rushed to Singapore, including equipment carefully assembled to boot the Hun out of Africa. Up to the attack on Pearl Harbour the war had been exclusively European. In fact, strategists had become used to thinking in terms of a war in Europe, even though it had spread to the Middle East. It had now developed into a world war on a scale so vast that Allied plans in the Middle East had to accept over-ruling decisions by war councils who had hastily to readjust the whole dismal perspective. The first repercussion lost us the second chance to clean up North Africa, but did not save Singapore. Indeed, the year 1942 in the Pacific was a year during which Australia and New Zealand held on grimly while America gathered strength to rescue them from perils beyond the ability of the Mother Country to resolve. This gloomy period in the south Pacific was not improved by news from Britain on February 12, 1942, that *Scharnhorst, Gneisenau,* and *Prinz Eugen* had steamed up the English Channel from their hide-out in Brest, past the Straits of Dover, and succeeded in entering German ports. No less than forty-two seaplanes and other aircraft were lost in unsuccessful efforts to sink these German capital ships. Three days later the cup of bitterness overflowed with news that Singapore had inexcusably fallen with the loss of 60,000 soldiers.

The Pacific war has so far resolved itself into three main phases—the grim period which involved holding on by the eyebrows, the toe-hold, and the approach movement toward the inner defences of Japan. The fourth phase developed later. It included the final assault from suitable jumping-off localities within easy reach of Japan. This phase required six months or so to develop after the final phase in Europe. It involved the movement of huge forces which must take time.

Tojo wasted no time after the American Pacific Fleet had been paralysed at Pearl Harbour. While the remnants of the American fleet concentrated in a secret north Pacific rendezvous, the Japanese war machine started to grind out a plan conceived many years before. This plan sought to overwhelm the whole of the south-west Pacific area, including Australia and New Zealand. The main features of the plan included an amphibious holding action far out in the Pacific, east of Japan, along a perimeter—Guam-Wake-Midway Islands—thence north to the Behring Sea. Behind this screen, three main thrusts developed southward to the Dutch East Indies, to the Java Sea

area, and to Sumatra. Occupation of the Solomon Islands completed the link-up. Australia was menaced along the whole length of her northern coasts by powerful Japanese forces with secure supply lines. Before the attack on Australia could develop, it was necessary to cut the slender Allied air link from America, via the Hawaiian Islands and Fiji. New Zealand rushed all her available military equipment and personnel to Fiji, the vital spot. This left New Zealand virtually undefended against modern types of attack. Fiji, however, was never lost. Through this narrow link with the outside world, America was able to build up air strength in Australia, then naval strength in the waters north-east of Australia, which enabled increasingly powerful amphibious forces to be concentrated at the vital areas. The Japanese also planned for their fleets to dominate the Indian Ocean, assisted by the occupation of Madagascar.

There can be no denying the imminent danger in which New Zealand found herself. What little equipment she had was courageously rushed to Fiji. The safety of New Zealand rested in the hands of Home Guard units, who spent uncomfortable periods along wind-swept coasts with inadequate shelter or equipment. Australia was even worse off because the menace was nearer.

Under the wise guidance of General MacArthur, America's hero of the Philippines, the tide was stemmed from March 17, 1942, onwards. In fact, American and Australian forces had unexpected success in New Guinea operations based on Port Moresby, which at one period seemed doomed to fall into Japanese hands.

The turning tide was presaged by three significant naval actions in May and June. On May 8, 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea converted the eyebrow hold into a toe-hold. The battle of Midway Island, on June 6, definitely confirmed the ability to retain a toe-hold and paved the way for the island-hopping phase. On November 15, 1942, the Japanese lost two battleships, eight cruisers, six destroyers, and twelve transports in a naval action at Guadalcanal. Moreover, Japanese plans in the Indian Ocean had to be modified when, on May 7, 1942, Madagascar fell to British forces. The route to the Middle East was thus placed out of danger. Japanese action in the Indian Ocean consisted very largely of commerce raids, including the sinking of the thousands of tents en route to New Zealand to accommodate American troops.

These Japanese set-backs paved the way to an American landing in the Solomons on August 7. This stubborn, up-hill campaign was destined to last all through 1942, gradually tapering off as the Japanese-held islands were cut off from their bases. New Zealand played a part in the Solomons, partly directly, when "3 Div." took an active part in attacks on Vella Lavella, and, largely, by converting the North Island of New Zealand into an American base. The first of many American forces landed in New Zealand on June 15, 1942. But for swift American action Fiji would have been captured by the Japanese and New Zealand would have fallen into their hands.

All through 1943 and 1944, there followed in the Pacific a remarkable penetration of Japanese-held island systems. The assault reached new intensities as more and more equipment rolled off the production lines. Many important Japanese defence centres were by-passed, including Rabaul and Truk. By the end of 1944, the Japanese outer defences had been prised wide open. Ever-growing amphibious American forces were lined up for the attack on the inner defences.

THE TURNING TIDE

Britain's period of disillusionment gave way in 1942 to hope. The industrial machine was getting into its stride. Already there was indication that the German lead in aeroplanes was being overtaken. Moreover, the people of Britain had been tested by a winter of intense bombing and had not been found wanting. The moral fibre of the nation had stood strain after strain. The soft, fatty, peace-time tissue had given place to a new material, proved and tested in a crucible of bombs. Moreover, the new armies were being trained in modern ways of war. For over a year this training had continued. Every dangerous throw-back to Great War I. was being eradicated. Imitation, it is said, is the sincerest form of flattery. Britain, in her third year of war providentially flattered herself in that she copied and adapted from the Germans, methods of armoured warfare they had copied and adapted from a book written by a British general ten years previously. It was a healthy sign. The past, if black, had at least been surmounted. The future, in 1942, gave Hitler only one more chance of victory. He must defeat Russia. The odds were already against a quick victory. Moreover, his Russian interlude had called off his bombers from the night skies over Britain. Invasion receded farther than ever into the background. Britain could get on with her preparations. Meanwhile, she watched Hitler make vain efforts to dismount from the tiger he had ridden into Russia. In 1942 that tiger was destined to take him even deeper into Russia. Every mile he went forward made it even more difficult to dismount. He was carried forward by a destiny which slowly unfolded its purpose. When 1942 ended one could discern a smile upon the face of the tiger.

Britain had already become an unsinkable aircraft-carrier, anchored off German-held Europe. She was, in fact, something more. Beer-swilling Germans, stationed along the Channel coast, from time to time received nasty shocks. British commandos had a nasty knack of making unexpected landings. A knock on the door might mean anything. These raids became almost monthly features. On March 28, the U-boat base at St. Nazaire was badly damaged when an old British cruiser, her bows filled with explosive, crashed through to an important lock-gate. The time fuse in her charge went off the next day when the German commandant of the area and his staff were gesticulating on the deck of the cruiser in a quandary as to how she could best be destroyed. There were, moreover, numerous raids against radio location installations along the coasts of France. On August 19 a raid in strength with tanks made an abortive effort to penetrate into the town of Dieppe. This raid was a failure. The German defences proved too strong. Efforts to soften up the area had been inadequate. Moreover, many tanks and other vehicles became water-logged in their efforts to land. The lessons learned in this costly raid, however, proved useful.

In the air, British fighters and bombers were becoming more and more troublesome to the Germans. The Germans had been forced to shift the bulk of their bombers and fighters to the Russian campaign. As they became more and more committed in the east, they became weaker and weaker in the west. In May, 1942, the Royal Air Force was able to put 1,000 machines into the air for a single night raid against Cologne. This was significant for the future, and at the time was memorable, because it was the first thousand-bomber raid in history. Although the Germans had used 800 machines at the same time against Britain in 1941, their machines had been spread over several targets.

At sea a measure of relief had been experienced against the U-boats, thanks to the increasing numbers of convoy craft which had been launched. In fact, in September, 1941, Churchill had been able to announce that launchings were exceeding sinkings. He pointed out, however, that Britain must expect further attacks and there was no guarantee that this margin was permanent. Furthermore, American shipyards had already got into their stride. It was possible in 1942 to deliver no less than 746 ships amounting to 5,930,000 tons.

Early in January, 1942, American soldiers started landing in Northern Ireland as token of a stream which was destined to become a mighty river. It was proof that Uncle Sam was not completely occupied in picking up shattered threads in the Pacific. He was able, even now, to assist in Hitler's war. By June, American pilots were arriving at British airfields. These fliers were but harbingers of the swarm which poured into Britain as the year drew to a close. In fact, one might say that Britain ceased to be an aircraft-carrier as the year drew to a close—she became a mighty arsenal of war straining under the weight of hundreds of thousands of tons of equipment of all types, and millions of men.

Hitler realised, with sudden intuition, for which his soldiers so frequently paid with their lives, that the tide might turn at any moment. He still had powerful weapons at his command—U-boats, attack in Libya, and, above all, attack in Russia. He had not lost the initiative. Nevertheless, he had enemies now who had become his equal. They could defend themselves in the modern manner. If, then, they could defend themselves, could they attack? That was a nasty headache for Hitler all through 1942. He proceeded to play his cards with the thoroughness which has made the German war-machine the admiration of the world.

Hitler played the Ace of Neptune as his first card. From January, 1942, onward, German U-boats took serious toll of American and other craft along the eastern coastline of America. The result was alarming. By April, twenty-two ships were sinking every week. This rate was kept up for three long months. By June, the Allies had reached the highest toll of sinkings of the war, or, for that matter, any war. These losses occurred when America was making vital strategical moves, both of equipment and men. It was not possible to do much about the losses until the American Navy was able to organise better convoy protection. Her yards worked overtime turning out the necessary ships and equipment. Half way through the year the U-boats had been driven south to the Carribean area. By the end of the year, they had been forced to hunt in the more distant areas of the central Atlantic. By the end of 1942 the U-boat threat had been reduced to normal, or slightly below normal.

Hitler played his Libyan card early in February. His operations in that area must not be considered as an isolated effort to gain final victory in a war that refused to be won. It was closely connected with his main deal in Russia. Egypt was still doubly threatened—from the Libyan desert and as a result of his advances in Russia which, he hoped, would take him to the Caspian Sea. If all went well, German armies might yet advance overland to India where they could now link with Japanese legions ruthlessly cleaning up the Asiatic mainland and the Pacific islands.

The second advance across Libya had ended once again at El Agheila, on December 21, 1941. Rommel retired to a strong position behind salt marshes. He had succeeded in extricating about forty tanks and 35,000 men from what might have been a debacle. British and Dominion casualties totalled just over 16,000, including 5,594 New Zealand troops and 3,536 South

Africans. The threat to Egypt was once again removed and what had been nearly defeat had been turned into victory. These results, however, had been obtained without a decisive battle. Both sides were on the defensive. There was, therefore, no permanence in the situation. Further men and equipment were required to reap the fruits of a brilliant piece of tactical chess. Those men and equipment, however, went to Singapore, not Egypt. Rommel, who had no Far East problem to consider, was left, therefore, with the initiative in his hands. Furthermore, despite our victory the German tank and anti-tank guns were superior to the British.

In the air, however, the Royal Air Force had already displayed marked superiority. Air Vice-Marshal Tedder, commander, R.A.F., Middle East, was largely responsible. Up to his arrival, it had been considered that an aeroplane was a flying gun, to be used in a semi-artillery role with ground forces. He introduced the idea that the best co-operation the Air Force could give in the Western Desert was the destruction of the German Luftwaffe. Ground targets could then be dealt with in detail and unopposed. He started a deliberate offensive against the Luftwaffe. First, the Germans were driven from the sky. Then Rommel's long supply routes were disorganised. The role played by this policy contributed in no small way to subsequent events. At the time that Rommel was at El Agheila, in December, 1941, there were already signs of disorganisation in his supply routes. This disorganisation increased in the early weeks of the New Year.

General Freyberg, commanding the New Zealand Division, summed up the situation in the Western Desert at this period with the words: "We know now that we can both 'take it' and 'fight back.' The last war was an artillery war. This time it is a tank war in which again the Germans have had a big lead in the equipment race. But the time is coming when the tide will turn. When it does, the Germans will have to show they can 'take it.' The experience of this campaign makes me feel certain they can't."

Before the tide turned in the deserts west of Egypt it had to ebb. In fact, the ebb tide started on January 24, 1942, when Axis forces attacked at El Agheila. Slowly but surely Axis forces overflowed eastward across the desert sands. Benghazi was re-occupied on January 31, Derna on February 7. By the beginning of May, Rommel was back again nearly at Tobruk. A race to build up men and supplies now began. Rommel had a short sea route across the narrowest part of the Mediterranean. The British armies, under General Ritchie, were served from Britain, round South Africa, thence via the Red Sea to Egypt. Intense air activity by Axis machines made the Mediterranean route too perilous for any but the most urgent supplies. Malta suffered chronic air attack in order to neutralise efforts from that island outpost to interfere with Rommel's nearby sea route.

This time it was to be a trial of strength in the Western Desert between two evenly matched giants. The British timed their offensive to start early in June. Rommel struck first. Nevertheless, his offensive, which started on May 26, was stopped in its tracks by sledge-hammer blows from the skies. Three weeks' heavy fighting followed. But for a serious error in the handling of tanks in the face of powerful German anti-tank defences that fighting might have gone in favour of the British forces. A ding-dong struggle continued for five days in the Knightsbridge-Acroma area, reaching a climax on May 31. In one area, however, British tanks were caught in cleverly sited Axis anti-tank defences. The Italians claimed the destruction, or capture, of no less than 345 British tanks, twenty-one armoured lorries, fifty-three guns, 200 motorised units, and a British admiral. It seems that the last-named was Admiral of the Fleet Sir William Cowan, aged 70 years,

fighting with the 3rd Indian Brigade at his own request.

The swaying battle of Knightsbridge ended with Axis troops cutting a lane through British minefields. This was covered by massed Axis anti-tank guns while German tanks lumbered through. Nevertheless, stubborn fighting continued at an ever-increasing pitch in terrific heat. By June 7, 1942, both sides had thrown a combined total of over 1,000 tanks into the battle, which surged to and fro in what was termed "The Devil's Cauldron." Slowly, but relentlessly, Rommel gained tank and artillery superiority. It was becoming clear that the redoubtable Eighth Army had been outgunned. Although the British forces now included a number of the new General Grant tanks, carrying seventy-five-millimetre field guns, the bulk of the tank force consisted of smaller tanks armed with two-pounders, useless against German tanks armed with forty-seven-millimetre guns. All the German, most of the Italian, and a large number of renovated French tanks, used by Rommel, all out-ranged the British tanks. Moreover, the bulk of the British anti-tank guns were two-pounders, useless at any range against German tanks. In contrast, the Germans were using eighty-eight-millimetre anti-tank guns. Towards the middle of June it became painfully obvious that a British withdrawal across the Egyptian frontier was inevitable. What was by no means obvious was where this withdrawal was going to end.

By June 17, the British forces had withdrawn to the Sidi Rezegh area, leaving what appeared to be an adequate garrison in Tobruk, which once again was to undertake a role of a besieged thorn in the side of the enemy's coastal flank. On June 20 a powerful Axis force attacked Tobruk and broke into the perimeter. Tobruk fell unexpectedly on June 21 with the loss of 25,000 prisoners and the capture of its commander, Major General Klopper, of the South African Division. The British forces steadily retreated past Sollum and Mersa Matruh, eventually, by July 4, 1942, to El Alamein, sixty miles west of Alexandria. To say that the situation was serious could never be anything but a gross understatement.

Rommel was created a Marshal when Tobruk fell and was strutting about in Germany at week-ends, telling his friends that he would be in Cairo by August. There was nothing to stop him—only the Eighth Army and, dash it all, it was a defeated army. With a few "Heil Hitlers" he popped back to administer the final kick.

General Auchinleck, supreme commander Middle East, decided to take personal command of the Eighth Army in place of General Ritchie. The change in command was made on July 1 when the famous Eighth Army was making a desperate stand at El Alamein. The headlong advance of the Axis forces was held at this spot by a desperately narrow margin. The impassable Qattara Depression provided a secure flank, eighty miles to the south. The momentous issue—the safety of Egypt—once again hung in the balance. A race for reinforcements became the deciding factor. When Churchill stated on June 27 that the position in Egypt was satisfactory, giving no cause for undue concern, Britain had, in fact, entered the most critical phase of the war. Nevertheless, a careful appreciation of the true situation was not so gloomy as events suggested. The Germans reached El Alamein in June, short of tanks, ammunition, and even water. Their supply lines were over 500 miles long, and disorganised. Tedder's air policy was already starting to reap a harvest.

The British had lost 80,000 men and prodigious quantites of equipment. Nevertheless, they had fallen back on reinforcements, thanks to the courageous policy initiated during the Battle of Britain by Churchill. That policy

was also starting to reap its harvest. In fact, when Churchill visited Cairo at this stage of the war he knew that further reinforcements, including great numbers of the latest aircraft, new General Sherman tanks, M.7 tank-destroyers, and enormous quantities of new equipment were then steaming up the Red Sea. A new high command was set up in Cairo by Churchill. Hitler's blunder was to allow his victorious desert troops to sit in front of El Alamein from June 30 to October 23, apparently waiting for a new British Army to be built up with completely up-to-date weapons, new tactics, and, above all, overwhelming air-power.

During the lull in the Western Desert the Eighth Army got a change in its commander. The new commander was to have been William T. E. ("Strafer") Gott, but an unfortunate aeroplane accident while he was on the way killed him. In his place there came an almost unknown ex-instructor from the Staff College by the name of Bernard Montgomery. The Western Desert had become notorious for unmaking far too many British generals whose only merit had been long but untested service. It was now destined to make a general for a change. He arrived at a moment when Hitler had already struck special medals to commemorate his entry into Egypt. When Montgomery took over the Eighth Army he found his staff busily at work. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Preparing withdrawal orders to Egypt," he was told. "Burn them," said the new commander, "and prepare orders for an attack."

After feints in other parts of the line, Montgomery struck against the Italians, with everything he had, south of the coast near El Alamein. On the night of October 23, 1942, the moon over El Alamein rose high and full. Suddenly, across the desert there skirled the ghostly scream of bagpipes pouring out the old Scots march, *Wi' a Hundred Pipers and a' and a'*. The night leapt into a crash of artillery splitting the whole horizon. Before the Germans had time to discover what the mad English were doing, they were rolled up against the sea and routed out by the bayonets of the 51st Highland Division, the 44th and 50th English, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, Indians, Free French and Greek troops. Rommel had anticipated an attack from the coastal area. He was abruptly made to realise that he had massed his defences in the wrong spot. Moreover, Rommel now realised "Monty" had not only his "hundred pipers," but his "a' and a' " consisted of a potential stockpile of up to 1,000,000 trained soldiers, 1,000 modern tanks, aeroplanes that filled the sky like a swarm of pinging mosquitoes. British armour overran the German positions, fanned out behind them in tactics the Germans knew only too well, for it was they who had used them so often in other campaigns.

The fall of Rommel was abject. Hitler hastily recalled all copies of his Afrika Korps film entitled *Victory in Africa*. Instead, he was compelled to become a passive spectator of his hero boy who became a fugitive, leading a beaten, fugitive army back to Tripoli. Rommel scattered westward with the remnants of two armoured divisions, chased by two armoured and four infantry divisions lavishly supplied with equipment. Packs of Allied aeroplanes beset Rommel's beaten force from the air. Desperately, he laid mines behind his retreat to slow up the victors. In a nightmare he passed all the familiar places—Mersa Matruh—Sollum—Derna—Benghazi—El Agheila—Sirte—into Tripolitania. The misery of his retreat was interrupted sixty miles west of El Agheila, when, by forced marches, the New Zealanders and other Allied veterans of the desert got in behind him, causing terrible havoc. Pathetically, Rommel radioed Hitler for air cover and parachute landings in the Tripoli area to safeguard his base. He knew, and Hitler knew, and the Ger-

man people knew, that unless the God they had denied could create a new German ghost army out of desert sand the Battle of El Alamein became one of the decisive victories of history. The unfolding purpose of Allied leaders suddenly got in step with a vaster, more profound, unfolding purpose. Destiny it seemed, had tired of the upstart house-painter who for three years had painted the world red with blood with little or no opposition.

When Rommel was stumbling across the western frontiers of Libya, on November 7, he learned that a reception committee consisting of powerful British and American armies, with the very latest equipment and weapons, was landing along the coasts of Africa from Casablanca to Algiers. An armada of nearly 1,000 Allied merchantmen and naval vessels arrived in the west African area from British and American ports. The series of surprise landings in the dawn of November 7 encountered scattered French resistance. A race ensued for the French naval base of Bizerte, which commanded the narrows to Sicily. Allied forces were within thirty-five miles of Bizerte by November 19, but were then delayed by heavy rain and mud.

Hitler suddenly realised that the Allies had started to play their cards. In fact, they had acted after the manner of his own heart—moved suddenly, in overpowering force, at a decisive point. Not only Hitler, but the people of Germany, were stunned by the blunt truth that the initiative was slipping from them. Their turn had come to dance to the tune taken up by the bagpipes at El Alamein and now echoing in every direction. Hitler's first intuition was to attack Gibraltar through Spain. He was stalled, however, owing to the fact that a move of that nature would come too late, even if Franco acquiesced. Franco, however, made it plain that he would not acquiesce. Delay would, therefore, make the scheme abortive. Moreover, it involved logistic and food supply headaches with no solution. A further deterrent was the knowledge that, even if Gibraltar fell, the Allies now possessed in north-west Africa road, rail and desert links with the Atlantic at Casablanca. Hitler had to be content with occupying the rest of France. He also demanded the use of the French Fleet, at anchor in Toulon. A total of thirty-nine warships, eighteen submarines, as well as many small craft, scuttled themselves on November 27, 1942, at the French naval base when Hitler was in the act of grabbing them. It was a nasty slap in the face for a face which, by now, was getting used to slaps. The Allies heaved a sigh of relief and got ready to boot the Germans out of Africa. In hot pursuit of the Afrika Korps, the British Eighth Army reached Tripoli on January 23, 1943, three months after the knock-out at El Alamein. Rommel made his first stand at the Mareth Line, a French defensive system built in peace time against the Italians. Rommel had by now fallen back on reinforcements. Nevertheless, the Eighth Army cracked the Mareth Line by March 29. On April 7 the Eighth Army, which had started 1,300 miles to the east, from the Egyptian frontier, joined up with American forces which had landed at Casablanca, nearly 1,000 miles west. Rommel honoured the veterans of the Eighth Army by moving his reserves south to confront it. French, American, and British troops thereupon attacked him in overwhelming violence along the whole front. Rommel's remaining reserves were insufficient. On May 3 the new arrivals thrust aside improvised German labour units and Luftwaffe ground troops. By May 5, Allied forces, including reserves of the Eighth Army, prised open the German centre.

Bizerta and Tunis fell on May 7, 1943. Speedy and tremendous blows by land, sea, and air had demoralised the Axis forces. They had withered under huge air bombardments. Hundreds of Axis barges, vainly attempting to stage a "Dunkirk" without the necessary elements for success, were sunk in

the Mediterranean. By May 8, remnants of Axis might in Africa were cornered in the Cape Bon peninsula. On May 12, 1943, all organised Axis resistance ended in North Africa. Whole German and Italian divisions surrendered unconditionally. Well over 150,000 prisoners were taken, including General von Arnim, who had superseded Rommel, and sixteen other generals.

The defeat of the Axis in North Africa was the greatest knock any German army had taken over a period of 150 years. Events in North Africa, coupled with events occurring simultaneously on the eastern front in Russia, made the winter and spring of 1942-1943 the turning point of the war. Moreover, the U-boat menace, even then, was showing signs of coming under control. The huge armadas required to land British and American troops in North Africa had done so with remarkably small losses. In fact, on June 30, 1943, Churchill was able to announce that few U-boats were now able to attack convoys. Moreover, merchant ship replacements were far ahead of losses. The battle of the Atlantic was virtually won.

SLEDGEHAMMERS IN RUSSIA

While destiny's unfolding purpose was staging the drama in North Africa equally spectacular events were taking place in Russia.

Although the Russians had been able to cut off some of the German "hedgehogs" during the winter of 1941-42, and the intervals between them were penetrated, the main framework of the German front remained intact. Owing to the fact that the German High Command had relied upon a swift victory in 1941, no preparations had been made for a winter campaign. As a result, German morale was badly shaken, losses due to the weather were high and suffering from cold was severe. The German armies, however, quickly recuperated. The effect of the set-back was to reduce the German offensive strength to a degree such that another all-out offensive along the whole front was no longer possible. It was thus necessary to stage an attack on a selected sector.

For the 1943 campaign in Russia, Hitler decided to launch a formidable attack on the Donets and the lower Don. His object was to rupture Timoshenko's southern armies, forcing them back to the lower Volga. That task completed, victorious German armies could swing north to roll up the entire Russian front in the centre, or move south to seize valuable oil-fields in the Caucasus. However, the start of this powerful thrust was delayed until July, 1942. The reduction of Sebastapol had proved longer and more costly than had been anticipated. This had permitted Timoshenko to institute a preventive offensive in the Kharkov sector, which further delayed the German attack. When the German armies struck, they did with the force of a sledgehammer. The Russian front was shattered. The German momentum carried them in pursuit across the River Don to the fringes of the River Volga, especially at Stalingrad. Moreover, the German armies overflowed the Kuban steppes toward the Caucasus oil-fields.

During the previous summer and winter fighting, the Russians had learned some vital lessons. Their armoured forces, as well as their air force, had proved no match for the German war-machine. It had to be drastically re-equipped to standards set by the Panzer and the Luftwaffe. New tanks and aircraft were put into production, well equal to German equipment. Unfortunately, the winter was not long enough for this new equipment to

roll off the production lines in numbers capable of affecting the summer campaign of 1942. Russian industry had been depleted and disorganised by the loss of factories and raw material in the Ukraine. A wholesale exodus had been initiated to the Urals, causing an inevitable time lag. Allied aid, via the Arctic and Iran, was unable to make good these deficiencies.

The Red Army at this time had manifested a serious weakness in the higher command. There were too many elderly generals steeped in the traditions of the past. They proved incapable of flexible reaction in the critical period which had overtaken Russia. Moreover, they blocked the way for younger men. Stalin found it necessary to take the position in hand himself. After the fall of Rostov, on November 23, 1941, he had been forced to issue a scathing Army Order, in which he stated, among other things, that it had "disgraced the Red Army's banners." He went on to say: "We lack order and discipline in the units; we can no longer tolerate commanders and commissars who abandon their posts at will; they will be considered as traitors and will be treated accordingly." A very thorough purge removed some scores of commanders of all ranks. Had a weaker man than Stalin been in command, it is probable that Russia would have fallen beneath the German attacks of the 1942 campaign. Their "Man of Steel" breathed a new spirit into the Russian armies. Crushing disaster was averted only just in time. The world saw the result at Stalingrad and the central Caucasus. In the nick of time the German surge into the heart of Russia was stopped. The Allies had Stalin to thank that Russia was not forced out of the war, or, at the best, crippled for many months.

Sebastapol fell to the Germans on July 1, 1942, after one of the most stubborn resistances in the history of fortress warfare. The whole area was in ruins. Its fall, however, safeguarded Hitler's southern water flank. As soon as this Russian naval base was in his hands, he started his summer campaign in Russia. By July 9 the Germans were 100 miles east of Kharkov and were crossing the River Don, a strategically important river defence. By July 13 all the Russian armies along their southern front were in retreat. The Germans continued to use methods which had brought them success in the 1941 campaign. A series of powerful Panzer pincers cut off Russian units, leaving them to be eliminated by slower-moving infantry. Rostov fell for the second time on July 26. In spite of the sledgehammer blows which the Russian armies received, it became clear toward the end of July that the Germans were anxious about the result. Timoshenko had succeeded in withdrawing without losing his main armies. Moreover, there were signs that the German whirlwind advance was abating. By the first week in August, the Germans were held everywhere, except toward the Caucasus. By August 11 a great armoured battle was taking place round Stalingrad, an industrial town which sprawled for miles along the banks of the River Volga, near where it bends eastward in the final 300-mile stretch to the Caspian Sea. The Russian position was far from reassuring. Perhaps the worst feature was the steady German advance along the shores of the Black Sea. The Russian Fleet was driven out of Sebastapol anchorages at the start of the summer campaign. On September 5 the last remaining Black Sea base, at Novorossisk, fell into German hands. The Russian Black Sea Fleet was thus forced to fall back on Batum, at the extreme east of the Black Sea, which was not a naval base. German aircraft ranged the Black Sea at will. Moreover, the Russian southern flank was not now fully protected, and could not be considered to be secure.

Fighting around Stalingrad continued with unabated fury until, on September 17, the Germans were storming the western approaches. The fall of Stalingrad would cut off the whole of south Russia from the north. The

Russian Caucasian armies would become isolated and be forced to withdraw into an area where supply and communication would become very difficult, if not impossible. The loss of Stalingrad would, indeed, have been to the Allied nations as great a reverse as the fall of France. By October 30, the heroic defence of Stalingrad had reached its seventieth day. Events in the Mediterranean cannot, at this point, be considered as isolated from the war of the giants staged before Stalingrad. Rommel's disorderly retreat toward Tripoli, combined with powerful American landings at Casablanca and other places in north-west Africa, compelled Hitler to withdraw large forces, including aircraft, from Russia to defend his "soft under-belly." Churchill and United States high officials went to Moscow on August 17, 1942, to confer with Stalin. Plans made then had already matured at the approaches to Stalingrad and in Africa. In Africa, Hitler became the helpless spectator of crack German legions rushing pell mell for safety. At Stalingrad, he was forced to watch the tide turn against him, partly because reserves to feed his mammoth operations had to be drained off to plug nasty gaps which opened in his southern flanks.

At the beginning of November German high tide ran from Novorossisk, south-east toward Grozny, thence north to Stalingrad, north-west to Voronezh along the River Don, then it looped to Tula in central Russia. The line then ran west of Moscow to Kalinin. From the last town it went north to Leningrad arriving east of that city to the southern shores of Lake Ladoga. Leningrad was thus invested on land. There were three significant features about the line. In the south, the Germans were 1,200 miles from their home bases; almost entirely in Russian territory. In the north, they were 600 miles from East Prussia, through occupied territories. The line itself contained two significant German salients—east of Rostov where Stalingrad formed the peak of the salient, east of Smolensk where Viasma and Rzhev formed the base line for the peak of the other salient. The Rostov area, moreover, consisted of a huge salient which stretched south-east for over 300 miles toward Grozny. The Russians had enticed the German armies far out on a limb. At least one-quarter of Germany's manpower and resources were bogged down in efforts to get supplies to the Russian fronts. No longer was Hitler operating on interior lines. Moreover, his difficulty was not improved by the fact that the Russian railway gauge and the German were different sizes. The elastic of strategy had reached a point where it might easily snap. Stalin proceeded to help it to do so.

In contrast to the Germans, the Russians had been falling back on supplies and enormous reserves of manpower. The implacable logic of this was now fighting against the Germans.

Stalin struck south from the River Don, north-east of Rostov. This drive endangered sixty German divisions in the sack east of Rostov, stretching to Grozny. It also directly threatened to pinch some ten German divisions operating against Stalingrad. Pressure in this area would thus be relieved, thus paving the way for a winter drive on Rostov itself, a formidable German "hedgehog." There was thus in the makings a great defeat for the German armies. As portent of what was to come, the Russians were able to report a victory at Ordzhonikidze, at the extreme tip of the Grozny pocket. A total of 15,000 Germans were killed and wounded. This stopped the German drive on the oil-fields.

On November 22 Stalin initiated a big offensive in the sector north of Stalingrad. An advance of fifty miles was made in three days. A total of 13,000 prisoners was taken. The Russian winter campaign had begun. A third attack, south of Stalingrad, provided the pincers required to nip off the

pocket in which Stalingrad now lay at the extreme tip. In northern Russia, Stalin started an attack in the Rzhev area on November 29, 1942. By this time Soviet forces had cut off ten German divisions in the Stalingrad area and they were in danger of being utterly destroyed. Winter was setting in all along the front. Fighting was reported in blizzards and stormy winter conditions. By January 31 the Russian operations at Stalingrad were crowned with complete success. A total of 330,000 Germans had been overwhelmed, with all their equipment and stores. This overwhelming defeat of the Germans was largely due to Hitler's refusal to permit the threatened German divisions to withdraw. He had some ill-conceived scheme to relieve them. Long communications and bad weather made it impossible to organise a sufficiently powerful relief force. By February, ruined Stalingrad was silent. The noise of battle had ebbed away to the west, taking with it a demoralised German Army.

The victory of Stalingrad shattered the legend of German invincibility. The main German armies had been convincingly defeated on the main battle-front. Indeed, the fighting in the western streets of Stalingrad will serve as a memorial to the highwater mark of German penetration into Russia. It is probable that of all the critical battles of Great War II., the Battle of Stalingrad was the most decisive. Coupled with El Alamein, the result was catastrophic to Hitler. Germany was denied badly needed Caucasian oil. Hitler could no longer plan grandiose marches to India. What was even more important, the two wars—Europe and Pacific—had not been allowed to merge. Stalingrad was as great a blow to Japanese grand strategy as it was to Germany. It was a sign to Tojo that, henceforth, Japan must fight her war without hope of German help. A huge door had slammed shut.

Slowly, the magnitude of the defeat dawned upon the people of Germany. Hitler had played all his aces. In 1942 he had lost the two most important—the African ace of diamonds and the Russian ace of clubs. The mighty German army, which had trampled tyrannically over the peoples of Europe ceased to be irresistible. Henceforward, the German army was on the defensive. The major turning point of the war had arrived. The close of the campaigning season of 1942 in Russia saw the Germans back almost to the position from which they started in July.

FORTRESS EUROPE ATTACKED

While the German armies in Russia were reeling back from Stalingrad, the Allies were already furthering their plans to attack Hitler's fortress of Europe.

At dawn, on July 10, a huge Allied armada began disembarking British, Canadian and American forces at selected beaches in Sicily. Already the Italian outpost island of Pantellaria, in the Sicillian Narrows, had been occupied by Allied troops. The tiny island of Lampedusa, south-west of redoubtable Malta, had also been captured. By July 12, the important Sicilian port of Syracuse had fallen into Allied hands. By July 18, one-third of Sicily was in Allied hands. Italians, with no heart for the fight, had offered themselves readily as prisoners. The main resistance came from German troops blocking the way between Syracuse and Messina. In fact, the Germans were destined to play an increasingly isolated role in their defence of Italian soil. This regard for the soil of Italy was less and less extended to the Italians as time went on.

HIS MAJESTY INSPECTS A TIGER.

NOT 1914.
British soldiers in France in 1939 prepare for Hitler's Panzers.

MIRACLE OF DUNKIRK.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN.
Roof Spotters.

COMBINED OPERATIONS.
Wounded from Dieppe Raid. August 19th, 1942.

HITLER'S NORWAY.
What Happened at Vaagso. British Raid, December 27th, 1941.

GERMAN HIGH TIDE.
Stalingrad, 1942.

THE BIG THREE.
Winston celebrates his 69th birthday at Teheran, November 30th, 1943.

THEY RESCUED A KING.
New Zealand soldiers under command of 2/Lt. W. H. Ryan receive the thanks of the King of Greece in Egypt.

THE "NEW WORLD" COMES TO AFRICA.
American tanks at El Guettar during the battle of Bir Marbott Pass.

AFTER EL ALAMEIN.
The road to Tunis. November, 1942.

MEDITERRANEAN TUG-OF-WAR.
H.M.S. *Nelson* gives Italian navy a nasty fright.

"REMEMBER PEARL HARBOUR"—DECEMBER 7th, 1941.
Salvage of U.S.S. *Oklahoma.*

CONVOY TO RUSSIA.
52 degrees below.

DESOLATION IN ITALY.
Ruins of Ronta.

D-DAY.
American Troops Landing in Normandy. June, 1944.

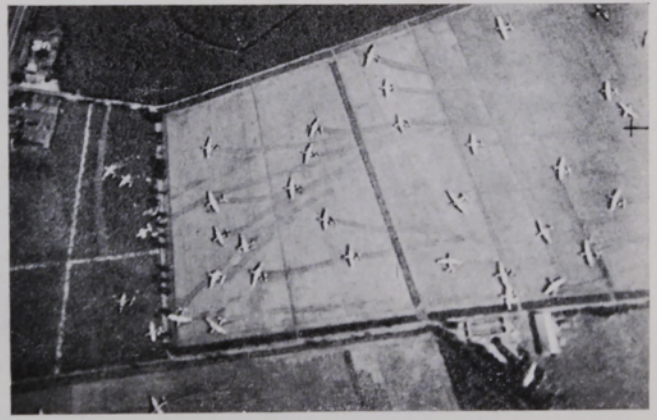
F.F.I.
French Forces of the Interior in Brittany.

"BIGGER THAN DOVER."
Mobile Harbour at Normandy Beach-head. June, 1944.

"OH LA-LA."
Parisian citizens dodge German sniper prior to arrival of De Gaulle at Notre Dame. September, 1944.

"THE WASP."
British Flame Thrower Tank in action.

THE DYKE BUSTER.
Sea dyke ruptured at Walcheren by R.A.F. Lancasters. October 3rd, 1944.



ARNHEM.
First Allied Airborne Army lands in Holland. September 17th, 1944.

ZERO HOUR.
Dutch civilians take cover while British soldiers battle for Dommel Canal, Holland. October, 1944.

While Allied forces were entering Palermo, capital of Sicily, on July 22, Mussolini was staging a stormy meeting of the Fascist Grand Council, at which he was virtually ordered to resign. Included in his attackers was Count Ciano, his own son-in-law, and many other fair-weather followers. In the late afternoon of July 4, 1943, the Fascist Grand Council met for the first time since December 8, 1939. After a heated session, which ended at 3 a.m. next day, Count Grandi carried, by nineteen votes to seven, an Order of the Day which demanded that the King of Italy take over the command of the forces and the supreme initiative of decision. Mussolini realised the game was up. That afternoon, he sought an audience with the King. His resignation was accepted, and Marshal Badoglio was appointed in Mussolini's place. Within a few days, the Fascist Party had been swept away. By Mussolini's birthday, on July 29, Hitler was the only person to congratulate him on attaining his sixtieth year.

Only Mussolini knows to the full the bitterness of his own disgrace. Democracies had beaten him in battle, despite his scornful jeerings in peace time. The very creatures he had raised to high position had deposed him. Moreover, he was forced to adopt the role of spectator as the whole Fascist facade was torn to pieces. His fall was even more "totalitarian" than had been his politics.

Mussolini was transferred to several places of confinement under protective arrest. Eventually, a gang of Hitler's paratroopers abducted him from the Gran Sasso in true film-thriller style. The Carabinieri guarding him had orders to shoot him if a rescue were attempted. They did not shoot. It would seem that destiny was determined that this braggart should survive to taste to the full the dregs at the bottom of his cup. In fact, it was almost divine retribution that this man should fall by the war into which he had wantonly plunged his countrymen, against the advice of military and political experts. His armies had been squarely beaten in the field, first by the Greeks in Albania, then in Abyssinia and Italian Somaliland. Finally his African legions had been driven into "Mare Nostrum" at Tunisia, thereby making the Mediterranean peculiarly their own sea.

During the interlude, when these political hurricanes were blowing the Fascist umbrella inside-out in Italy, the campaign in Sicily came to an end on August 17, 1943. A total of 135,000 prisoners had been taken in the operations. It was openly admitted that the Allies intended to extend the campaign to Italy. By August 20, the Italian army was in a state of disintegration. In contrast, German forces were pouring into northern Italy. Hitler made it clear he intended to defend Germany at Italy's expense.

On September 3, the Eighth Army crossed the Straits of Messina and landed on the Italian mainland, preceded by a barrage of 150,000 shells. It was a fitting moment for this, the first footing in Europe proper, for it marked the fifth anniversary of Britain's entry into Great War II. Italians surrendered freely in the toe of Italy and the Eighth Army quickly consolidated and advanced inland. This token resistance was explained on September 8, when it was announced that Italy had capitulated on September 3.

Cessation of hostilities on the part of the Italians had given the Allies immense strategical potential gains. The Mediterranean was now open as a transport route for Allied vessels, unmolested by the Axis. Moreover, Italian airfields were potential bomber bases for operations against Germany, especially areas of southern and eastern Germany not easily reached from Britain.

A moment appeared to have come in the war which demanded swift action by the Allies, even if some risks were involved. It was known that

German troops were pouring into northern Italy. Nevertheless, Italian sabotage was rampant in that area. Opportunity appeared to be at hand for a terrific air pounding of all the German inlets to Italy. Furthermore, the way apparently was clear for a complete recasting of Allied plans, envisaging possible landings in the Rome area. Possibly, at this stage, an Anzio beach-head would have had far-reaching results. Until the full facts are revealed, criticism is based only on conjecture. There was a strong feeling at the time that opportunities swiftly to rid the whole of Italy of the Germans were lost between August and September, 1943.

It may have been that Allied plans were so inflexible that it was impossible to advance or alter the schedule arranged for Allied landings on the beaches of Salerno on September 9. These belated landings at once got into difficulties. Salerno was the only possible area in which landings could then have been effected. By September 9, the Germans were installed inland, waiting. Had the time been advanced a week, or a fortnight, it would have been possible to land direct in the port of Naples, or possibly Rome. No Germans were reported at that time in strength sufficient to have denied those areas to Allied forces. Until clear-cut reasons are forthcoming, there will continue to persist a feeling that the full harvest of Italian change of heart was not reaped. What subsequently was destined to take years might have been attained in as many months.

One significant highlight of this phase was the surrender of the bulk of the Italian Fleet in accordance with the terms of the armistice. Five battleships and seven cruisers surrendered to the British Navy at Malta on September 11. Counting Italian naval units surrendering at other ports, the total reached over 100 naval craft. Moreover, the Italian garrison in Sardinia cleared the Germans out of that island by September 19. French troops completed the liberation of Corsica by October 5. On October 13 the Italian Government formally declared war on Germany. Italy was accepted as a co-belligerent by the Allies.

When Allied forces, including the Fifth Army, landed at Salerno on September 9, not only had the Germans occupied the whole of Italy from Naples northward, but German troops had taken up positions at Salerno beach itself. In fact, Hitler openly declared that he intended to make Italy a major battle-field. From the beginning, these landings proved "sticky" for the Allies. The Germans brought down terrific fire on the beaches from artillery installed in high ground inland. The Eighth Army instituted a dash from the toe of Italy to assist at Salerno. Every available aircraft was concentrated over the Salerno landing beaches. The massed fire-power of the Air Force contrived to check the Germans who, at one time, nearly drove the allies back into their landing craft. By September 18 the Eighth Army, which had met with no resistance, made contact with the Fifth Army at Salerno, and the crisis passed.

There followed, in Italy, a slow advance of the Allied armies right up the leg of Italy. By October 1, the Fifth Army had occupied Naples after stubborn rearguard actions by the Germans. Meanwhile the Eighth Army was fighting its way up the Adriatic coast, where the Foggia area was cleared. This area was important because it provided the only really satisfactory locality for large aerodromes. It had been adapted to that end by the Italians. The Allies swiftly used Foggia for the same purpose and proceeded to launch increasingly heavy air attacks against southern Germany, Austria, Hungary, and the Balkans.

As the Allied armies approached Rome they were literally "inching" their way north in the face of extreme geographic difficulties and stubborn

German resistance. Every river was contested. Bloody fighting occurred at the Volturno River, the Sangro River, the Rapido, and a hundred minor rivers which flow down from the central Appenines, a mountain mass running down the backbone of Italy. Inland, the country became increasingly mountainous, crossed by passes up to four or five thousand feet above sea-level. A narrow coastal fringe was hemmed in, some few miles inland, by rugged mountains broken up into impassable gorges and ravines ideal for defence. The Germans made the most of this ideal withdrawal country. Every hill-top became a redoubt, every crag held its machine-gun. Moreover, cunningly concealed in the mountain sides, strong pill-box defensive systems sprang up as the Allies advanced north. Until, some 100 miles south of Rome, the Allies were halted by one of the strongest natural defensive lines in the history of war. The Germans turned every natural tactical feature to their advantage. When the winter snows arrived in 1943, the Allies were battling against German defensive positions stretching from Minturno in the west, northward, along the Rapido River, thence along the Sangro River to Ortona on the Adriatic. The Germans had had time to prepare their so-called Gustav Line in this area, which was buttressed on Cassino, bordering the Tyrrhenian Sea, and on Ortona on the Adriatic.

As 1943 drew to a close, it became clear that a major operation would be necessary in Italy to lever the Germans from their positions. Rome lay 130 miles away, a glittering prize for the Allies from the psychological aspect, and an important communication centre from the military point of view. The Italians had previously declared Rome an open city. The Germans, however, had used it as a strategical communication centre. In fact, they could not do otherwise and continue to fight south of Rome. All roads lead to Rome. From time to time the Allies were painfully forced to bomb strategic railway centres in Rome, but the precincts of the Vatican were spared.

Allied armies in Italy spent an uncomfortable winter, 1943-1944, in improvised lines facing the Germans. Nevertheless, inch by inch, the Fifth Army and the Eighth Army on the Adriatic, continued to edge their way forward all through the winter. Toward the end of January, 1944, the Fifth Army was closing in on Cassino, a mountain buttress, which the Germans had converted into a strongpoint. They had even incorporated the monastery on a spur overlooking Cassino into one of the strongest defensive bastions of the campaign.

New life seemed to be given the Italian situation when, on January 22, 1944, part of the Fifth Army made a surprise landing at Nettuno, under thirty miles from Rome. Thus, the famous Anzio Beachhead was successfully established. The situation looked bright because the Germans had been taken by surprise. In fact, for a fortnight, the German commander, Field-Marshal Kesselring, did not mount a counter-attack. The Beachhead was enlarged to a radius of fifteen to twenty miles, but progress then came to a standstill. It was officially admitted that our target had not been achieved. It was, however, never officially stated what was our target. It is probable that the object of the landing was to occupy the Alban Hills, cut the German communications between Rome and Cassino, force Kesselring to withdraw troops from Cassino to cope with the Anzio beach-head, thereby giving the Fifth Army opportunity to punch a hole through the main German lines. The result would have been a first-class victory of the highest strategical order.

For three months there was no material change in the general situation around Cassino and the Anzio beach-head. There was, however, a material

change in the general situation viewed from the point of grand strategy. The Anzio threat succeeded in drawing down into central Italy no less than nine or ten fresh German divisions. It was during this period that the Germans were desperately trying to defend the Crimea, into which the Russians were advancing. From the point of view of grand strategy, Anzio relieved the Russians of the weight of ten German divisions.

General Alexander, commanding in Italy, made at least one abortive effort to resolve the Cassino impasse. A combination of over-bombing from the air and resolute German defence made the effort a failure. The New Zealand Division found the town impassable to tanks, owing to rubble. Moreover, a delay between the fall of the last bomb and the advance gave the Germans time to recover. It was thus not until May 11, 1944, that the final offensive was launched south of Rome from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian Sea. Attack was preceded by a tremendous barrage. There was powerful naval and air co-operation. General Leese, who had taken over command of the Eighth Army from General Montgomery, anticipated bitter fighting. What actually occurred was one of the most consummate instances of strategy of the whole war.

When the main attack began the Allied troops in the Beach-head pinned down Germans opposite them by feints and barrages. Despite the fact that the main attack at Cassino preceded the attack at Anzio by twelve days, Kesselring never dared divert troops from Anzio to Cassino. His force was, therefore, kept neatly split. His reserves were unable to be employed against each attack in turn because the offensive at Anzio was so timed as to begin when conditions were strategically most favourable. By that time, May 23, the gap between the Beach-head and the main army had been reduced from sixty miles to twenty miles.

By May 25 the Anzio troops had linked up with troops advancing along the coast from Anzio. The line, however, was shaped like a letter "L," with the Cassino front astride the Adolf Hitler Line. The Germans found themselves in a strategically unsound position, with communications running through Rome, and a new front running parallel to these communications in the south. Whereas they had to hold this entire parallel front in strength, the Allies could concentrate to attack it wherever they decided was best. Once this parallel front was cut, the whole German main front withered away. The German flank was cut in two places—Valmonte and the Alban Hills. Kesselring's whole army had then to retreat precipitately through precarious mountain routes east of Rome. On the way, his army became disorganised, disintegrated, and, in fact, never recovered until it got behind the Pisa-Rimini Line, 150 miles away. In the plaudits and surprises of this spectacular Allied advance beyond Rome, too little was heard of the man behind this strategy—General Sir Harold Alexander.

The Fifth Army entered Rome on June 4, 1944. Thence onward, Allied operations in Italy took second place to events which had been taking shape on other battle-fronts. In fact, it is a debatable point in strategy whether it would have been sound policy to eject the twenty German divisions from Italy swiftly, or keep them engaged, thereby denying German armies elsewhere vital reinforcements. In view of the fact that Allied manpower problems were less acute than those in Germany, it is probable that a speedy ending to the Italian campaign would have served no useful purpose in Allied grand strategy, unless, of course, the German divisions were utterly destroyed, which was unlikely. Fighting persisted in Northern Italy all through 1944. It provided a background for spectacular events occurring in Russia and France.

STALINGRAD AND AFTER

The destruction of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad introduced a hurried German retreat from the Caucasus. Badly stricken in morale and with armies below strength due to losses, the Germans had received a setback from which they were never able to recover. The Red Army had rallied on the very edge of a precipice. It had been a narrow escape from disaster. In spite of the staggering blow which Hitler's Russian adventure had received, the fact still remained that a fully equipped Panzer division was still ahead of anything that the Russian Army was then able to put into the field. Russian forces had to make up for these deficiencies, which were rapidly being overtaken, by lavish use of infantry. Some 500 miles north of Stalingrad, Russian armies took the offensive in the area between Orel and Moscow. This German salient had to be eliminated by costly infantry frontal attacks. The Russians had the men to lose. The Germans suffered severely in proportion to their waning strength. Russian efforts at Kharkov to batter through the German defences with armour proved unsuccessful. It became clear, during the German withdrawal subsequent to Stalingrad, that, until the Russians could produce armoured divisions comparable in wealth of technical equipment and experience with the Panzer divisions, new strategy would have to be employed. Stalin very wisely instituted a strategy of rapidly alternating thrusts at widely separated sectors along a battle-front nearly 1,600 miles long. Each thrust was exploited as far and as long as it produced results. As soon as German armoured reserves appeared on the scene the attack was switched elsewhere. It was a thoroughly sound policy. The Russians had sufficient troops to pursue this plan, despite bad lateral communications. Furthermore, the open character of the fighting gave the Russians every opportunity to exploit infiltration tactics and to maintain freedom of manoeuvre. Hitler was treated to the spectacle of watching German reserves rushing all over Russia to plug one hole after another. These lightning hammer blows pushed the Russian front back westward, sector by sector, much as a craftsman beats out a piece of silver. The strain on the Germans became observed by sudden collapse, now at one place, now at another place many hundreds of miles away. Instances of this sinister German disintegration became noticeable at Melitopol, which fell on October 23, 1943, at Smolensk, which fell on September 25, 1943, and on the River Dneister in the early part of 1944. These somewhat dramatic Russian successes produced, in some cases, unfortunate psychological reactions. Just when things seemed to be going furiously, the Russian attacks appeared, for no reason at all, to subside and a period of stalemate ensued.

While the people of Germany were introduced to a day of mourning on February 3, 1943, for Hitler's pathetic failure in front of Stalingrad, Russian armies were driving forward on Rostov. One by one, German "hedgehogs," along Hitler's highwater mark in Russia, fell to the Russian generals. On February 14, Rostov fell. Two days later, Kharkov fell. This German "hedgehog" occupied an important position in the northern Ukraine. It was a great victory for the Russians. Russian armies were now converging on the third major German base at Orel, with operations starting against Rzhev and Vyasma, 300 miles farther north. Rzhev fell on March 3, producing yet another major German reverse. By now, the Russians had re-captured more territory than the Germans had overwhelmed in their summer campaign. It was apparent that the Germans were under-

taking no mere line-straightening operation. Increasing Russian pressure at widely separated parts of the front continued to thrust the Germans back in a non-stop withdrawal, which was only interrupted by the unusually early melting of the snows in March. Vyasma fell on March 12. In the middle of that month, the Germans staged a series of powerful counter-attacks in the Kharkov area. They succeeded in capturing that city on March 15.

During the spring thaws, the Russian and German armies paused to gather strength. Both sides advertised the fact that they proposed to institute gigantic attacks as soon as summer weather made the roads passable.

It was not until the middle of July, 1943, that the Russians launched a series of attacks in the Orel area, thus starting the Germans on a summer retreat. This was a new event in the war in Russia. Up to now the Germans had advanced in the summer and withdrawn in the winter. Other Russian attack were preparing in the vicinity of Leningrad, the Don Basin, and the area around Novorossisk, east of the Crimea Peninsula. Leningrad had remained a besieged town ever since the original German tide had washed its defenders into the city. The line ran east of Leningrad to Lake Ladoga. Immediately north of Leningrad the Finnish line barred the way. Supplies for Leningrad had to come across Lake Ladoga. In the winter the lake was frozen. The Russians laid railway tracks and were able to build up supplies, which dwindled through the summer. The populace of Leningrad faced hard times. They knew the meaning of starvation. In the winter they knew what it was to live with no artificial heat. Moreover, the town was open to easy bombardment, as well as direct attack. History records no conditions worse in any siege of a city the size of Leningrad. The siege of Paris was comparative luxury. The German grip was partly broken on January 19, 1943, after a siege of 500 days. The city was finally liberated on January 19, 1944, when the Russians broke through south of the city.

Orel fell to the Russians on August 4, 1943. Kharkov was retaken for the second time on August 23, after a week of grim fighting. After a period of comparative quiet on the southern Russian fronts, an attack was launched on Taganrog, which was captured on August 30. By September 8, the whole of the Donetz Basin was in Russian hands. There followed a steady German withdrawal toward Kiev. The Russians were encouraged by the fact that they were fighting in territory captured by the Germans in 1941. By September 25 the Germans had lost Smolensk. By the beginning of October a full-scale offensive had reared up in the Kuban area, along the Dnieper River. This offensive reached a climax when, on October 18, the Russians broke through the Dnieper defences and poured into the western Ukraine. On October 25 the Russians were once again in possession of Dnepropetrovsk. The Germans retired in disorderly retreat. By November 6 Kiev had fallen. The Crimea was now threatened. The German "hedgehog" array, the length and breadth of Russia, had been shattered.

By April, 1944, the Russians were sweeping through the Crimea. Sebastapol fell to them on May 9, after one month's fighting in the Crimea, compared with ten months required by the Germans to take this peninsula.

By now the Russians were entering other people's lands. Early in April the Red Army had forced an entry into Rumania on a wide front. Advanced Russian forces, under General Vatutin, who died shortly afterwards, had crossed the Polish frontier on January 4. Despite huge losses of men, which totalled nearly 4,500,000, the Russian armies had been growing stronger and stronger. The Air Force had been greatly increased in power, new tanks were coming off the production lines, and the very latest type of

anti-tank equipment made Panzer attacks easier to defeat. In fact, a noticeable change had now taken place. Russian strategy of widely separated thrusts continued to gain ground. German attacks, when instituted, gained little ground. It had become clear that Russian equipment had improved. The experience gained by the troops themselves enabled them to resist German attacks which, at the start of the war, went through the Russian lines like a knife through cheese. Nevertheless, German defensive methods were still sufficiently powerful to halt the Russian advances after a certain period. The German eighty-eight-millimetre gun, and other anti-tank equipment, was very powerful.

By the time that the Allies were strong enough to risk landings in force in France, the Russian line had become more or less stabilised along the Dneister from Akkerman in the south, on the Black Sea, into Poland, near Lvov, along the Vistula to Warsaw, which was in German hands. The line then roughly followed the River Narew to Bialystock—Grodno—Wilno—Dvinsk, and along the River Dvina to a point near Riga. A series of thrusts first cut off German armies north of Riga in Latvia and Estonia. Other thrusts subdivided these German armies until, by November, 1944, the Russians were fighting nearly forty miles within the eastern borders of East Prussia, near Insterburg. The Russian line, moreover, had by then moved forward so that the whole of the Lithuanian coast was in Russian hands up to the German border town of Tilsit, on the Niemen. In the south a series of masterly jabs had ousted Rumania and Bulgaria from the war. Russian armies were fighting in Hungary, some 100 miles from Budapest itself. The entire German Balkan buttress had therefore been shattered. Greece had been cut off, and the Germans were evacuating that country. One by one, the islands south and east of Greece were being occupied by the Allies. In the east, Germany was encircled from the Balkans, north, through central Poland, to the sea. In the west dramatic events were already in operation to encircle the German borders from Switzerland to Holland. A phase of the war had started in which the Allies were closing for the kill. Nevertheless, the Germans were fighting with a stubborness and disregard of life strangely in contrast to the sudden fold-up of 1918. Hitler was defending himself to the last German.

BOMBING CRESCENDO

The theme song behind events in Russia, in the Middle East, and wherever there was fighting in Europe was provided first by the Royal Air Force Bomber Command, then by a combination of British and American bomber pilots. Britain entered Great War II. with so inadequate an air force it was only now and then that two or three machines could be spared to drop a pound or two of bombs on German targets. The damage that was done proved so negligible it could be repaired by normal maintenance workers on the staff of the parish councils. It was left for the Germans themselves to show what real bombing meant. The people of Britain noted the effects. They heartily disliked being woken up in the night to go and sit in draughty dug-outs in the back garden. The entire nation made a subconscious memo to return the German bombardment of British towns with a bombardment of German cities by British bombers. Goebbels, of course, had reassured the people of Germany that not one British bomb was to desecrate the sacred

hearths of the townsfolk of German cities. Goebbels was talking through his hat.

By the spring of 1941, Britain had recovered sufficiently from Mr. Chamberlain's assurances, prior to the war, which stated: "This Government will see to it that in air strength and air power this country shall no longer be in a position inferior to any country within striking distance of our shores." Two years of chastisement by the Luftwaffe had made the people of Britain realise, in the only practical way, what had never got beyond words prior to the war. By March, 1941, the British had already created something which even then was making Hitler sit up and take notice. In contrast to the empty words of pre-war days, little was said. The answer was given by the rain of bombs which began to fall here, there, and everywhere upon the sacred Reich.

The stepping-up of the bombing crescendo reached a stage on March 14, 1941, where the Royal Air Force was able to institute really destructive raids on Hamburg. German communiques thenceforward were compelled to admit that damage had occurred. For the most part, industrial targets were selected in the Ruhr area. This area contained the heavy industries upon which other industries in Germany were dependent for basic material and certain fundamental machinery.

It is probable that the stepped-up bombing at this stage of the war did little to deny to the German war machine any vital equipment. The effect was, however, observable in indirect ways. From the start of the war to perhaps the middle of 1943 the German industrial lay-out had been more or less standard. A plant to produce a certain munition was laid out in a number of buildings all in the same factory area. In order to minimise air attack the buildings were scattered. The mounting attacks on the Ruhr proved that this method afforded insufficient protection. A fundamental change in policy had to be instituted. The various components required to make the whole were made in the same district, but in factories several miles apart; in some cases, even fifty or 100 miles apart. This change forced on the German war-machine certain deep-rooted difficulties. The most significant effect was caused by the additional load thrown on short-distance transport. Local railways and road transport systems had to be organised to collect the components. There was, thus, placed on local transport a burden which upset the whole transport machine. It came, moreover, at a time when trucks and transport equipment were in short supply and were badly required behind the Russian front.

By May, 1942, the Germans had been forced to shift their main air strength to the Russian front. Moreover, the Royal Air Force, which for three long years had shouldered the air burden alone, was able to look forward to a time in the near future when their American cousins could relieve them of some of the weight. It was thus possible to endure losses in proportion to the importance of the target. On May 31 the Royal Air Force was able to place 1,130 bombers over Cologne in a single night operation. A total of 3,000 tons of bombs was dropped. All told, forty-four machines were lost on that night, including those lost by 250 machines which bombed other targets. The little single-figure raids of the early days now took on their true perspective. On June 2 the dose was repeated. A total of 1,036 bombers attacked the Ruhr, concentrating on Essen. A total of thirty-five machines was lost. The Ruhr suffered damage on a scale which had never been inflicted on any area of Britain in one night. Civilian casualties amounted to 74,000, including 20,000 killed.

Early in June, American pilots arrived at airfields in Britain. These

pilots were destined to take up a role by day which the Royal Air Force had already adopted by night. Hitler was compelled to watch his Reich attacked from the air by day and by night all round the clock. He soon saw the writing on the wall. The German factories began to concentrate on fighters at the expense of bombers. Gradually, the sound of enemy bombers over Britain became less and less frequent, until virtually it was reduced to hit-and-run raids in coastal areas.

The blitz on the Ruhr culminated in the destruction of the Mohne Dam in the Ruhr on May 17, 1943. Hundreds of millions of tons of water were released. Vital war munition-producing areas were inundated and the loss of electrical power affected an even greater area.

The air blitz on the Ruhr was in the nature of a curtain-raiser. Having damaged the basic industries upon which the German war-machine was erected, the Allies proceeded to knock out the German war-machine in detail. Incidental to that task was the demoralisation of the populace and disorganisation of communications. The combination proved an embarrassment to the German armies in their operational role.

The German industrial machine had been located in or near large centres of population. Air attack was, therefore, mainly directed against enemy towns and their vicinity. There were over sixty German towns with populations over 100,000. Centred on these localities was a high proportion of industries. Smaller towns became targets owing to their geographical situation. Thus, Emden, Cuxhaven, Innsbruck, Wilhelmshaven and Schweinfurt assumed an importance out of all proportion to their population. Altogether, there were about twenty or thirty of these smaller key centres. There was, therefore, a main kernel of some eighty or ninety German towns. All of these received attention. Indeed, some German towns received concentrated and persistent attention. By the end of 1943 at least six important towns had been virtually "eliminated" so far as their use to the German industrial machine was concerned.

By the end of July, 1943, Hamburg was contributing very little to the German war effort. Thenceforward it received attention at intervals to destroy what had then been reconstructed. Out of a total of 8,000 acres in the built-up area of Hamburg, some 2,600 acres had been destroyed. A further eight heavy attacks at intervals was sufficient to keep Hamburg out of the war. A total of 15,000 tons of bombs was required to eliminate Hamburg. In the same way, the city of Hanover stopped 7,000 tons of bombs and ceased to take any further part in war production by the end of 1943. Mannheim was similarly treated. Munich received a dosage which also converted it from a war asset into a liability. Cologne had been persistently bombed from the start of bombing operations over the Ruhr. By August, 1943, both Cologne and Dusseldorf had received sufficient bombs, some 8,000 tons or so, to contribute little to Hitler's new order in Europe, except a vast chaos. Essen and Frankfurt both received well over 8,000 tons of high explosive from the air by the beginning of 1944. In fact, Frankfurt "enjoyed" its fortieth severe raid toward the end of 1943.

There were, in addition, many other towns, such as Kassel, which by the end of 1943 were in a very groggy condition. It was reported, in November, 1943, that out of 315 acres in the built-up area of Kassel 300 had been destroyed. By July, 1943, Wilhelmshaven was reported to have been virtually eliminated as a naval base. It continued to receive occasional air raids to keep it under. The U-boat base had to be moved to the mouth of the River Weser.

Berlin, the capital of the Reich, received attention, both from the Royal

Air Force and from daylight raids carried out by huge fleets of American aeroplanes. This city had a peace-time population of 4,000,000. It was shown that Hamburg with a population of 1,000,000 had required 15,000 tons of bombs to eliminate it. On this basis, it would require 60,000 tons to eliminate Berlin. From October, 1943, to January, 1944, Berlin received 30,000 tons of bombs. Hitler was forced to move the seat of Government to Breslau. Berlin continued to be raided, either by heavy bombers or by fast Mosquitoes, several times every month right up to the end of the war. By January, 1945, Berlin's bomb load had reached 100,000 tons.

Apart from the damage done to the German war machine by Allied raids, all manner of administrative complications arose at a time when Hitler and his creatures wished to concentrate on their defeats in Africa, Russia and, subsequently, France. Places, such as Berlin and Hamburg, were destined to have a roofless population of up to 250,000 citizens for whom there appeared no solution. There was also created a problem in transportation, which became so severe, late in 1944, the Germans were quite unable to cope with both it and the movement of the Rhine city populations to places of safety from Allied land attack as well as air attack. It became impossible to find havens for the huge numbers of people rendered homeless. They drifted to and fro, constituting a psychological danger to the whole structure of the Nazi Reich. The safety valve, in fact, required so many sitting on it there were few Nazis left to do anything else.

In addition to these main raids there were many sideshows. Probably the most important sideshow, if, indeed, it can be called a sideshow in view of what is now known, took place against Peenemunde, on the Baltic, on August 17, 1943. By the beginning of 1943 Allied air bombing had opened serious wounds in the German war machine. In view of the German decision to concentrate on fighter aeroplanes there were no modern bombers to use against Britain. Hitler decided to make good the deficiency by mass-producing automatic-controlled flying bombs. The main development was secretly set up at the Luftwaffe research station at Peenemunde in a forest sixty miles north-east of Stettin and 700 miles from Allied aerodromes in Britain. A staff of several thousand experts were set working around the clock to produce flying bombs within six months. It was hoped to incite the Allies into premature invasion of the Channel area where these contrivances were to be installed.

Air Chief Marshal Harris, of Bomber Command, decided to conduct a surprise raid against this danger centre. By the light of the full moon of August 17 a fleet of 600 heavy night-bombers from Royal Air Force aerodromes roared across the North Sea. The target was cleverly marked out by Pathfinders. They were followed by wave after wave of heavy bombers who unloaded block-busters from a few thousand feet on key areas. In three-quarters of an hour the whole locality was a continuous lake of fire. Reconnaissance photos. proved that forty-five huts where the experts lived had been wiped out. In addition, forty buildings, including assembly blocks, had been destroyed and fifty other buildings damaged. Moreover, the block-busters had touched off German explosives stored underground. Out of the 7,000 scientists stationed at Peenemunde, 5,000 were killed. The head scientist, von Chamier-Glisezenski died during the raid. The Luftwaffe chief of staff, General Jeschonnek, died as a result of wounds, and General Ernst Udet, head of the technical directorate of the German Air Ministry, was reported killed shortly afterwards.

This raid was destined to produce long-term results. The loss of forty-one British aeroplanes was a small price to pay. The flying bomb was

delayed for a whole year. The Germans had to recast their whole plans, find new experts, and instal them on another site, this time on an island in the Baltic. If Peenemunde had not been bombed, the Germans had planned a grandiose bombardment of the British South Coast, including London, in the spring of 1944. This was to be followed by a German invasion calculated to make an Allied invasion of France out of the question. At the worst, Allied invasion plans would have been so upset, invasion might have had to be postponed indefinitely.

There have been all manner of arguments for and against Allied bombing of German industries and towns. It is probable that public morale was not as badly shaken as upholders of bombing expected. In fact, British citizens proved this themselves when the Luftwaffe was bombing their own cities. It is, therefore, doubtful if air raids alone could hope to win a war. Nevertheless, they undoubtedly played their part. Germany was never allowed to get on her feet after the huge losses in Russia. Damaged factories contributed partly to this. Loss of sleep and productive hours by workers formed a contributing factor. The disorganisation became so great the way was paved for a series of final blows by Allied armies encircling the frontiers of the Reich.

"D" DAY AND AFTER

One of Hitler's Normandy divisions held its manoeuvres near Isigny, in the Bay of the Seine, at the beginning of June, 1944. That is, the division held its manoeuvres until dawn, June 6. Hastily its commander switched into top gear. German signallers scoffing Normandy butter and beef in dug-outs twenty feet underground hastily phoned the back areas: "It is real war now." Seven divisions in Normandy started to manoeuvre, but this time in real earnest.

The long-expected Anglo-American invasion of the "Fortress of Europe" began at dawn, June 6, 1944, along the stretch of beaches in the Bay of the Seine, between Le Havre and the Cherbourg peninsula. When daylight came the Bay of the Seine was alive with Allied ships, landing craft, naval craft, aeroplanes, and huge rafts holding lorries and tanks, and even bigger things. Landing from surface craft had been preceded by parachute landings inland on a huge scale on the night of June 5-6. Some four thousand major craft and tens of thousands of smaller craft made it clear to the Germans on shore that this, any how, was no practice manoeuvre on the part of the British and the Americans. As the troops waded ashore they pushed ahead to attack pre-arranged strongpoints, led by tanks.

The actual landings were the culmination of a long-term policy of air attack which in fact continued right through D Day onwards for weeks. It was essential to knock out the German coastal defences in the vicinity of the landings. These defences contained guns capable of sinking a battleship, and quick-firing secondary armament capable of wiping out an armada of even 4,000 vessels. At the last moment, Allied bombers flew low over the pin-pointed batteries, and sent down thousands of tons of the biggest bombs. Guns protected by thirty feet of concrete were torn from their mountings, other guns were put out of action sufficiently to make them unusable. Enemy machine-gun posts were liberally treated. Conclusive proof that the Allied bombing had done its job was obtained a few minutes after the last

bomb fell. The Allied concourse of shipping, stealing across the Channel with dowsed lights, arrived at their allotted stations off the beaches and stayed there all day and every day subsequently. The Allied Navy sterilised any enemy areas which showed signs of recovering from their antiseptic bombing from the air.

Evidence of the efficacy of the naval bombardment is best given by the Germans themselves. This is what some of their expert writers said: "The fire curtain provided by the guns of the Navy proved to be one of the best trump cards of the Anglo-U.S. invasion armies." Another expert German commentator said: "Repeatedly strong formations of warships and cruisers were used against single coast batteries, thus bringing a quite extraordinary superior fire-power to bear on them. It is no exaggeration to say that the co-operation of the heavy naval guns played a decisive part in enabling the Allies to establish a bridgehead in Normandy."

Indeed, the Navy continued to play a significant role bombarding enemy resistance areas, even when the fighting had receded nearly twenty miles inland. In addition to this dramatic aspect of the work of the Navy, it fulfilled more than adequately its major role of protecting the sea lane across the Channel.

The Germans did their best to upset the cross-Channel traffic. Hordes of fast E-boats weaved around the fringes, trying to find an opening, especially by night. The Navy sank them. The Air Force bombed their dens. Scurries of automatic robot-boats with high-explosive in their bows were set loose. The Navy sank them, the Air Force sank them, the LST's sank them. Outside the pale, in the entrance to the English Channel, Admiral Doenitz lined up his U-boats for the fray. They were sent to the bottom by air units of Coastal Command. They were set upon by corvettes, destroyers, fast motor-launches. Not one of the tens of thousands of cross-Channel transports, of all sizes, was sunk by a U-boat. Goering's efforts to upset the stream of men and supplies from the air were futile. The air was so full of Allied aeroplanes there was no room for the few German machines which made an effort. They were shot out of the skies. There was no question at all who ruled the skies. At intervals, the Germans sent up small coveys, perhaps twenty machines, now and then. They were chased back to aerodromes in the process of being bombed by Allied machines. All the German aerodromes within 200 miles of Normandy were bombed and bombed again. Most of them became unusable.

When Hitler's commander in Normandy blew the whistle for help, none came. It took weeks to move a division distances normally involving hours The Allied Air Force bombed all the bridges over the Seine and Loire, and kept them bombed. Every railway line was treated to bombs at all key points. Moreover, the treatment was repeated as required. All main-road bridges were down, cuttings and tunnels were bombed until they were impassable. The Germans were treated to something which made their much-vaunted blitz in 1940 seem a child's game.

Since 1940, Hitler had built in France his much-talked-about Atlantic Wall. It was strong around Calais and in Belgium—concrete defences in depth contained guns, machine-guns, mined areas, and interlocking defended areas. It was very strong. As these defences went westward towards the Bay of Biscay they became thinner, until they ran out in the hills to the south of the Normandy beaches.

Hitler was determined to deny the Allies any invasion hopes in the Calais-Havre area. In fact, this area of coast was set aside for Hitler's flying bomb sites. These sites were the launching area for his V1 weapon,

the newly perfected flying bomb. This device was an automatic aeroplane which carried a ton of high-explosive in its nose. The machine was gyroscopically controlled. It was set to fly a certain determined distance. Then it dived to earth and detonated. The first of these robots arrived in the London area shortly after D Day. It was followed by flocks of others. A total of 17,000 houses a day were destroyed. The only complete cure was the occupation of the flying bomb sites.

At the time when the Allies landed on the beaches in Normandy, there were sixty German divisions, under the command of Marshal Rundstedt, from North Holland to the Pyrenees. Marshal Rommel was in command of the northern areas as far as, and including, Brittany. Rommel was given the bulk of these sixty divisions. In the Calais area, he put a division every ten miles. In the Seine area, to Cherbourg, there was one division every twenty miles. In Brittany the line was diluted to a division every forty miles. Facing the Bay of Biscay, the divisional fronts were longer. In the Normandy area there were, in fact, seven German divisions on D Day—the 711th between the Seine and the River Orne, the 716th and 352nd between the Orne and the Vire, the 709th and 77th on the east coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula, the 243rd and 91st in the vicinity of Cherbourg. Two Panzer divisions were in reserve behind the central area. The 12th S.S. Panzers, in addition, were south-east of the area in which the landings took place.

Against this German battle array the Allies launched, initially, slightly more than 100,000 men, landed on five beaches extending for sixty miles in the Bay of the Seine, from the River Orne, in the east, to the River Vire, in the west. The British 6th Airborne Division was given the task of attacking the German 352nd division. The main body of British and Canadian troops went ashore west of the River Orne, in command of General Dempsey, British Second Army. American troops, under General Bradley, First U.S. Army, landed east of the Vire, below the Cherbourg Peninsula. The 82nd and 101st U.S. Airborne Divisions landed on the Cherbourg Peninsula in an area held by the German 243rd and 91st divisions. There were, in addition, numerous isolated parachute landings well behind the enemy lines; with instructions to destroy certain key bridges and other communication focal points. These suicide squads carried out their tasks and made the best way they could back to Allied areas. Many were taken prisoner or killed.

The broad Allied plan was to gain a foothold in Normandy and then to occupy the whole of the area contained by the River Seine, in the east, and the River Loire, in the south. This would give the Allies, roughly, a rectangle with sides 200 miles long. It contained certain important bases on its west side from which German submarines had been operating for four years. It also contained excellent sites for aerodromes. Moreover, from a strategic point of view, whoever held this area held the key to Paris and the Channel ports. Allied armies would then overflow from the quadrangle to drive the Germans out of northern France. A second Allied landing was planned in the Riviera area. This landing would thrust like a piston up the Rhone Valley. The German defensive lines along the Seine would thus be threatened from the south.

Prior to D Day, the Allies had destroyed every bridge across the Seine between Paris and the sea. After D Day, bridges south of Paris were destroyed. This air attack did not give away Allied plans. There was no way the Germans could discover whether the destruction of the bridges was designed to obstruct communications from west to east, or vice versa. After D Day, Allied Air Forces concentrated on the destruction of bridges across the Loire. The Normandy area was thus isolated from the rest of

France and Europe. Allied air power was such that it was possible to keep the area isolated while issues were decided in Normandy destined to affect the whole of France.

Ultimately, more than a third of the total hostile forces in France were drawn into the battle of Normandy. These divisions, however, did not all arrive at once. It was nearly six weeks before some of them arrived. Over half of them were deployed on the sector occupied by the British Second Army. These German reinforcements included two parachute divisions, a Luftwaffe division, 17th S.S. Grenadier Division, 20th and 21st Lehr Panzer divisions, 2nd, 10th, 12th divisions, and two Panzer divisions, six infantry divisions.

The effect of the isolation of Normandy was such that none of these reinforcements could be welded into a powerful striking force with which to deliver a terrific counter-stroke. They were dissipated into the fighting to plug nasty holes punched by the Allies in the German defences. In fact, many of the reinforcements became merely replacements for the seven German divisions in the area at the start. Out of these seven, two were completely destroyed, five badly mauled, in the first six weeks of the fighting. The result was that Rommel was never able to mount a major counter-attack.

The effective way in which the Allied air forces had isolated the battle area enabled the Allies to survive the period of greatest danger at the early stages of the landings.

It is clear that the German High Command put too great a faith in their Atlantic Wall. It was, in fact, the quickest to fall to Allied pressure. The resolute mobile defence forced upon the Germans in the woods and narrow sunken lanes of Normandy proved a far harder nut to crack. In fact, geographical conditions and natural features were greatly in favour of defence. The River Orne, on the east, ran broad and wide to Caen which, thanks to a canal to the sea, was in the nature of a small port. East of the Orne, the land was flat and intersected by numerous dykes and irrigation ditches running beside the Dives River. This gave the Allied beach heads flank protection as the area was unsuited for tanks. Inland from Caen, the ground rose in a series of wooded undulations to ground over 1,000 feet above sea level in the vicinity of Falaise. This high ground formed a massive block, running westward some thirty miles inland, as far as Mortain, near Avranches in the west.

Normandy is largely an agricultural district, including numerous orchards. Lateral roads ran in a north-easterly direction from Avranches to Caen, with feeder communication at right angles, parallel to the axis of the Cherbourg Peninsula. This lay-out of roads forced upon the Allies a gradual shift of alignment, from the east-west line of the beaches, to the south-west - north-east line of the roads.

The Cherbourg Peninsula ran north for thirty miles from its base in the east, at Carentan. The western coasts of the peninsula bit deeper into the junction of Normandy and Brittany, ending at Avranches, a distance of sixty miles from Cherbourg, compared with thirty miles to Carentan. West of the peninsula lie the Channel Islands, some twenty-five miles out to sea, and in German possession throughout the fighting in France. The base of the Cherbourg Peninsula was low-lying, with extensive marshy areas between Lessay, on the west, and Carentan, in the east. Further north, the country becomes hilly until the immediate hinterland of Cherbourg itself is quite hilly. East and west of Cherbourg the land runs out to steep cliffs at the sea.

There were two main lines of advance which the Allied armies could use after the consolidation at the beaches. These lines ran east and west of the main central mountains. The western line of advance debouched into the Loire watershed, via Avranches. The eastern approach ran south-east from Caen into the flat watershed of the Seine, leading to Paris, only ninety miles away.

It was clear that the approach through Caen to the Seine and Paris offered the most dangerous threat to the Germans. It was, thus, in this eastern sector that the most stubborn fighting took place. In fact, the British and Canadian troops were unable to broach the German defences in the Caen area to a degree which might have been called a break-through in depth. The Germans flung their reinforcements into the Caen sector until, eventually, nearly all their armour was locked in grim battle with the British and Canadians. Efforts to break the impasse on the eastern sector failed, despite tremendous air bombing sorties, involving as many as 1,000 Allied bombers. It was found at Caen, as at Cassino, that air bombardment supplies the enemy with ready-made defences, while denying the attackers ready access to the bomb-riven streets of communication centres. For that reason, operations in the Caen area remained virtually in the first phase. battle for the beach head, until the final break-through elsewhere.

The Allied operations in Normandy fall, naturally, into three main phases—the battle for the beach heads, advance and consolidation of the beach hinterland, and the final break-through into central France. The Chiefs of Staff at Supreme Headquarters could congratulate themselves within a week of D Day that the battle for the beaches had enabled bridgeheads to be formed and linked up one with another. The men selected to take charge of this entirely new concept in amphibious warfare had been announced on December 24, 1943. They were General Eisenhower, Commander in Chief, General Bernard Montgomery, Field Commander; General Omar Bradley, Commander United States ground forces; Admiral Bertram Ramsay, commanding Allied Navies; Air Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, deputy-Commander in Chief to Eisenhower; Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh Mallory, Air Commander; Walter B. Smith, Chief of Staff.

The success of the landings was partly due to a curious psychological aspect. Constant reiteration by German propaganda that the task was impossible, put the Allies on their mettle. Moreover, the Allied commanders knew only too well that the past history of amphibious operations in other wars was not exactly favourable. The chequered history of amphibious warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had not been encouraging: St. Malo, 1758, two failures due to bad staff work; Ostend, 1798, premature surrender; the Helder, 1799, inexplicable retreat by an elderly general; Rolica, 1808, panicky general; Walcheren, 1809, over caution. The twentieth century had not been any more encouraging: Cape Hellas, 1915, orders too rigid; Suvla Bay, 1915, too much consolidation. One can well imagine that SHAEF was determined that the glaring mistakes of the past would not be repeated.

The main error of the past could be resolved into hasty and makeshift improvisation. Troops had been dumped ashore with inadequate instruction as to their task. One report regarding the amphibious operation at the Helder stated: "Many necessary articles had been left behind. Some of the men were almost naked; two whole brigades did not possess a great-coat between them." The institution of a separate Combined Operations Department, under Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes, in 1942, and, subsequently, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, undoubtedly paved the way for amphibious

successes. The unbroken series of vast amphibious operations from North Africa, Sicily, Italy, to Normandy, are historically unique. They stand in a class by themselves. Pre-war text-books had caught the pessimistic infection of past centuries. Members of SHAEF who turned to them for guidance learned that "the submarine would prohibit any future anchoring of transports off open beaches," that "air power would make short work of surface ships approaching a hostile coast. Modern armies needed an organised port for the landing of mechanised equipment." Eisenhower and his gang proved that all that is required for the landing of an Allied army is an enemy coast upon which to land, and command of the sea and air. Military text-books tend to become a dangerous deterrent to new ideas. SHAEF spared no pains, therefore, to insure the success of Allied landings in Normandy. This even went so far as the transportation of portable harbours—one for the American beach head, and one for the British beach head.

By the middle of June, the Allied beach heads had been linked up along a front of some fifty miles. In the east, the British were held up around Caen. More to the west, British troops had quickly taken the ancient town of Bayeux and had advanced beyond it to Tilly. In this, and other British sectors, there was inconclusive fighting and only slow headway. The beaches, however, had been secured and held against German efforts to initiate counter-attacks.

By June 18 American troops had cut off the Cherbourg Peninsula by a thrust from Carentan across to the western coast. A definite threat to Cherbourg had, therefore, developed, where 35,000 German troops were now cut off. A curious strategical situation had arisen. The Germans had thrown in their armour, some four divisions, in the Tilly-Caen area. The British proceeded to make it impossible for the German armour to withdraw. Allied bombing had made German communications go from bad to worse. Opportunity, if only fleeting, had arisen during which the Americans had time to get a swift thrust against Cherbourg. It was, indeed, a timely move.

The portable concrete harbour, in process of erection off the American beach head, had been hopelessly damaged in a bad storm shortly after D Day. It was decided to use what remained of it to improve the British harbour, which had not been so badly damaged. It, thus, became of prime importance to acquire Cherbourg.

There were enormous risks taken in the operations against Cherbourg. American forces were compelled to operate on two fronts in the Cherbourg Peninsula—one toward Cherbourg, and the other to the south. The foot of the peninsula is, however, marshy and unsuited to large-scale tank actions. It was, therefore, a locality with natural facilities for the type of holding defence required. The German 77th division, trapped in the peninsula, made a desperate effort to break the cordon in the St. Jacques de Nehon area. The flank of the American 9th division, however, held firm, and the Germans retreated to Bricquebec under heavy attack from the air. This German failure sealed the fate of Cherbourg.

General Bradley wasted not a moment. Indeed, he had not a moment to waste. It was a race against possible German reaction inland. Montebourg was by-passed by troops advancing along the coast. By June 21 American troops were penetrating the outer defences of Cherbourg. These outer defences consisted of a semi-circle of strong points, some five or six miles outside the town. An all-out attack was launched on June 22 on the twenty-mile perimeter of the defences. By June 24, the outer defences were pierced.

On June 25th a heavy naval bombardment, under the command of Rear

Admiral Morton L. Deyo, U.S.N., was a prelude to the assault on the inner defences. *Tuscaloosa, Texas, Nevada, Arkansas, Quincy,* and two British cruisers, *Enterprise* and *Glasgow,* took part in what Admiral Deyo modestly styled: "A satisfactory operation." By nightfall, June 26, American troops had reached the waterfront and the docks. Cherbourg fell on June 27, 1944. In the fall the Germans lost four infantry divisions, numerous naval, marine, and communication troops. Lieutenant General Wilhelm von Schlieben, commander of the garrison, was captured, as well as Rear Admiral Hennecke. The American 7th Corps had carried out this brilliant operation. The 9th American division had played a conspicuous part. A total of 35,000 prisoners was taken. A first-class deep-water port, with an outer road of 1,250 acres with safe anchorage for 100 large ships, was in American hands. Consolidation of the beach head hinterland dates from the capture of Cherbourg. It served notice on the Germans, in the only way they understood, that the Allies in Normandy packed a punch second not even to German Panzers. Hitler's stock, which had been fluctuating like a barometer in a stunting fighter, steadied at a record all-time low.

Problems of supply had already reached a stage where Allied commanders had cause to bestow well-merited praise. By June 28 the Navy had landed no less than 1,000,000 men on the beaches in Normandy. This had also included the landing of 183,000 vehicles and 650,000 tons of stores. German experts had totalled up the facilities available at all the ports of northern France. They found that, even had these ports been in Allied hands, they were insufficient to meet the requirements of the Allies. It would, thus, seem that modern beach landing craft, working on suitable beaches in suitable weather, are able to deal with far more traffic and goods in this crude way than can be handled by the best ports. Delays of handling are less. Beach landing craft permit vehicles and men to land under their own power and fully loaded. Lorries can run off direct to the roads. Tanks go into action the moment the landing craft touches shore. Nevertheless, the Allied schedule was sadly behind. In fact, it took sixty days to do what had been planned for twenty days. This is more a reflection on the optimism of the planners than upon those who were called upon to work to schedule.

Whatever may have been the anticipated tempo of operations, the armies in the field wasted no time. Rundstedt had decided, under orders from Hitler, to make his major stand in Normandy. Every effort was made to seal off the fighting from the rest of France. Hitler's decision was strategically unsound. One can only assume it was yet another instance of his intuition, for which so many Germans were prepared to give their lives. From the point of view of strategy, the Germans were stretched across the whole of France. Their armies in Normandy had to be supplied along routes eventually leading into Germany, some 250 miles long as the bomber flies. The whole of this supply line had been disrupted by heavy Allied bombing and by sabotage by the French Forces of the Interior and the Maquis. Unless Hitler could put vast new armies into the field to hold such well-known lines as the Seine, the Meuse, the Moselle, once things went wrong for him in Normandy it meant disaster. It was, thus, much in the favour of the Allies to wear down and destroy as many German divisions in Normandy as Hitler would kindly provide.

From the period when Allied armies occupied the hinterland area south of the beaches to depths from ten to twenty-five miles, to the final break-out, stubborn and inconclusive fighting took place. The fighting was particularly stubborn and inconclusive around Caen. Further west, better progress was made. The battle area slowly aligned itself in a south-west

direction from Caen as the pivot.

British troops fought their way south into the higher ground at Villers Bocage. Fierce thrusts, east of Caen, drove the Germans out of the area between Caen and the Dives River. All efforts to break through the German defences beyond proved unavailing. The pressure exerted by British and Canadian troops was such that the Germans were forced to commit the whole of their armour and most of their reserves in this area.

St. Lo fell to the Americans on July 18. By July 30 Coutances was in their hands. Montgomery was winding up the spring which, forty-nine days after D Day, was to catapult American armour into central France. Assisted by air bombardment from 2,000 aeroplanes and backed by nearly 4,000 tanks, General Patton's armour burst south, at Avranches on the Allies' left flank, into open tank country in central France on July 31, 1944. There were only two possible defensive lines south of Avranches where, at the last moment, the Germans could hope to stem the tidal wave which was breaking into enemy-held France. By this time Rommel was seriously wounded. He lingered until October 17, when he died. All German available reserves were, however, busily engaged around Caen. Moreover, communications were so bad it was impossible to rush up further reserves, deeper in France.

Events which followed fall into three main phases: Break-out, D plus 49 to D plus 65; Victory, D plus 65 to D plus 80; Pursuit, D plus 80 to D plus 90. It must be admitted that, once again, the Allied plan contained risks. No successful military plans can contain anything but risk. The U.S. First Army was given the role of setting up a corridor stretching from Normandy, near Avranches, into Brittany. Through this narrow corridor, only some twenty-five miles wide, there passed the flower of the Allied armour into the back regions of the Normandy battle area. Success depended upon the corridor holding. A heavy German thrust toward Avranches developed at Mortain on August 7, too late. The American First Army bent, but did not break. A clever operation, involving the massed use of Air Force tank-busters, destroyed the German armour at Mortain. The Germans reeled and fell neatly into a trap.

While the trap was developing, Patton's units swirled into Brittany, fingers stretched out to contain the ports of Brest, Lorient, St. Nazaire. His main striking force turned east and speeded toward Le Mans, which was reached on August 5. It was at this juncture that the German forces attacking at Mortain had the trap sprung. Montgomery ordered Patton to send a force north to thrust the Germans in the ribs at Argentan, some fifty miles east of Mortain. He also let loose a powerful force southward from the Caen area, via Falaise. These two pincers nipped the German counter-attack in two, contained Rommel's main armies in two sacks—one west of Falaise, the other east. Before the pincers closed completely the western sack had partially emptied itself into the eastern sack. By then Patton's armour had thrust beyond Chartres, had crossed the Seine at Mantes. A British force was also working along the coast to Rouen. The entire German fighting force in Normandy was trapped. Moreover, powerful armoured units had thrust to the Loire at Nantes and Orleans.

So many amateurish mistakes were made by the Germans at this phase of the operations, it is impossible to assume the mistakes were made by professional soldiers, or even semi-professional soldiers. The first glaring mistake occurred on D Day when the German forces waited instead of counter-attacking. The second mistake was connected with the use of their reserves. Instead of conserving their reserves, even at the expense of giving ground, reinforcements were hurled into the battle piecemeal as they turned

up from all over Europe. These mistakes, however, sink into insignificance compared with the error made, by Hitler's orders, when the Americans broke through at Avranches. No less than six Panzer divisions were assembled and tried to break the American corridor at Avranches. The Allied right flank was then at Le Mans, en route for Paris. The Germans had counter-attacked too late. In fact, the time spent in developing that glaringly mis-timed counter-attack ought to have been spent in organising a large-scale withdrawal to the line of the Seine.

The German armies in France had fallen so completely into this trap of their own making no recovery was possible. No stand could be made on the Seine, or along any other defensive line. The whole German army in France had to scuttle for home as fast as their legs, and the few remaining lorries and cars, could take them. Their losses on the Seine were tremendous. Allied advance units had got behind the Seine before the bulk of the German forces had crossed. In fact, a large proportion of the Germans were still staging a hopeless and unnecessary stand in the Falaise pocket. The Allies could take their time in closing that pocket. A bigger and better trap was closing round the Germans at the Seine.

Victory was gained in the break-through from Normandy between D plus 65 and D plus 80. There remained only the final phase—pursuit—which took place from D plus 80 to D plus 90. Patton's armour was deep into central France to the south of Paris. Other formations were crossing the Seine. The British and Canadian forces were starting an advance along the Channel coast. Allied aeroplanes had made the German pocket along the Seine, as well as that at Falaise, a charnel house. Not more than one-fifth of the German troops lined up against the Allied a month previously were now left. There were not more than 150 German tanks in working order. Streams of German vehicles were destroyed as they fled. What was left of the German strength in the west was clinging to the Channel coast and the flying bomb sites. The Allies did not relax their pursuit to deal with these. Pockets of resistance were left behind by the Germans at all ports, such as Havre, Dieppe, Calais, Dunkirk, as well as Brest, Lorient, and St. Nazaire. Long after the pursuit had reached the vicinity of the German frontier, these German suicide pockets were holding out. Nevertheless, Allied plans were by now well ahead of schedule. Sixty days after D Day, toward the end of August, Allied schedule had outstripped the position set for D plus 90; with the German armies in full retreat everywhere.

Paris was liberated on August 27, 1944, and, except for sporadic sniping, all organised resistance ceased. A total of 10,000 Germans surrendered. Mrs. Goering had made a rush journey to Paris to shop a fortnight before the city was liberated. She was the last of the "gang" to visit Paris. Her orders were never delivered. The liberation of Paris was partly due to the Allied advance and partly due to the useful work done by the French Forces of the Interior, under General Leclerc. General de Gaulle arrived in Paris in time for the final triumph, which took place in a melodramatic blend of street fighting, roof sniping, the fall of enemy shells from guns outside, and the delirious shouting and dancing of the citizens of Paris. In the direction of Neuilly and Vincennes the sky was still ablaze.

On August 15, 1944, while the Germans in the North of France were retreating in headlong and disorganised flight, a powerful Allied army landed in the south of France, along the coasts of the Riviera. British, American and French troops were put ashore under cover of powerful air umbrellas. The project had been an ill-kept secret for nearly a month. Nevertheless, such was the German plight in France, the landing was opposed by token

German forces, mostly consisting of second-rate troops. There was none of that grim, stubborn fighting which had been so marked a feature of the Normandy battles. The objective of these landings was to drive a piston up the Rhone Valley, forcing the Germans ahead of it. The armies of the north and the south would then link in battle array before the frontiers of Germany. All those Germans who failed to scuttle quickly from south-west France would find the door bolted. The ejection of the Germans was greatly hastened by powerful forces of Maquis in the mountains east of the Rhone and in the Cervennes west of the Rhone.

The Allied Seventh Army in the south of France, under General A. M. Patch, U.S. Army, billowed into southern France in the fastest development of a beach head of the war. This superbly trained and equipped army exploded into the inadequate German defences. gathering strength from the French Forces of the Interior as the advance gained momentum. German opposition proved substantial only in Toulon, Marseilles, and along coastal strips at the beach head. Twelve days after the landing, resistance was virtually wiped out. Allied schedules had to be scrapped on account of the fact that the advance became hopelessly ahead of dates. According to schedule, Marseilles would be captured fifty days after the original landings. It was captured eight days after the original landing. Toulon was cracked twelve days after the landing. Soldiers from three countries were able to contemplate the scuttled French Navy rusting in the harbour so that Hitler could not grab it. The garrison of Cannes, to the east of the beaches, was subdued by attack from the sea, air, and land in ten days. Allied forces advanced to Nice, plunged north-east to Briancon, only five miles from the Italian border. German hopes of bolting into Italy were thus definitely ended.

The Allied southern armies then moved north. Motorised units, under Brigadier General F. B. Butler, moved up secondary roads, east of the Rhone, and linked up with the Maquis in Grenoble. Lack of organised resistance was such that a party of journalists turned up on the Swiss frontier near Geneva a few days later. They reported swarms of Maquis en route, armed with the most fantastic weapons, burning for revenge.

In the south and to the west, Arles, Tarascon, and Avignon were quickly in Allied hands. The tide of Allied advance was, in fact, already flowing round the corner beyond to Beziers and the Spanish border. A finger from Eisenhower's armies was stretching south from Poitiers towards Bordeaux. Around Clermont Ferrand and Vichy the Maquis had already taken steps to oust scared Germans, who saw their bolt holes closing all around them. Laval was making tracks for the German frontier under close protection by the Germans. Petain was awakened by the battering in of his bedroom door. He was whisked off to the French frontier, thence, with Laval, to Lake Constance. "Tell the people of France I did not leave under my own free will," he said as he left. It is uncertain what the people of France would have done with Petain, a marshal whom many thought had betrayed France as thoroughly as, in their opinion, did Bazaine.

The six German divisions in the south were as perplexed and stunned as those in the north. In fact, the only real war appeared to develop around the controversial question as to who was winning back France. Clandestine newspapers in Marseilles spread banner headlines which read: "Marseilles, conquered by F.F.I., entered by Allies' troops." "F.F.I. frees Paris from yoke of invader." As the Allied armies from the south got further and further north their progress encountered greater and greater German resistance. It was, in fact, not until September 16 that units of the American Third

Army advancing up the Rhone made contact round Dijon with units of the American Seventh Army which had been advancing eastward from Normandy.

The system of command which had brought the battles of Normandy to such success was changed shortly after the landings on the Riviera. General Montgomery gave up his position as executive commander of all the land forces in France and assumed command of the British 21st Army Group. He was shortly afterwards promoted to the rank of Field Marshal for his services both in Normandy and Africa. General Eisenhower, moreover, took charge of all the operations in France and became commander of all the Allied forces, including those in the south of France.

As executive commander of all the land forces in France, General Montgomery had made all the operational plans. The following were his conceptions: The break-through at Avranches, the Argentan-Falaise pocket, the lower Seine encirclement, and the sweeps across France beyond the Marne. It was a list of victories concerning which even Marlborough might have felt proud.

The period of pursuit was marked by the daily list of places which had been liberated, rather than by military highlights. Allied troops were in Belgium on September 3. Brussels was freed on September 4. On September 5 the Allies had crossed the Dutch border. Next day American forces had made the first penetration of Reich territory. At this juncture the flying bomb area all along the Channel coast had been swamped. The London district and the south coast of Britain were no longer terrorised by these gadgets. In fact, it was announced on September 6 that modifications in the black-out would be permitted as a result of the clearing of the Germans out of France. On September 11 Luxemburg was liberated.

The liberation of Luxemburg marked the end of the period of pursuit. Fresh German forces were already making a stand along the Albert Canal at a moment when the port of Antwerp had fallen into Allied grasp almost intact. This port, however, could not be used until the sea approaches were cleared of Germans. The Schelde area was still held by the Germans, who had mounted powerful batteries in the islands. Ships could not reach Antwerp until these islands were cleared. Moreover, an attack on Germany proper could not develop until jumping-off sites had been wrested from the Germans, amid a maze of dykes, ditches, canals in the below-sea-level areas of northern Holland. Meanwhile, the Allies had now made contact with German forces along a front of 320 miles, from Bruges to Nancy. General Patton's troops were already encountering strong resistance in the Moselle area. Their advance forces, in fact, had been thrust back on the main body. It was clear that along this 320-miles front the Germans were determined to put up a desperate fight.

Hitler must certainly take a large share of the blame for the elementary departures from sound strategy during and after the break-out from Normandy. He had direct telephone lines to all his headquarters and put through calls many times each day. In fact, every decision was directly referred to him. He refused all appeals on the part of his commanders to retire, calling them cowards and ordering them to stand and die where they stood. It would seem that the German commanders obeyed Hitler's orders to the letter. German losses, from D Day onward to the end of September, amounted to nearly one million men. This does not include the garrison forces trapped in various ports on the French coast. Included in the total were 544,695 prisoners taken by the Allies, about 100,000 Germans killed, including Rommel and Kluge, and 200,000 seriously wounded. In broad figures, this

meant that the Germans had started the battle of Normandy with sixty-five divisions and had lost the battle for France with thirty divisions. It would also appear that German commanders on fronts other than the Western had also obeyed Hitler's orders to the last letter. A total of 1,300,000 men had been sacrificed on the Russian front. Where Hitler had 220 divisions at the start, there were only 130 remaining by the autumn of 1944.

During the stirring Allied pursuit across France desperate events had rocked the Nazis inside Germany. On July 21 an attempt on Hitler's life had been made by a clique of German generals, who realised that the war was lost. These generals sought to retrieve from the disaster as much of the German armies and industrial assets as could be arranged by instituting an immediate peace. In fact, their methods were similar to those instituted in 1918 with such successful results. Colonel von Stauffenberg had placed a suitcase containing a bomb on Hitler's desk during a meeting of high-placed Nazis. The bomb, however, inflicted only slight concussion with minor burns and bruises. Hitler's amateurish strategy had greatly assisted the Allies and it was doubtful if his death at this moment would have helped.

The bomb incident enabled Hitler to institute one of his super-purges. Moreover, he was able to stamp out the plot and whip up the failing morale of the German people by ten per cent. pep talks and ninety per cent. brutality. The conspirators were ruthlessly exterminated to encourage the others. Heinrich Himmler was appointed to the new post of Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army. General Guderian was made Chief of the German Staff. Rundstedt sat on the Court of Honour to try his army friends.

The revolt inside Germany at least indicated which way the winds of war were blowing. The immediate result was a Reich-wide recruiting campaign for youths, old men and wounded soldiers, to form new divisions to replace those destroyed in France and Poland. The immediate result was an enormous stiffening of resistance when Allied armies reached the German border, both on the western front and the eastern front. Bands of suicide youths and S.S. troops held on desperately, despite the fact that in many cases there was no hope. Nevertheless, these methods delayed the Allied advance and in many places brought it to a standstill. The rivers and canals of Holland were ideal for delaying tactics. Except for small advances of up to ten miles or so the Allies received a check all through October and November out of all proportion to the trained reserves available to German commanders. The battles of pursuit gave place, in fact, to a type of warfare intermediate between the trench warfare of 1914-18 and the mobile warfare of the summer of 1944.

On September 17, 1944, American troops launched an attack at Aachen, which carried them forward ten or twelve miles. It was obvious, however, that the Allies were suffering from difficulty in getting supplies to the battle area in sufficient quantity to maintain a major offensive. The operation around Aachen died down after the first successful advance in the face of very determined German resistance. This attack, however, proved that the Siegfried Line was by no means impregnable.

When this first attack on Aachen was instituted, the Allies had a battle line which now stretched along a 500-mile front, from the Swiss frontier, at Belfort, to the English Channel. Almost overnight a Western Front had sprung into being, comparable in magnitude with the Western Front of 1918. Associated with this new front were innumerable problems of administration and organisation. Not the least was the problem of supply from beaches, and the few ports in Allied hands in operable condition. Le Havre had fallen

on September 12 with the capture of 8,474 prisoners. The other main ports were still being reduced. Even if they had been in Allied hands, it is doubtful if they would have been in any condition to cope with the problem of supplies. The Germans made a very thorough job of harbour demolition at every port. It had taken nearly two months to put Cherbourg in a state of repair capable of handling the vast quantity of shipping required. Except for Marseilles, Toulon, Cherbourg, and a few small harbours now in partial operation, Allied supplies had to be delivered on the beaches of France, often hundreds of miles from the battle area. Until the Allies cleaned up the supply problem it was not possible to develop hard-hitting, persistent attacks which had been such a feature in the battles of Normandy. In fact, in September, Allied supply requirements had become equated with German supply systems operating along shorter routes, to feed an army on the defensive.

At this stage the Allied line ran from north to south as follows: Bruges — Ghent—Antwerp — Roermonde — Hasselt — Eupen — Malmedy — Dinant — Sedan — Treves — Perle — Thionville — west of Metz — Nancy — Belfort. The main feature of the post-pursuit period was the clearing of the approaches to the Rhine in Holland, including the Schelde area. The Germans were ensconced along excellent defensive positions, in which the Rhine, with its many mouths, formed the backbone. In front was the Siegfried Line, ending near Nijmegen, on the Lower Rhine, and pivoting in the south on Karlsruhe, on the Rhine. Further south, mountainous and wooded areas west of the Rhine were destined to keep American armies fully occupied in slow advances through very difficult country. From Nancy to Metz the Germans succeeded in pushing out very strong resistance units which broke the shock of the Allied advance some seventy miles before the main defences of the Rhine in that area.

If the Allies wished to gain a major decision before the winter, the only hopeful area lay in the north, amid the waterways of Holland. At Nijmegen the Rhine is split into three large waterways, the Neder Rhine, or Lek, being the most northerly, the Waal the centre, and the Maas the most southerly branch of this great river. These branches were several hundred yards wide with difficult banks in many areas. The little township of Arnhem lies on the Lek, almost due north of Nijmegen and some ten miles away. The Maas is about the same distance south from Nijmegen.

There was one weak area in the German defences. Once the branches of the Rhine are crossed at Nijmegen and Arnhem, there are no other barriers to the east where the water-logged Dutch sea-level terrain opens on to the German Baltic Plains, running flat to Berlin. Moreover, if the German defences in the Arnhem area could be burst wide open, the major defences of the Rhine and the Ruhr are turned from the north. Success at Arnhem meant disaster to the German frontier defences, the certain loss of the Ruhr, and the probable loss of Berlin and the whole of the flatter northern districts of Germany. In fact, at Arnhem lay the only hope of bringing the war in Europe to an end before the winter of 1944.

On September 18 General Montgomery planned an operation to crash through to Arnhem, gain the bridges over the three branches of the Rhine, and burst wide open the door to northern Germany. In the afternoon of September 17, 1944, massive Allied forces of the British First Airborne Division, American airborne units, as well as Polish and Dutch units, landed by glider and parachute in the area between Arnhem and Eindhoven. The plan was to seize the area between the three branches of the Rhine, from Arnhem south, and lay a carpet of parachute troops to enable land forces, already operating in Holland, to leap, via Arnhem, into northern Germany.

The airborne divisions, under General Brereton, landed without much opposition and with little loss. However, the moment they moved on their objectives they encountered heavy German opposition. While the airborne troops were seizing key points, the land forces made a dash toward Arnhem. Their advance, in fact, was made through a narrow corridor in enemy-held country, starting at a point a few miles south of Eindhoven and penetrating to the Maas with isolated advance units eventually reaching the south bank of the Lek, opposite Arnhem.

Although the landings were made in good weather, the weather broke almost immediately. It became impossible to give the air support which had been planned. The land forces were delayed as a result and the operation proceeded to get out of gear. Furthermore, lack of massive allied air support enabled the Germans to rush reinforcements to the threatened area without hindrance. The result was that the Germans were able to reinforce the threatened area in sufficient strength to thwart the Allied plan. Moreover the narrow corridor, some forty miles deep, was pierced on several occasions by violent German counter-attacks. Delay piled up on delay until it became impossible for the land forces to relieve the airborne forces before supplies ran out.

From September 18 to September 27, the airborne troops fought heroic actions between the three branches of the Rhine and north of the Lek, around Arnhem. These outlying troops, north of Arnhem, however, were gradually driven in on Arnhem by increasing German strength, including powerful artillery and mortar support. By September 27 it was found necessary to withdraw the remnants of the British First Airborne Division from the Arnhem area to the south of the river after a gallant stand against great odds. This division left behind 1,200 wounded. Out of a total of 8,000 airborne troops who had dropped from the skies in the Arnhem area, 2,000 of them made their way back across the Lek into the safe keeping of the British Second Army. Thus had ended in failure this bold bid to end the war at one stroke. But for bad weather there is every reason to assume it would have succeeded.

Although the Arnhem operation had failed, it was not a complete failure. A deep salient had been driven into German-held Holland. Moreover, the two southern branches of the Rhine had been crossed and their bridges were in Allied hands. There was thus created, west of this area, a German pocket south of the Maas, including the islands of the Schelde and large tracts of boggy country between Eindhoven and the coast. It now became necessary to clear this area, oust the Germans from their positions on the Schelde Islands, free the approaches to Antwerp, and then stage a major offensive calculated to carry the Allies across the Rhine into Germany. September was, however, well advanced. It was an autumn of bad weather and early rains. The ground was hopelessly waterlogged by the beginning of November. Moreover, the periods during which air support on a massive scale could be relied upon grew less and less frequent. It was not until November 8 that the islands of the Schelde had been cleared and the Germans had withdrawn from almost the whole of the area between Eindhoven and the coast south of the Maas. This operation was conducted under appalling conditions. Troops sought cover in ditches half full of water. It rained for fourteen days without end. The roads ran on embankments clearly visible to enemy defences, which made movement by day impossible for all types of vehicles.

Further south, the Americans had fought their way into Aachen after stubborn defence by the German garrison. This second phase of their offen-

sive in the Aachen area took them nearly as far as the town of Duren, twenty-five miles from Cologne. They were held up before that town by heavy German counter-attacks and massed artillery fire. Further south, American and French forces were battling inconclusively in the Vosges.

BALKAN WEATHER-COCKS

When things were going well with Hitler's plans, Balkan weather-cocks had swung to the hurricane which blew the Allies right out of Europe. Greece did so under duress and unwillingly. Albania was collected for Mussolini by Hitler's dustmen, much against the will of the sturdy Albanians. Yugo-slavia was totally unable to make up its mind, and fell between two stools. Bulgaria was out to acquire the pickings of the side most likely to win, whatever cork-screw twists were required to effect this policy. Rumania gave up teetering with the Allies and collapsed into Hitler's ample pockets as a ripe plum anxious to be safely picked by somebody. Hungary willingly stepped into the German prison camp, hopefully anticipating that an early arrival would grant exclusion from the role of slave nation. Czecho-slovakia had long since been raped and was in no condition to retaliate.

When, however, the Russian blasts swept westward from Stalingrad it became painfully obvious that, after all, Hitler was the wrong horse. By the time that the Russian armies were battering at Warsaw most of the Balkan States were watching their weather-cocks for the first friendly slants from the east and south-east.

The Balkan States occupy a curious position in the strategical structure of Europe. Industrially and economically they contribute very little to the concert of European affairs. Strategically, however, they provide Germany with a buffer with which to slow down and break up rude onslaughts from the Mediterranean and the Black sea on Germany's back door. This back door into Germany gives ready access, via Vienna, into the southern highlands of Germany, which are not readily entered from the west owing to stubborn geographical conditions north of Switzerland. The Balkans, therefore, performed the function of a stopping in a decayed tooth. Moreover, disintegration in the stopping was not calculated at once to destroy Germany. The progress was, in fact, a slow one, but, nevertheless, a sure one.

The Balkans, including Hungary, were also useful in the East Front strategy. Powerful German forces in Hungary, backed by reserves in the Balkans proper, must inevitably bring a Russian advance west of Warsaw to a halt. The threat to Russian communications, unless Hungary were cleared, must eventually prevent a large-scale assault on Berlin, via the northern Baltic plains. Hungary alone was not enough, because enemy threats against southern Hungary would be able to distract the Germans in Hungary, thereby detracting from their main role on the flank of the Russian armies in the north. The Balkans were, therefore, vital to German East Front strategy.

It became apparent to Hitler late in July, 1944, that German divisions in the southern Balkans could be put to better use elsewhere. By the end of July, 1944, a definite drift to the north was discernible. By that time all German first-line troops had been withdrawn from southern Yugo-slavia. The remainder were re-dealt to spread them over the southern Balkans as thick as possible. Only ten out of the original seventeen divisions remained

in Yugo-slavia, and out of that total only one division was first class. The Axis battle array in the Balkans and neighbouring areas at this time was: Hungary, thirty divisions, including twenty in the Carpathians; Bulgaria contained twenty Bulgarian divisions, including six in Yugo-slavia. Rumania now contained twenty Rumanian divisions, but it was already patent that it was uncertain, even in August, which side, Axis or Allies, these divisions would fight. There were, in addition, 600,000 German troops in Rumania.

Stalin wisely decided to intervene in the Balkan area and by so doing indicate in the only way understood by Axis supporters which way the weather cocks should now be turned. Faced with catastrophic invasion, the Rumanian dictator, General Antonescu, recalled all diplomats to Bucharest for a conference at the beginning of August. By the beginning of September, 1944, General Malinovsky and General Tolbukhin had delivered a mortal blow which ejected Rumania hastily from German allegiance. In fact, by Septemper 3, the Rumanian armies, far from fighting for the Germans, reported the capture of 50,000 German prisoners, including nine generals. Rumania had adjusted her weather cock to the hurricane slanting in from the Dneister and the Ukraine.

The Red Army was, by now, advancing toward Bucharest, having reached Constanta. In fact, the Bulgarian border had been reached beyond Constanta. Hitler could do little to stop the rot. He knew that the Russians had completely liquidated fifteen of his divisions in Bessarabia in a fortnight's fighting. It was not surprising, therefore, that Rumania signed an armistice with Russia, on behalf of the Allies, on September 13, 1944. Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina were to be returned to Russia. Rumania, moreover, was to pay an indemnity of £25,000,000. Transylvania was, however, to be restored to Rumania. The terms of this armistice were, indeed, encouragingly light. Rumania was told, in fact, that she had been a naughty girl, but if she behaved herself in the future and fought hard for the Allies she would be treated with understanding. After all, it had been found impossible for Britain to come to the aid of Rumania in the early stages of the war when the Big Bad Wolf had knocked at the door, all eager to gobble her up. About the same time, September 19, Finland also signed armistice terms, involving an indemnity of £75,000,000, a withdrawal to the 1940 border, and the lease of a large sea and land area to Russia. The Finns, therefore, got out of the war relatively lightly and, like the Rumanians, promptly started chasing their former allies out of the country.

Toward the end of September, Allied forces from Italy were landed along the eastern seaboard of the Adriatic, especially along the Albanian coast. It became clear that the German stay in Greece, as well as Bulgaria, was given a time limit. There was no question upon whose side the Greeks wished to fight, despite a somewhat inconsistent and conflicting partisanship with both the Germans and the Allies. The people of Greece were anxious to see the last of the Germans. Allied grand strategy was in complete agreement with the people of Greece. South of the Aegean Sea, Crete still lay athwart the supply routes of the Eastern Mediterranean. German occupation of that island, as well as the myriad isles of the Aegean, was a troublesome thorn in the flank of Allied supply routes now operating from Gibraltar to Port Said in comparative freedom. The fall of Greece would mean the withering of Crete. The fall of Greece meant, furthermore, increased pressure on Bulgaria from the west as well as the East. German access to the Mediterranean would thenceforth become negligible.

Early in October, the United Nations made a co-ordinated attack in the Balkan area. Russia launched four large-scale offensives to knock out Hun-

gary, liberate Yugo-slavia, and Czecho-slovakia. These four drives were made, firstly, towards Belgrade, secondly, through the Beskid Pass into Slovakia, thirdly, westward to Budapest, and, fourthly, north-westward through Hungary, starting some sixty miles south-east of Budapest. On October 5, British land forces occupied the port of Patras, in the north-west Peloponnese Peninsula, at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth. Little opposition was met.

Within a week the liberation of Greece was well ahead. The German position in Greece had crumbled to a degree such that a junior officer and a jeep virtually occupied Athens with a dozen men or so. Greek patriots had, in fact, cleared Athens by October 15. Pireaus, the port, was also occupied. Other British troops landed on Corfu, a large Greek island in the Ionian Sea, and found it free from Germans. A dispirited German army ignominiously tottered out of Greece, beset all the way by whole-hearted Greek patriot troops. By October, 31, 1944, British troops were at Salonika. Virtually the whole of Greece had been liberated. Furthermore, Greece was now also free from Bulgarians, who had massacred, deported, and generally ill-treated the population for over three years.

Greek Ministers, who had been forced to withdraw from Greece, had returned, and efforts were started to get the economic situation under control. There was an absence of food amounting to a famine. Moreover, the economic situation had degenerated to a degree such that twenty trillion drachmas went to £1 sterling. On November 7, the Greek Prime Minister M. Papandreou, announced the dissolution of partisan military organisations and said that each demobilised man would receive one gold pound. At the rate of exchange then in vogue each man, if he converted his bonus to drachmas, would be kept busy for twenty-five billion years counting his pay. This was the first realistic intimation of the insuperable problems which would be left to be solved as an aftermath of Great War II.

The Russian decision to disintegrate the Balkan cockpit and knock Hungary out of the war fitted in nicely with their strategy to strike at widely separated places when held up at any given spot. Russian claws reached round the Nazi buffer in the Balkans and compelled Hitler to spare precious panzers to defend his back door at a time when divisions were badly needed elsewhere. The Russian offensive in the Carpathians drove deep into the eastern corner of Czecho-slovakia before it came to a standstill. Russian troops stormed the Tatra Pass, and won a further six passes in the Carpathian mountain barrier. The deepest penetration took the Russian armies to the town of Rochav, thirty miles inside the border of Czecho-slovakia. A spirited outburst by Czecho-slovakian patriots undoubtedly embarrassed the Germans. Nevertheless, these outbursts, as well as similar outbursts inside Warsaw, were premature. The Russians never planned to press home attacks once resistance stiffened. Inability to link up these inside outbreaks with outside strategy led, in these and other instances, to premature action which eventually was got under control by the Germans. The Russian advance into Czecho-slovakia was under the command of General Petrov, commander of the Fourth Ukrainian Army Group.

Meanwhile, in Bulgaria, Russian and Yugo-slav forces were battling to clear Belgrade. This city had suffered as a result of German bombing at the beginning of the war. It was now destined to further suffering as a result of Allied bombing at the end. The city was left a mere shell of its original self, with many buildings destroyed and burned out by the Germans. Bulgaria was only too anxious to wriggle out of her commitments with Hitler at this stage of the war. It was difficult, however, to persuade either Stalin,

Churchill, or Roosevelt, that she had been forced on the German side by circumstances. Bulgarian politicians had worked hard to ensure that Bulgaria should be in at the death on the winning side. Indeed, efforts to attain this ideal led at this stage to a somewhat ironical situation. In order to try to persuade the Allies of her good graces, part of her armed forces started to shoot-up Germans. The remainder of her armed forces, however, continued to resist Russian invasion. Technically, Bulgaria was not at war with Russia. Nevertheless, Stalin soon disillusioned her leaders by promptly declaring war on Bulgaria. There was a phase in which Bulgaria succeeded in wriggling herself into war with Germany, Russia, Britain, France, America, Poland, Czecho-slovakia, Greece, and some twenty other members of the United Nations. In this capacity Bulgaria set up a record only equalled by her ability to double-cross and bilk in an effort to fight on the winning side. It was clear that, at last, Bulgarian schemers had insured that the moment had come to place her cards fairly on the table. Obviously, Bulgaria was in no position to take on all-comers.

It was not surprising that, on October 29, 1944, the terms of an armistice were announced between the Allies and Bulgaria. Under this armistice, the Bulgarian Government undertook to disarm German forces in Bulgaria and hand them over as prisoners of war. She also undertook to intern the nationals of Germany and her satellites. Moreover, Bulgaria undertook to make available such forces as were demanded for service under the direction of the Soviet High Command. In fact, Bulgaria was told that she must work her passage to peace by fighting the Germans. At the conclusion of Great War II. against Germany the Bulgarian armed forces were to be demobilised under the supervision of an Allied Control Commission.

Bulgarian armed forces were ordered to be withdrawn from Greece and Yugo-slavia within a specified time. This also applied to Bulgarians resident in those two countries. All legislation and administrative provisions relating to the annexation of Greek or Yugo-slav territory had to be repealed. The Allies were granted freedom of movement over Bulgaria at Bulgaria's expense. All Allied prisoners were to be released and adequately looked after, including prisoners of Greek and Yugo-slav origin. All Nazi organisations were to be dissolved at once. Persons accused of war crimes were to be apprehended and tried. All booty was ordered to be handed over and property rights restored. Further terms provided for Allied supervision of publications and broadcasting, industrial enterprises, communications and shipping. Bulgaria, in fact, got what she had long been asking for—a sharp reminder that you cannot hunt with the hounds and run with the hare. Compared with the previous armistice terms, Bulgaria's were severe. There were, in fact, no mitigating circumstances.

The elimination of Bulgaria and Rumania from the Nazi over-lordship was a severe blow to Hitler. Apart from the slap in the face, which was becoming too frequent to have lasting effects, the whole strategy of the Balkans had now turned in favour of the Allies—especially Russia. German access to the Mediterranean had virtually ended. Crete was rendered impotent. Nothing that the Germans could hope to do would enable them to retain effective control of Greece, or the Aegean Islands. Britain could write "Mare Nostrum" across the Mediterranean and Hitler could not even say a word. Every word he said would have been evidence of his failure in the Balkans. It was as if a deep flesh wound had festered into the German Fortress of Europe, corroding through flesh, ligaments and blood vessels. The wound was not immediately deadly, but slowly weakened German ability to effect any sort of convalescence. Moreover, Hungary now lay wide

open to occupation. Hitler was forced to send precious divisions to delay this calamity as long as possible. In the Balkans, the weather cocks, freed from years of oppression, suddenly started to crow.

As a result of the disintegration in the Balkans, land-locked Admiral Horthy, Premier of Hungary, suddenly found himself captain of a Ship of State beset by the very worst sort of land waves—Russian high explosives The Russian Bear had pushed two ugly claws around Horthy's Hungary and was shaking the whole countryside. The Rumanians had joined the Russians in an advance across the plains of Hungary, between the Rivers Tisza and Danube. To the east and north the Russian armies were rattling ominously at the padlocked mountains. The gallant admiral, who had piloted the Ship of State through so many storms, had never faced a nautical nightmare comparable with the present situation. At sea one can cut the anchor chain and scud before the storm. In land-bound Hungary, scudding was out of the question. Horthy decided that the time had come to bow to the storm. He decided to make peace with it—a method not mentioned in standard naval text books. At the moment that Horthy was taking steps to cope with the turbulent weather in the very streets of Budapest, Himmler, accompanied by fifteen of the highest Gestapo thugs, was winging his way to Budapest. Early on October 16, 1944, Horthy signed an order-of-the-day, as Regent and Commander-in-Chief, which stated that Hungary had asked the Allies for an Armistice. Four hours later, Bela Imredy, opportunist and pro-Nazi, stated over the radio that the Hungarian Arrow Cross Fascist Party had taken control. There wasn't going to be an armistice. Several worthy Hungarian generals refused to co-operate and were officially sacked. In fact, the general feeling in Hungary was all for an armistice. There was no real support of the so-called Arrow Cross Party. Horthy was whisked away into Germany under "protective custody." Thus ended a curious premiership which had started in March, 1920, when the worthy admiral had modestly assumed the role of Regent; until Hungary, a monarchy with a vacant throne, had remedied the vacancy. Instead of one vacancy there were now two. Nevertheless, Crown Prince Otto, in America, proceeded to pack his grip—just in case.

Hitler's action in Hungary served notice on Russia that if she wanted Hungary she had to fight. German strategists realised only too well the significance of the occupation of Hungary by Allied forces. In this way, Budapest became a battle ground with the unwilling citizens of Hungary helpless spectators.

For a fortnight the Russian advance, across the plains south of Budapest, was halted by a grim tank battle. Slowly, the Germans were forced back with large tank losses. By November the battle was lapping round Budapest. The Germans hurled in ten more Panzer divisions. It was clear, however, that Budapest must fall to the Russians. Desperate, as was the German effort, the flower of their old men were now in East Prussia, where the Russians had penetrated twenty miles across the borders to the communication centre of Insterburg. Unless Hitler had unlimited reserves, something had to go—Hungary or Prussia. Goering had £30,000,000 illicit holdings in Prussia. Hungary went.

Thus, by the time that November leaf was red and sear, Hitler, who had shouted about "living space" in 1938, now found his quarters even more cramped than ever. It was, however, no good shouting. Germany was surrounded by hostile armies. In the far north, the Russians had already chased the Germans out of Finland into northern Norway, where Russian soldiers were hard at their heels. Petsamo and its mines were freed. Hammerfest,

in Norway, the most northerly town in the world, was in Russian hands by November 10. In Lithuania and Estonia thirty trapped German divisions had been turned upon by the Russians in the second week in November, and were in the process of liquidation. It was a word invented by Hitler at the height of his power. Now, when the sands were running low, it was a word turned against him. In East Prussia, the first winter snows found the Germans at bay on their own territory, fighting to the last nonagerian, the last lad of fifteen years, and the last soldier with wounds from previous campaigns still unhealed, to gain a respite.

Behind, deep in Russia, there were already murmurs of a gigantic winter campaign. Warsaw was still in German hands. But, further south, the Viennese were speculating as to where they would be at Christmas. In the Balkans the remnants of a domineering, bullying army were creeping through little-used passes in efforts to burst a way through to the comparative security of a Germany invested by the three most powerful nations in the world—Russia, Britain, America. In Italy, Allied armies were pinning down and hustling twenty-five German divisions, which could have been better used elsewhere than guarding the approaches to the Po. Over Switzerland there flew the flag of the Red Cross. That sturdy little Republic continued to supply watches and clocks to all who asked—on one side Germany, on the other the World. The Swiss, indeed, became the time-keepers of the war. In fact, the Swiss Government even made an effort to make friends with Russia. Their first little dove of friendship, however, was somewhat harshly dealt with.

In France, the Allies had solved the problem of their supplies. The Western Front was an organised, integrated whole. Behind, on innumerable aerodromes, previously developed and expanded by the Germans, the industrial hatchings of aeroplanes were flocking down to roost for the winter. Mounting activity in the Vosges indicated that, if winter came, an Allied offensive of major dimensions could not be far behind.

In Holland the last German had been pushed into, or out of, the last ditch south of the Maas. Antwerp was testing out the harbour cranes. In Britain there was even talk of an invasion of Norway. Across the Atlantic war headlines had temporarily been replaced by election headlines as that industrialised nation, on November 8, proceeded to re-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt to a fourth term at the White House. It was a gesture which pleased neither Hitler, nor his yellow friends in Japan. Moreover, this gesture had been preceded by a gesture on the part of Stalin who, in a speech, denounced Japan as an aggressor nation, thereby indicating Russian sentiments despite the pact of friendship between the two countries.

Deep in the heart of Germany there came the murmurings of an inexplicable silence—for the first time in twenty-one years Hitler had failed to deliver his beer-hall putsch speech from the Munich cellar. Nerve specialists had ordered him a long rest.

THE GREAT KNOCK OUT

Early in November General Eisenhower had made two vital decisions on the Western Front. The most vital decision of all had changed his armies of pursuit into armies holding a line from the North Sea to Switzerland. The pursuit had in fact ended. It was not destined to sweep across the Rhine until various loose threads had been tucked in. This decision was forced on Eisenhower, who, in fact, bowed to communications and supply difficulties. There was, in fact, no alternative. For a period, therefore, linear warfare not dissimilar to that which had been waged on the Western Front in 1915 took the place of mobile war.

The second decision which Eisenhower had to make was connected with the crossing of the Rhine. He had to decide what the Germans intended to do. The Germans had the choice of two things—to defend Germany with armies operating west of the Rhine or to defend the line of the Rhine itself with forces based east of that river. Defence west of the Rhine kept the war from the Ruhr but it placed German armies in strategically dangerous situations. They could be isolated, attacked, cut up and their escape routes obliterated by Allied air superiority. Defence on the line of the Rhine, however, jeopardised Germany's main centre of heavy industries in the Ruhr. It lost her the Saar coalfields, and, of course, must have had an adverse effect on morale.

Eisenhower correctly guessed that the Germans would throw their main defence weight west of the Rhine. Until the British and American armies in the West had gained their breath it became necessary to tidy up the battlefield. Suitable jumping-off positions must be found for the main assault—that final knock out which would start with battles in the Rhineland area. The British line in Holland was straightened and aligned roughly along the Rhine. It was a slow process and, in fact, the last phase had scarcely been completed before the main assaults started in March, 1945. Further south it was necessary for the U.S. 7th Army under General Patton to straighten their positions in the Saarbrucken area. The fighting here had developed into a series of vicious jabs and counter-jabs on the fringes of the so-called Siegfried Line. This German defence line branched from the Rhine at Karlsruhe and ran fifty or sixty miles west of that river to Aachen and Cleve. The remaining allied armies were given the task of wearing down the Siegfried Line in a series of slow-moving but vital operations which necessarily suffered high casualties. South of Karlsruhe the new French 1st Army under General Tassigny was given a series of line-straightening tasks which eventually virtually cleared the Germans out of their positions west of the Rhine.

Patton started proceedings on November 8, 1944, with a powerful jab between Metz and Luneville. By November 17 six Allied armies had been committed to major operations involving positional warfare. Two huge Allied airfleets numbed the enemy, while on November 16 U.S. 1st Army under General Hodges opened their assault on German fortifications east of Aachen. The U.S. 9th Army, which had been moved in secret from Brest, sprang suddenly into action on a nine-mile front north of Aachen. To the north the British 2nd Army began its move forward in its offensive in the Roermond area. In the south, Patton's 3rd Army was encircling Metz. In the Vosges the U.S. 7th Army was making slow progress. In the extreme south the French 1st Army was only eight miles from Belfort. The main fury of these preliminaries fell along a belt of fifty miles from Venloo to

Aachen. Ahead lay the Siegfried zone and recent earthworks flung up by toiling German civilians.

No spectacular results were produced by any of the Allied Armies, except the French in the south. A dramatic dash through the Belfort Gap had threatened all those German forces in the plain of Alsace. Great credit is due to General Tassigny, in charge of the French, who led his army into Alsace so swiftly that the Germans were unable to parry his threat. By November 20 the French were on the Rhine. By November 23 it became clear that the Germans had suffered a major defeat in Alsace. The first fruits of Eisenhower's strategy had been delivered. In the south the Germans had been smashed west of the Rhine. It was a blow from which Hitler's armies in Alsace never recovered. This operation was destined to provide a front near Strasbourg which ran parallel to the German communications in the more northern areas. A stepping-stone had been gained from which the Germans eventually were to be delivered a smashing blow.

For nearly a month hard fighting took place along the whole of the Western Front, especially north of Strasbourg. The Germans contested every inch of ground. Allied armies fought for paddocks, they fought for copses, woods, forests, and every village was a battleground. In fact, toward the end of November Mr. Churchill issued a warning, couched in his famed style, that it was unwise to imagine that the war would soon be over. The remarkable resurgence of German military power, after their hurried exit from France, came as a surprise. One commanding officer who had fought in France in Great War I. declared that the present fighting was the hardest and costliest he had seen—worse than anything in Great War I.

By the end of November Patton's troops were fighting among the Saar coalfields. In the Aachen area there had been no major break-through into the Cologne plain. In fact, almost a stalemate had occurred. Rundstedt had been given command on the Western Front early in October. He had placed in front of Cologne, on an eleven-mile front, two panzer divisions, one panzer grenadier division, three infantry divisions, and independent anti-tank battalions. In fact, on the western front the Germans had mustered some seventy divisions, or five more than they had in the west on D Day. The new divisions, however, were of a reconstituted type containing 6,000 fewer men and many of them Volksturm soldiers with inadequate training. It was known, however, that the German High Command had not yet committed its reserves.

These battering-ram battles of position came to an abrupt end on December 16, 1944, when Field-Marshal von Rundstedt launched an unexpected blow with twenty picked divisions on a fifty-mile front running south from Monschau in the Ardennes. The German column which opened this startling offensive struck in force south-east of Malmedy. A second German column stabbed toward St. Vith. American troops had been sent to this part of the front for a rest after weeks of bitter fighting. The forests and hills of the Ardennes had been the accepted quiet sector of the Western Front. Some two divisions were in the way of Rundstedt's vigorous blow. The American troops were thinly spread, their communications were bad, one quarter of the tanks were stripped for overhaul, many others were not in working order. The Germans were considered to be too weak in this particular area to attack. In fog which blotted out all landmarks for several days the Germans thrust aside the Allied defence and created a situation which was not over-exaggerated by the word "fluid."

American resistance was swept aside and Rundstedt's panzers made a spectacular bulge in the Allied lines. By December 23 his southern spear-

heads had penetrated some forty-five miles into the Allied lines. His northern pincer had encountered Allied resistance in the Stavelot area, were prevented from turning north, and had lost momentum under the unexpected shock. Furthermore, unexpected stubborness in the American defence of Bastogne had delayed the southern spearheads. Nevertheless, by December 26 the German divisions had driven a dangerous wedge into the Allied lines nearly seventy miles deep and fifty miles wide at its base. Their western-most spearheads had, in fact, almost reached the Meuse at Celles and Ciney. Until December 26 Allied air forces had been unable to assist the ground troops. The Ardennes is a densely wooded area with high hills, difficult terrain, and a vile winter climate.

The first German setback came on December 26 when the weather cleared. For the first time thousands of Allied aeroplanes pounded the enemy-held triangle, and all roads in the area and leading to it. Rundstedt's drive lost momentum and by December 29 Allied reinforcements were applying ever-increasing pressure. General Patton's 3rd Army relieved Bastogne and narrowed the corridor in which the Germans were operating to a distance less than medium artillery range, some eight miles or so. It was clear that whatever plans Rundstedt had made they were now doomed to fail. A very gallant and resolute American defence, coupled with the defence of Bastogne had caused Rundstedt's plans to go astray. The Allied blow from the air had completed the miscarriage of the plans. It was, however, a near shave.

Naturally this quite unexpected blow had completely upset the Allied offensives, whose mighty weight had been biting into the Siegfried defences and threatening to endanger the Ruhr. The first reaction on the part of the Allies was to withdraw troops from these offensives to use as reserves against Rundstedt's bulge.

Eisenhower was not slow to react to the new situation. Field-Marshal Montgomery was given command of the whole danger area. He was thus temporarily placed in command of two U.S. Armies as well as his own army group consisting of the Canadian 1st Army and the British 2nd Army. Reinforcements were quickly ordered to move toward the flanks of the break-through. These troops came in the north from the British 2nd Army, U.S. 9th Army, U.S. 1st Army. In the south reinforcements were taken from the U.S. 3rd Army. Pressure was applied on the flanks with ever-increasing weight. Montgomery acted with characteristic dash. He regrouped the whole battle front and stationed reserves at important areas, including General Collins's 7th Corps, U.S. Army. This corps bore the brunt of the westward spear thrust toward the Meuse and played a forceful part in bringing the Germans to a halt. It was, in fact, a close race between German divisions pressing toward the Meuse near Namur and Allied reserves also rushing to hold the line of the Meuse. Field-Marshal Montgomery won the race by a few hours. The Meuse was held in force and it is doubtful if Rundstedt would have then succeeded in forcing the river if he had reached it. Field-Marshal Montgomery put down Rundstedt's failure to two reasons —the fighting qualities of the Americans, and Allied team work.

There have been many arguments as to why the German High Command approved such a risky undertaking. It became clear that it was intended to have been a major blow. The Germans lashed out with all weapons, including their normal brand of planned treachery and brutality. King Tanks of 75 tons were included as well as jet planes, flying bombs and squads of English-speaking spies dropped from aeroplanes behind the Allied lines. Some had been specially trained to kill the Allied commanders. The Germans murdered

American prisoners in cold blood. In the towns civilians were shot or burned to death. In fact, everything, including the killing, was very methodical and very German.

It would appear that Rundstedt intended his attack to produce several results. Undoubtedly his plan envisaged a dash to the line of the Meuse from Venloo in the north through Liege, Namur, Dinant, and possibly south to the level of Metz. Even if this failed his attack was calculated to knock the Allies off their balance, delay their offensive plans and create a series of new and totally unexpected situations. If the first phase had succeeded Rundstedt had the choice of three moves—the encirclement and neutralisation of Antwerp as an Allied supply port, a dash to the French Channel ports, or thirdly a threat to Paris. In view of the powerful Allied armies known to be in France in a superiority of over three to one it is difficult to imagine that even Hitler hoped that these ambitious plans had any chance of success. One must, therefore, assume that Hitler planned to knock the Allies off their balance. In the interlude he hoped to seize whatever opportunities offered—especially those diplomatic opportunities caused by possible American and British recriminations.

What actually happened was that Allied plans were temporarily dislocated. In return Hitler lost nearly all his twenty picked divisions as a fighting entity in battles of the immediate future. Indeed, the whole effort was based on an assumption that there were vast German reserves, fifty or more divisions, which could have been used to exploit success. In reality there were no such reserves. Nevertheless, from the Allied point of view Rundstedt's attack cannot be considered anything but a nasty dig in the ribs. The Ardennes had already been exploited by Hitler in 1940, and in previous wars by other German generals. There was no excuse for holding the area in contempt as a possible danger. In fact, there was every reason to assume to the contrary. Furthermore, it will require more explanation than is likely to be offered how Allied intelligence services failed to notice the concentration close to or actually in this area of German forces amounting to a quarter of million men with several thousand tanks and a supply column utilising 10,000 lorries. Despite the bad weather it is impossible to congratulate the Allies on their preliminary staff work. There was something inexplicably amateurish about the lack of Allied information which made Rundstedt's plan possible. No doubt this episode will be used as a classic example of what happens when an army intelligence system breaks down at a critical moment.

The series of operations instituted by Field-Marshal Montgomery to eliminate the bulge continued all through the month of January. In fact, it was not until February 8 that it was possible to announce that the American First Army's capture of the town of Schmidt had thus retaken the last ground lost in this episode. The operation had ended in failure for the Germans. It had cost them 220,000 soldiers, including 110,000 taken prisoner, 1,450 tanks and assault guns. Furthermore, Hitler had committed a total of twenty-four divisions, including ten panzer divisions. The whole of the German 6th S.S. Panzer Army, the 5th S.S. Panzer Army, and the 7th German Army escaped complete annihilation only because of bad weather. These losses were suffered at a time when since D Day the Germans had lost men and equipment sufficient to form 110 divisions, and enough tanks and assault guns to equip fifteen divisions. On February 5 General Bradley resumed command of the First American Army and Field-Marshal Montgomery returned to his original command.

While the alarums and excursions were taking place on the Western

Front the Russians had not been idle in the east. They had battered their way into Budapest. Large chunks of Czecho-Slovakia were falling to their armies. On January 12, 1945, it was announced by Stalin that his armies had forced a sudden breach in the Nazi defence lines in Poland. It was about these self-same lines that the Germans had previously boasted that they were impregnable. In this offensive, which started on the line of the Vistula and ended with the Soviet Army aligning itself along the Oder on January 23, 1945, Red Army troops pushed Hitler finally out of Poland. Warsaw fell to the Russian armies, who took it in their stride on January 17. Marshal Zhukov, in command of the 1st White Russian Army, proceeded to lever the Germans out of East Prussia. Konigsberg, its capital was besieged and was finally taken on April 9, 1945. Koniev, in command of the 1st Ukrainian Army, swept through Poland and a fortnight after the offensive opened was besieging Breslau. The Germans abandoned large tracts of Silesia, their only heavy industrial area after the Ruhr.

By the beginning of February Russian troops were only forty-five miles from Berlin, at the apex of a huge salient with a base of 300 miles and a penetration of nearly 350 miles. By the middle of February the Neisse River had been crossed and by March 6 the mouth of the River Oder had been reached. The Russians were thus aligned against Berlin on a front which in the south ran along the River Neisse west of Breslau to Frankfurt on the Oder, thence along the River Oder to Stettin. Behind this front there were still pockets of German resistance to be cleaned up, but one by one they fell, until even the Polish corridor and the port of Danzig were in Russian hands.

This Polish debacle represents the greatest German disaster in the history of war. Their situation was indeed hopeless. Before Vienna their last barriers were falling, and by the first week in April Russian soldiers were fighting in the centre of that city. The best that can be said is that Rundstedt's adventure had prevented the Allies in the west staging their knock-out to coincide with the Russians. Thus the knock-out of Germany, which might have been staged in one dramatic heave was destined to take place in two Acts equally dramatic, but more spaced in time.

Having resolved the Rundstedt complication, Allied armies in the West proceeded methodically to liquidate the German armies west of the Rhine. On February 18, 1945, Field-Marshal Montgomery issued one of his characteristic messages to his men. In it he said: "Operations on all fronts have now brought the German war to the final stage. . . . We stand ready for the last round. . . . We will go for a knock-out till the final count—there is no time limit." By the end of February Cologne was attacked in a mighty forward surge in the West. On March 7 the capture of Cologne was announced. Furthermore, the German 15th and 1st Paratroop Armies were virtually destroyed as fighting formations in a series of battles between the Rivers Maas and the Rhine. Remnants of this one-time picked Army were pursued to the Rhine crossings by United Kingdom and Canadian troops. In the south the American 1st, 3rd and 7th armies had driven deep into the German armies west of the Rhine. They were cut into isolated sectors, their escape routes across the Rhine were blasted from under them. The Wehrmacht west of the Rhine was virtually eliminated with huge loss of tanks and vehicles by the end of the first week in March. In fact, it was announced on March 9 that the U.S. 1st Army, under General Hodges, had opportunely forced a crossing of the Rhine on March 7 at Remagen, between Bonn and Coblenz. This bridgehead was rapidly expanded and grew to be a formidable tactical asset for the Allies in the subsequent battles for the Rhine crossings.

Huge Allied air formations proceeded methodically to isolate the Ruhr, to cut all German communications leading to the Rhine, and to destroy vast dumps of German material as well as road and rail communications. In fact the battles for the Rhine crossing was presaged by air action which virtually isolated the area from the rest of Germany. At this critical juncture Hitler disposed of Rundstedt and ordered Kesselring, the German commander in Italy, to take charge. In fact, commentators declared that Hitler changed generals in mid-Rhine. While this was taking place the Allies were aligned along the Rhine from Arnhem in the north to Switzerland in the south. The line of battle was: Montgomery, British 2nd Army and Canadian 1st Army, Holland to Cologne; General Simpson, U.S. 9th Army, Southern Ruhr; General Hodges, U.S. 1st Army, Cologne to Coblenz; General Patton, U. S. 3rd Army, Coblenz to Frankfurt; General Patch, U.S. 7th Army, Frankfurt to Karlsruhe; and General Tassigny, French 1st Army, thence south to the Swiss border.

For nearly a week huge smoke screens covered the Rhine, especially along the front commanded by General Montgomery. All manner of bridging and other equipment was assembled under cover of these screens. On March 23, 1945, the battle of the Rhine crossings began on the lower Rhine and was subsequently extended southward. It was watched by Churchill, Eisenhower and the Allied leaders. A vast airborne army descended on the Germans east of the Rhine at all the areas where crossings were planned. These sky troops, in fact, seized no less than six bridges over the Rhine. Assault and supply craft which had been brought up overland were quickly manned by the Allied navies. A series of crossings were made between Arnhem and Karlsruhe. This phase of the battle continued all through March. Allied bridgeheads over the Rhine were established, consolidated, expanded, and a vast build-up of troops continued in preparation for the break-out into Germany in battles of pursuit.

Meanwhile the Remagen bridgehead was expanded until troops in this area burst into Germany, thereby covering the flanks of adjoining bridgeheads and enabling operations to be speeded up. By March 27 General Eisenhower announced: "A preliminary victory in the west has been won. The main German defence line has been broken. The Germans have not the strength to make a future stand such as they have made in the past. The German Army is whipped but it is not impossible for it to form a new front when we are extended." Next day spearheads in the lower Rhine were reported twenty miles inside Germany. Tanks of the U.S. 1st Army were reported sixty miles beyond the Rhine, as were those of the U.S. 3rd Army. The battles of pursuit were on.

There had been no operations directly opposite the Ruhr. This huge industrial area was by-passed, thereby trapping a German army of nearly 500,000 men. In fact, eleven days after the great offensive had started the Ruhr was a diminishing enemy island in a vast Allied surge bursting deep into Germany. By April 14 it was announced at Supreme Headquarters that the Allied programme since D Day was now far ahead of timetable. On this, the three hundredth day since D Day, the timetable had planned for the Allied advance to be no further ahead than Antwerp. In reality the Allies on that day were approaching the River Weser. Osnabruck had fallen to British airborne troops, the Canadians had cut the railway between Amsterdam and Hanover. South-west of Leipzig General Patton had sent seven tank columns rumbling eastward along parallel routes. Gotha had been reached the day before. Such well-known German cities had been captured as Munster, Hamm and Kassel.

The Allies in the west were only 180 miles from their Russian allies in the east at the nearest point as the Allied bomber flies. On April 10, 1945, it was announced that Canadian troops had reached almost to the Zuyder Zee and had cut off 200,000 German troops in Holland. Moreover, the V bomb sites in that area had been eliminated.

The Germans had been sent reeling into the heart of their own country suffering losses which no armies could endure for any length of time. In the first ten days of the battles of pursuit their losses amounted to 500,000 men killed, wounded or captured. This worked out at a daily average of 50,000 Germans. Hitler, however, resolutely refused to capitulate. Possessed of some innate desire for martyrdom he appeared determined to make sure that this time there could be no shadow of doubt as to whether or no the German armies had been well and truly beaten.

It became clear by the 24th April, that the sands were running out in Germany. The large-scale battles of pursuit continued unchecked on all active fronts. Having been beaten on the Rhine, there were no German armies capable of checking the Allied advance. Indeed, the two fronts—Western and Eastern—were bulging dangerously close one to the other for German armies to find room to operate. The Germans were being choked by two vast fronts which showed every sign of merging at any moment. At this phase the Allied front in the West ran from just south of Emden to the outskirts of Hamburg, thence south-east along the Elbe to Magdeburg, east of Leipzig, and south through the western tip of Czecho-slovakia to Augsburg, Lake Constance and Basle. The Russians were along the line of the lower Oder at Stettin, thence to Berlin, Dresden, the northern boundary of Czechoslovakia to Ostrava, Brno, Vienna, Graz and thence into Jugo-slavia. It was apparent that the Reich was about to be cut into two.

The armies of the West and the East met two days later on April 26 at a place called Torgau in the vicinity of the Mulde River in the heart of Germany. It was apparent that the situation for the German armies was hopeless. Further contacts of West and East continued to be made. There was now not one Germany, but two. A triangular wedge of Germany was left in the north. The base ran East from Hamburg to Stettin, a distance of 150 miles. The apex was some fifty miles south of Berlin. The southern armies of the Reich were in Czecho-slovakia with Prague as their centre, and in Austria. A portion of the southern quadrilateral overflowed across the Brenner Pass into the valley of the Po.

During the period in which armies of pursuit were scampering across northern Germany events in Italy were rushing toward a conclusion. The famous 8th Army wasted no time after crossing the Senio River on the night of April 9-10. This army, in fact, proceeded to put into operation one of Field-Marshal Alexander's famous moves to a flank. The Germans were ensconced in Italy roughly in the valley of the Po with ramparts along the southern extremities of this huge valley stretching right across northern Italy. Their main area of resistance in the southern fringes of the Po Valley was around Bologna. The Brenner Pass, their only useful exit and supply line to Germany, lay almost 200 miles due north of Bologna. Field Marshal Alexander concentrated his main blow along an area parallel to the line, Bologna-Brenner Pass and slightly east of it. The effect was to endanger the German supply line, to introduce a very active front parallel to that line, and to threaten to bottle up some twenty-five German divisions in the valley of the Po. It was just such a plan which had produced spectacular results in the Cassino-Rome area.

The 8th Army pushed north in the Adriatic area. Bologna fell to Polish

troops on April 21 as a result of converging attacks by the 8th and 5th Armies. The New Zealand Division crossed the Po on Anzac Day, April 25, thence they sped north-east, eventually arriving at Trieste in the middle of partisan complications of a nature similar to those that had occurred in Greece. during liberation. The 5th and 8th Armies wasted no time. The 5th dashed north-west toward Lake Como, the 8th, north toward the Brenner Pass. Field Marshal Alexander's masterly strategy was in process of being implemented by a series of brilliant tactical successes due to the energetic and skilful leadership of General Mark Clark, in charge of the two armies. By April 29 the 8th Army was north of Venice and had spearheads in the vicinity of Brenner Pass. The operations were now assisted by Italian Partisans, who prevented any chance of the reeling German armies in Italy rallying.

A rising of partisans in the Milan area and in the mountain passes on April 27 captured over a dozen large towns in the north. The rising swiftly spread and link-ups with the Allied armies were made. The Germans were corralled. Their exits were blocked. Moreover, tremendous air onslaughts by the Allies had shattered their ability to resist during and after the crossing of the Po. Mussolini was captured by partisans while trying to escape to Switzerland near Lake Como on April 27. In company with seventeen high-ranking Italian Fascists Mussolini and his mistress were shot. Their bodies were subsequently displayed publicly at Milan.

German military might in Italy ceased by April 30. Twenty of the best divisions of the German Army had been torn to pieces. In an offensive lasting twenty-two days the German armies had been eliminated as a fighting force. On May 2 the German armies in Italy surrendered unconditionally. Nearly a million German soldiers went into captivity. The area surrendered included not only northern Italy but stretched north across the Alps to Linz. It was apparent that any plans to defend the so-called Bavarian redoubt were now out of the question. Powerful Allied armies were surging over southern Germany from the west, the east, and from the south, via Italy and the Alps.

It is probable that the German surrender in Italy was largely stimulated by the dreadful news from the north, from the German viewpoint. The Russians were storming into the heart of Berlin. On May 1 the death of Hitler was announced, at his Chancellory in Berlin. He died from cerebral haemorrhage, suicide, a Russian shell which landed beside him. The Nazis, in fact, gave him so many deaths it is not improbable that he never died at all; but made a good get-away under cover of funeral marches played from the few remaining German radio stations.

In Northern Germany the candle of Hitler's Reich was guttering in an atmosphere of bullets, burning cities, suicides, and swift advances by the Allies, whose forces now totalled 10,000,000 men. Germany with the lid off was proving an unpleasant sight. Concentration camp after concentration camp was being overrun. From each came tales of horror which makes the brutalities of Genghis Khan seem trivial in comparison.

Berlin fell the day after Hitler's death was reported. Hamburg surrendered on May 3. The battles of pursuit had ended. The last phase had arrived—the phase of wholesale surrenders. Admiral Doenitz claimed that Hitler had nominated him to be Fuhrer. He issued orders for the German armies to fight on. This decision ended a period lasting about five days in which Himmler had initiated peace feelers. His efforts, however, proved abortive in view of the fact that he offered unconditional surrender of the German armies to Britain and America, but not to Russia. The comings and goings of his emissary, Count Bernadotte, faded out in a series of statements

made by Admiral Doenitz suggesting that the Germans intended to resist to the bitter end.

The next dramatic surrender came in the North. On May 4 all the German armies in North-West Germany surrendered unconditionally to Field Marshal Montgomery. The area included the Friesian Islands and Heligoland and Denmark and Holland. This accounted for another million German soldiers. Indeed, the problem for the German soldiers was to find somebody to whom they could give themselves up. The policy of surrendering to anybody but the Russians persisted. Whole divisions made their way westward in order to give themselves up to the British or to the Americans. There was no pride left in the Wehrmacht.

By May 5 the situation might best be described as a situation of the pockets. In the north there remained a pocket west of Stettin and isolated pockets along the Baltic coasts. In the south there remained large German armies, some twenty divisions, in Czecho-slovakia, stretching, via a bottleneck, into the areas south of Vienna and into the Austrian Alps almost to Trieste itself. On May 4 the southern area of this pocket had surrendered, uncovering a front from Linz to Leipzig and the Swiss border. The rest of Germany was in Allied hands. In fact, a total of over five million prisoners had been taken, not to mention sixty German generals.

Beyond Germany there remained only Norway, an isolated pocket containing some fifteen German divisions, numerous U-boat bases, and at least two large naval bases. It was clear, however, that the Germans did not intend to defend Norway, despite their policy of fighting whenever possible in the other fellow's country. Doenitz was already calling his U-boats home, because they now had no effective bases from which to continue operations. Kiel, the German naval base number one, was shattered beyond belief, and was in Allied hands. The remnants of the Germany Navy had surrendered to the Allies in Baltic ports. By May 5 Allied naval forces were patrolling off Trondheim and Oslo fiords.

So complete had been the Allies' blows since D Day, only eleven months before, that Nazi Generals were out of touch with their armies and armies were crumbling to nothing in spontaneous bursts of panic. Not even Doenitz could get instructions passed swiftly to the dying remnants of the divisions of the Southern Reich. The main signals headquarters had been overrun by the Allies some weeks ago. The German armies had received a defeat so decisive history records nothing like it. The battle of Waterloo pales into insignificance compared with what the Allies had done to the Wehrmacht in some 330 days. Only in Czecho-slovakia did there remain ugly rumours of war and the thud of shells. A Czech rising in that area took place on May 5 but the situation remained confused. The Czechs held Prague. They were surrounded by powerful German armies using tanks. These German armies in their turn were surrounded by Allied armies advancing from the west, the south and the east. The end was inevitable. By May 6 Allied forces were only seven miles from Prague.

An air of expectancy had settled upon Allied communities. On May 6 it was announced that the war in Europe might end at any moment. The final announcement, in fact, came almost as anti-climax from London on May 7 when it was stated that Germany had surrendered unconditionally. The surrender to the Western Allies and Russia was signed at 2.41 a.m., G.M.T., in a schoolhouse in Rheims, used by General Eisenhower as his headquarters. The surrender was signed for the Germans by Colonel-General Gustav Jodl, new German chief of staff, and by General Eisenhower's chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Wilbur Bedell Smith. Major General Ivan Suslaptov

signed for Russia, and General Francois Sevez for France. General Eisenhower did not attend the signing, but immediately afterwards he received Colonel-General Jodl and General-Admiral Hans Friedburg and obtained from them a statement that they fully understood the terms of surrender and an assurance that they would be carried out. After the signing Colonel-General Jodl asked and received permission to speak. He said: "With this signature the German people and armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the victors' hands. In a war which lasted more than five years both the German people and the armed forces have suffered more, perhaps, than any other people in the world." There was no reply, the German delegates clicked their heels and walked out of the room in silence.

The German Third Reich ceased its legal existence on May 8. The German Government became that of a subjugated, conquered, occupied country, without further independent existence. All the German war leaders became prisoners of war. Furthermore, all German property, possessions, and credits became automatically transferred to the account of the Central Allied Control Commission, which began to function forthwith. In 1918 there had been an armistice. In 1945 there was no armistice. The whole of the German manpower, military and private property were at the disposal of the Allies. The Nazi Party had been swept away—gone.

The Surrender Act was ratified in the ruins of Berlin on May 9. Included in the surrender terms which were then ratified was the following: "We, the undersigned, acting on the authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Allied Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command all the forces on land and sea and in the air at this date under German control." The ratification was signed by Field-Marshal Keitel (Army), General Admiral Friedeburg (Navy), General Stumpf (Air Force), in the presence of Marshal Zhukov, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, General Spaatz, and General de Tassigny.

As peace came gradually to isolated areas of Europe, the loose threads of German defeat were gathered in all over the continent. On May 10 the Russians were parading through the streets of Prague, city of chaos. British naval craft had entered Oslo and Trondheim Fiords, and Norway had capitulated. The Dodecanese had surrendered. Crete had surrendered, and 10,000 German soldiers in the island. In the English Channel the Germans handed over on May 10, the only piece of British territory they had managed to grab. In France the Germans crept out of Dunkirk, St. Nazaire and Lorient as prisoners to the armies besieging those places.

In concluding his announcement that hostilities had ended in Europe, Mr. Churchill said: "The German war is therefore at an end. . . . Our gratitude to our splendid allies goes forth from all our hearts. . . . Advance Britannia. Long live the cause of freedom. God Save the King."

The End.

MEN OF DESTINY

CHURCHILL

An unfolding purpose provides a man of destiny when such a man is needed. In fact, when one studies the life of men in the forefront of the strife to-day, it would appear as if destiny is at pains to ensure that the irresponsible vanity of upstarts shall not be permitted to thwart the flow of the great river of progress. Mankind sweeps onward round the corners of the years to fulfil a purpose concerning which even the very great philosophers glimpse but a vague fraction. Indeed, even evil men, the Ghenghis Khans, the Bismarcks, the Hitlers, are compelled to lend their evils so that good may eventually unfold. Out of the storm comes hope, from darkness comes greater light. In the general post of world war, nations are mixed one with another so that an unfolding purpose may utilise the product in the future mosaic.

One would almost imagine that Lord Randolph Churchill, Winston's father, was an instance of over-eager Destiny anxious to make sure that a man of destiny should be ready for the dangers ahead. If that be so, Destiny made an error of one whole generation. Indeed, Destiny seemed to realise this error. Just when Lord Randolph appeared to have the ball at his feet he folded up and disappeared from history. The error, however, was more than corrected. The man who arrived too early left behind a son who arrived in step with events—but only just—it required a lifetime before his ripe experience was at the service of a world in agony.

Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born on November 30, 1874. He was the first son of Randolph, who, in his turn, was the third son of the seventh Duke of Marlborough. It was a name with which to conjure. The first Duke had risen to a position of high honour entirely as a result of his inspired, almost uncanny, ability to solve bewildering political tangles in Europe. Incidental to his master strokes of diplomacy, he had combined a skill as a commander on the strategical battlefields never excelled even by Napoleon. Here, then, was a fresh chip of an old block which in the seventeen hundreds had walked hand in hand with Fate.

Destiny was determined that Winston should survive to fulfil a purpose denied his father. When the lad, Winston, fell thirty feet from a tree and was unconscious for several days, who could see what responsibilities were in store for that lad sixty years hence. In Egypt, in South Africa, and on many outposts of Empire the young Winston seemed determined to flaunt Destiny. He survived the poised dagger of outlandish barbarians, and, but for the fact that Smuts forgot his revolver at the first meeting with Winston in South Africa, history might have had to submit to changes.

Winston was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst military college. He entered the army in 1895 as lieutenant in the Fourth Queen's Own Hussars and served with the Spanish forces in Cuba in the same year. In this campaign he gained his first medal, First Class Spanish Order of Military Merit.

It was strange that a man to whom the British Empire was to owe so much should have acquired merit in the eyes of a foreign country before his own even realised he was there.

When Mr. Churchill was called upon to bear the burdens of Great War II. it could not be argued that, like many Prime Ministers, he knew nothing about war. Before he was twenty-five years old he had seen more active service, in a variety of units, in every climate, than had many generals by fifty. In 1897 he was present with the Malakand Field Force, attached to the 31st Punjab Infantry, and was mentioned in dispatches. He also got his second medal with clasp. A year later he served as orderly officer with Sir William Lockhart with the Tirah Expeditionary Force, for which he received a clasp. In the same year he had contrived to become a member of the Nile Expeditionary Force and took part in the battle of Omdurman for which he received another medal and clasp. From 1899-1900 Lieutenant Winston Churchill was in the Light Horse in South Africa, participating in the Boer War. Subsequently, he became special correspondent to the *Morning Post*, London. He was captured by the Boers when he was giving instructions to the engine-driver of an armoured train how to extricate the train from an impossible situation. Churchill was present at the principal actions of the Boer War, including Spion Kop, Acton Holmes, Vaal Kranz, Pieter's Hill, the engagement at Johannesburg, and the capture of Pretoria. For all this Winston gained a medal with six clasps. Thus, by the age of twenty-six years, Winston Churchill could jingle a respectable row of medals.

Destiny had not arranged for Winston to spend all his days collecting medals and experience in the army. It was but one facet which required polishing in order to fit him for the enormous tasks awaiting him in his later years. In 1900, Churchill entered Parliament as Liberal Member for Oldham. He has been in Parliament off and on ever since. In 1906 he became Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies—his chief, Lord Elgin, being in the House of Lords. Thus, Churchill was responsible for that Department in the House of Commons. It is a curious fact that Churchill never learned by becoming a mere spectator. If he was doing a job he was right in it, bearing a load of responsibility usually denied men twice his age.

Possibly, this eagerness to assume responsibility was the urge behind Churchill's desire to reduce his impressions to writing. Even now he had written several books which placed him among the successful authors of the day. His military impressions may still be read in such books as "The Story of the Malakand Field Force," and "Ian Hamilton's March." In 1900 he published "Lord Randolph Churchill," which was a prelude to even greater inspiration in his biography of "Marlborough."

From Churchill's entrance into the army in 1894 until he accepted office in Sir Henry Bannerman's Ministry in 1905 we have the story of a man in the making. From the last-named date, until Great War I., in 1914, we have the story of the statesman in the making. It was a facet which Destiny insisted upon polishing and repolishing.

Probably his greatest triumph during this period was his speech on the Transvaal Constitution. It still remains a model of lucid exhaustiveness. His conclusion was impressive. In a period when a beaten enemy was considered something in the nature of a doormat, Churchill advocated humane treatment and opportunity. He prophesied, as a result, a loyal South Africa to rise out of the red sea of war. Moreover, he flung a final appeal to the Opposition couched in the style which in the low-water phase of Great War II. was to make him famed all over the world. His appeal to the Opposition to join in the great Imperial Act ended with these words: "We can only

make this Constitution the gift of a party. You can help to make it the gift of the nation." The young Churchill had now become a solid politician and men were saying that he had a future ahead of him. Nevertheless, Destiny did not permit Winston easy victories, or back-door routes to fame. In fact, on occasions, when easy fame and preferment appeared to be there for the grasping, Destiny dashed it to the ground and left Winston to contemplate the broken pieces.

Nevertheless, Churchill's pre-Great War I. life was a period of steady progress. It was largely due to Churchill that the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies obtained self-government. This led to the Federation of South Africa and a life-long friendship between Churchill and Smuts. The skill shown in this difficult task relating to the Boers had much to do with a place being found for Churchill, in 1908, in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade.

Indeed, when Winston Churchill assumed the responsibilities of Prime Minister in the lowest ebb of a terrible World War, nobody could complain that the man had no knowledge of Government or of politics. Already, in 1909, he was accepted as a great power in the Liberal Party. In fact, at this stage Churchill threw himself with typical boldness and impetuosity into the conflict which raged after the House of Lords rejected the Lloyd George Budget. One can see, at this stage, a glimpse of the broader outlook which became so prominent a part of Churchill's diplomacy in Great War II. He was never a man content with parochial ends. His schemes were formed such that they became integrated in the wider designs of Empire, and even beyond. This aspect peeps out in Churchill's views on Home Rule for Ireland, expressed at a meeting in Ireland. "Any plan for Home Rule put forward," he said, "would be an integral part of Parliamentary devolution, and would not be inconsistent with the design of the ultimate Federation of the Empire." The thread of Empire runs through his life. It was not destined to blossom forth until after Great War I. Nevertheless, his guide in difficult decisions was always: "How does it affect the Empire?"

The British Empire is made possible by the British Navy. It was, therefore, not surprising that events on a larger scale took shape in 1911 which were destined to give Churchill an insight into naval matters early in that year. Destiny compelled Churchill, not against his will, to serve his time before the mast of high naval responsibility. In July, 1911, Great Britain came into dangerous clash with an increasingly provocative Germany over the Agadir incident. War was avoided, but it became obvious that it was only deferred. The Kaiser thenceforward "hoched" and "hawed" more stridently. Churchill was transferred from the Home Office to the Admiralty. Asquith told him to "put the Fleet into a state of instant and constant readiness for war." Churchill did not have an enviable task. The War Office and the Admiralty were at loggerheads regarding fundamental points of strategy. For some reason the Admiralty were stubbornly opposed to a Naval War Staff. Churchill created a new Admiralty Board and proceeded to form a naval staff, thereby removing the main cause of friction. In fact, this task had not been wholly completed when Great War I. started in 1914. Nevertheless, during Churchill's tenure of office at the Admiralty, significant naval changes occurred. The fifteen-inch gun was introduced, the light cruiser was developed, changes were made in naval personnel, and a division of fast battleships of the *Queen Elizabeth* type was created. Jellicoe and Beatty came to the fore and received important commands just before 1914. In short, the Battle of Jutland was already won and a turning point in Great War I. established before that war started. Churchill is due more praise for this

than he has received.

May be Destiny considered Churchill was progressing too fast. At any rate, an unfortunate set-back originated in the twilight years before the first German thunderstorm broke over Europe. Churchill was determined war was imminent. Lloyd George, man of peace, with no service experience, was equally sure it was not imminent. An unfortunate rift opened. Nevertheless, when Great War I. started, it was due to Churchill's foresight that the Fleet was ready and on a war footing. Unfortunately, the mere fact that Lloyd George had been wrong tended to widen the rift. Churchill found himself the leader of a minor school of strategy. The Antwerp expedition and the Dardanelles enterprise were both the children of Churchill's brain. Despite the fact that the Dardanelles policy was strategically sound, it was a tactical failure largely due to half-hearted action and lack of enterprise. Churchill had to take the full brunt of the criticism for its failure. Nothing succeeds like success, and one can but wonder what would have happened if its tactical aspect had carried the bold scheme to unqualified success.

In May, 1915, Churchill was succeeded in office at the Admiralty by Balfour. He remained in office for a month or so as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, but in November he resigned. Thus had Destiny broken the almost unfaltering progress of this child of hers just when it seemed he might have been most use to his country. It was no easy high road upon which Winston had set forth. He could not attain everything for the asking.

Churchill left the highest position in the Navy to command a battalion at the front. Once again, the soldier was on active service, with the rank this time of lieutenant-colonel, commanding the 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers. It was a position of peril in the front line. In fact, the Destiny which had broken him all but lost him. A friend phoned him to meet at a certain spot behind the lines. Churchill waited a couple of hours at the rendezvous. When he returned, he found his dug-out had been flattened by a German shell. This interlude of soldiering ended in 1917 when he was appointed to the Treasury Bench as Minister of Munitions. A year later, he became Secretary for War and Air Minister. Thus, it fell to Churchill to demobilise the British Army when Great War I. ended.

Churchill's Russian policy and expensive minor campaigns instigated against the Bolsheviks widened the rift between him and Lloyd George once again. Possibly as a result, Churchill was passed over for the vacancy that occurred as Chancellor of the Exchequer, created by the retirement of Bonar Law. In 1921 Churchill went to the Colonial Office.

The post-war period between the two wars proved to be a testing period for Churchill's patience. Like Sisyphus, he had pushed the burden almost to the top of the hill, but he was not destined to get to the top yet awhile. The first introduction to the political doldrums occurred in 1922 when the Dundee constituency voted Churchill out of Parliament. He found himself in retirement for two years. The period was devoted to writing, painting, brick-laying and lecturing. He started the first volume of *The World Crisis*, subsequently completed in 1927. In 1924 he was defeated in a by-election in the Westminster Division, but in September, he was once again able to take his place in Parliament, this time as member for Epping. It was at this time that he obtained his long-coveted post as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In all, he was responsible for the Budgets of the next four years. Having demobilised the Army in 1918, he now had the thankless task of sorting out the economic tangles produced by the Great War I. The years of his chancellorship saw a progressive settling of war debts and readjustments of a

Britain whose finances were heavily burdened by world war. When Labour took over the reins, in 1929, Churchill still retained his seat as Member for Epping. Nevertheless, his party was "out," Churchill was "out."

Churchill had reached the period of his life when Destiny put him through the final test. The man had been made, the statesman had been made—now came the wilderness—the final test. From 1930, for the next ten years, the times were sadly out of joint. The half-hearted 'thirties were utterly alien to Churchill's dynamic character. In fact, there grew up a mutual distrust.

If Churchill distrusted the decade, certainly the decade distrusted this voice crying in the wilderness. A belief grew that Churchill was "unreliable." It was created by a series of half-hearted policies whose survival was due to weak-kneed scepticism casting a great illusion over reality. Churchill blew robust gusts of invective, in vain, against the ramparts of sand he had no power to control. "We see our race, doubtful of its mission—drifting to and fro with the tides and currents of a deeply disturbed ocean," warned Churchill to ears which would not hear. Churchill was impatiently compelled to look on while the muddled idealism of MacDonald gave way to Baldwin's organised inertia. As the peace Churchill had helped to make in 1918 now passed all understanding in the illogical decade before Great War II., Churchill hung on to the Conservative Party's flank with the pertinacity of a bulldog. His political speeches were issued in book form and afforded written proof of the warnings which were to remain unheeded by a succession of political "mixtures as before." His thunderings did no more than ensure him the unsatisfying role of an elder statesman with a watching brief.

Churchill was forced to watch MacDonald hit the cloud tops in search of that "broad, just, fundamental thing" which never was found. Churchill warned all and sundry who would listen about this "cursed, hellish invention and development of war from the air. . . ." He pressed impotently for an air force "as strong as that of any Power than can get at us." Instead of action, he was forced to listen to Baldwin assuring industrial magnates that no unnecessary money would be wasted on munitions or preparations for a war which might never come. Indeed, in 1934, Churchill was compelled to listen to Baldwin eloquently locating the British frontier on the Rhine without making any provision to keep it there.

It was at this juncture that Churchill pointed out, with all his characteristic forceful command of words, that a vanquished Germany had now taken the law into its own hands and had rearmed. He thundered for the rebuilding of the Fleet and for adequate anti-aircraft defences. Baldwin contrived to suggest that Churchill's "scaremongering" was downright bad taste. No effort was made to suggest that it had been bad taste for Hitler to take over the Rhine. It was not bad taste for Hoare, in partnership with Laval, to try to solve the Abyssinian problem by so callous an expedient as the elimination of Abyssinia. This distasteful harvest could not be hidden entirely from the general public, which grew more and more amazed.

Certainly, history can never blame Great War II. on Churchill. He suggested, in 1936, a grand alliance to bring Hitler to his senses. Churchill criticised mercilessly Baldwin's inexplicable policy in which, in Churchill's own words, Baldwin "decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent." By the time of the abdication of Edward VIII., Churchill's political fortunes had fallen to zero. Baldwin's sedatives were swallowed. Churchill stimulants were discarded. In this mood, the curtain rose on Neville Chamberlain and his troupe of word-framing conjurers.

Chamberlain initiated a period of hopeful correspondence with the dictators. Chamberlain wrote to Mussolini, and Halifax tried to pick up Hitler as a pen-friend. "I predict," said Churchill at this stage, "that the day will come when, at some point or other . . . you will have to make a stand; and I pray God that when that day comes we may not find . . . we are left to make that stand alone." That day came.

On the first day of Great War II. the public insisted that Churchill, at sixty-four years of age, take over his Great War I. task at the Admiralty. While Chamberlain was optimistically wringing his hands, Churchill was shaking his fist. A grateful public listened and recalled his pre-war speeches. With intolerable patience both Churchill and the public submitted to Chamberlain's war, which, like the peace, passed all understanding. While Chamberlain was assuring his cronies that the country would not be turned upside-down to make munitions, Churchill was saying: "There is not a week, nor a day, nor an hour, to lose." There wasn't.

The terrible simplicity in the order of events, which eliminated Norway, sank Holland, swallowed Belgium, and torpedoed France, left Britain rocked but still right-side-up, alone on the outskirts of Europe. This little island was then separated from Hitler's Europe by twenty-one miles of sea. Between the Hun and England, were Churchill, the people of Britain, and the English Channel.

The people of Britain made Churchill Prime Minister. They gave him, in their fearful hour of hope, all the power they had to give. Their judgment was better than those politicians of the decade now over who had turned down Churchill as "unreliable." When the assault on Western Europe was one day off, Churchill took upon his shoulders the awful responsibilities of Prime Minister. In the ninth month of a war, for which he had not been permitted to prepare the nation, Churchill was asked to save Britain, and the world, from a fate against which he had long been thundering. "You ask what is our policy. I will say: It is to wage war by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us. . . . You ask what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory—victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival." The fierce simplicity of this policy was in harmony with the deep-rooted fundamental instincts of the people of Britain; who had never at heart condoned the humiliations of the previous decade. Whatever Churchill did would be backed to the hilt by a great people, backed in their turn by a great Empire. The half-hearted decade was over.

In June, 1940, and the months that followed, Britain stood in greater peril than at any other time in her history. In those summer months of 1940 no man rendered greater service to his people than their Prime Minister. He had been tested, re-tested, tried, bent, cast down, lifted up, given every conceivable type of task and responsibility, before Destiny gave him his real task—to save Britain and the Empire, so that upon this foundation could be built other greater, enduring things, leading ultimately to an Empire of Nations—a confederacy of the world.

When, in September, 1940, German losses in the air over Britain became unbearable, the people of Britain understood their Chieftain when he gave them reprieve with the words: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." The first milestone to victory had been surmounted. Furthermore, the replacement of the unresponsive Chamberlain by the lively figure of Churchill had reactions in the United States of America. A series of conferences and visits between Churchill and Roose-

velt paved the way to Rome. Talks between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin produced the blue-print of victory. It was Churchill's task to take his people and the Empire up the hill to victory. Milestone after milestone was attained and left behind. Now, in the hour of attainment, the world realised that Destiny had given them a genius—a man who had rallied the communities at the edge of the abyss. With a skill born from knowledge gained by a life of hard-won experience, Winston Churchill had utterly confounded the designs of Hitler—"That Evil Man."

ROOSEVELT

When the Roosevelt family set forth from Holland in 1648 for the unknown lands across the Atlantic, the first rung in a ladder had been placed in position. This ladder was destined to rear itself against the wall of Time, until, in the hour of the world's distress, it had given us Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In fact, this family arrived in America in good time to prepare the cradle for no less than two Presidents of the United States of America. Franklin's father, James, was, in fact, a fourth cousin of Theodore Roosevelt, a former picturesque holder of Presidential office. When the move was made from Holland to America the journey took many months. Patience was required. Patience, fortitude in adversity, and vision, all those were required. One might say that just these three characteristics have formed the foundation for Franklin's success. The theme song of his life has been patience. It is a virtue denied to many, yet it reaps so rich a harvest, provided there is also vision.

President Roosevelt was at the White House so long he became almost an institution. His working day started on the second floor in a museum converted into a bedroom. From his bed, he contemplated three dozen china pigs on the mantelpiece and massed nautical prints on the walls. An assortment of wooden donkeys ranged beside the china pigs, which were arranged in increasing heights, with the tallest pig in the centre. Round about 9 o'clock Roosevelt held an informal conference from his bed. The proposed list of the day's appointments were discussed.

Roosevelt's day was largely spent with visitors. One came every fifteen minutes. For most of the day he was a prisoner in his own office. Lunch was brought him in a hot-box. The afternoon was spent with routine appointments—Press conferences, National Defence Commission, Cabinet meetings, Ambassadorial talks. Roosevelt liked visitors. By the evening his schedule was hopelessly out of gear. His extreme sociability always threw his schedule out of gear. He liked people and he liked to talk.

Three times a week he took a swim in his private swimming bath. Every evening he received massage and exercises for the after-effects of infantile paralysis contracted in 1921. This regular routine kept him fit under difficult conditions. His weight rarely rose about thirteen and a half stone.

Franklin Roosevelt did not plan to become President. He did not dedicate his life to that end. Unlike Churchill, he did not spend his young days gratifying a thirst for adventure. Roosevelt did not spend a lifetime training for high office. When he died, however, he had spent a large part of a lifetime as President of the United States of America; no mean feat, in view of the fact that the position lasts only four years and Presidents have never before been encouraged to make it their life's work.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was born at Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York, on January 30, 1882. New York was destined to cradle him, not only as a babe, but during all the stages of his career, from lawyer to President. His particular branch of the Roosevelt family moved to Hyde Park about one hundred years ago. Roosevelt was proud of Hyde Park and when he voted at elections he put his profession as "tree-grower"—he was very proud of his oaks. Actually, it is unlikely that he would have become a timber merchant, because he had always had a hankering for the sea. As a lad he wanted to enter the Navy. His family, who, perhaps, were inspired by Destiny, decided for Groton School and Harvard, followed by a law course at Columbia University. He obtained his degree in 1907. There was no indication at this period of the high calling for which Destiny was preparing him. He was not present at any cavalry charges, he wrote no books, he was never taken prisoner. He patiently plodded along in a legal practice which did not bring him before the public in any way. It is probable that Roosevelt might have patiently pursued his daily tasks, content to play a modest part in whatever responsibilities were placed upon his shoulders. Now and again he thought about the sea and ships and boats.

Two years before Roosevelt took his degree, he married his cousin, Miss Eleanor Roosevelt, of New York. She was a niece of Theodore. In fact, at the wedding Theodore gave the bride away, and in his capacity as President stole all the thunder.

The State senatorial district in which Roosevelt lived had sent a Republican to Albany to represent it for twenty-eight years without a gap. It was, in fact, a period equal to Roosevelt's life-time. He, therefore, decided to contest the position in his twenty-eighth year and entered the campaign with a vigour which was to become characteristic of the man. In 1911 he was duly elected. He went to Albany an unknown man. At that time he had not even earned the title of a "coming man." He came into prominence almost at once as the leader of the Democratic insurgents. In 1912 he was again elected to the legislature with an even more impressive majority. Deep down in the subconscious of his Senatorial district, the community felt that in Roosevelt they had "something."

Already Roosevelt had given proof of his patience. He had not impatiently battered at the gates, but had waited until the gates had opened for him. Once inside, he had found there was a job to be done, not for big business, but for the people, the little men who, like him, had plodded through their daily tasks, wistfully dreaming about the sea, or high adventure in the clouds. In fact, as the years went by Roosevelt gave proof of abilities which rose to the surface when the occasion demanded. His fortitude and courage were not destined to be displayed on the field of battle. He had within himself something as great, if not greater than physical bravery, moral courage. Moreover, already it was becoming apparent that he had a depth of vision destined to take him far. He saw how much was required to make the ordinary American, the man with a small store, or the man with more children than he could afford—how much was required to give some form of security to these people. Moreover, if they were to have security, the whole community must be secure. Roosevelt saw that America could no longer remain splendidly isolated from the world—up in the home clouds. It required the patience of fifteen years, and the highest moral courage, to persuade the 120,000,000 people of the United States of America that what was happening in the great big world outside was vital to them. Patiently, Roosevelt had to wean a whole nation from lovely soft thoughts of soda fountains and ice creams to awful thoughts of war, armies, munitions; and

the cruel, harsh thought that many would be asked to lay down their lives in far-off lands.

Roosevelt's own personal courage was demonstrated in a number of ways when he first started to carve out for himself the political philosophy which kept him at the White House for four terms—a record in a land of records. He chose the tough way to the top. Instead of courting success by a "yes" policy to those above, he became the leader of an insurgent band of politicians. Subsequently, he gave proof of an enduring physical and moral courage when, in 1921, he was struck down by infantile paralysis. The disease left him paralysed from the waist down. Undaunted at this blow, he set for himself a standard of treatment and a psychological outlook which was destined partially to counteract the initial severity of the crippling after-effects. This victory over paralysis was an aspect of a greater significant virtue. Roosevelt was gifted with an extraordinary habit of success. He won victories as a statesman comparable with his victory on the physical plane.

One can only believe that Destiny cherished Roosevelt much as Churchill's career appeared to have been guided by an unfolding purpose. Roosevelt's habit of success is usually considered to be a virtue of the man himself. It may be that there are other more powerful factors which work upon the individual. An Alexander is born when there are worlds to conquer, a Churchill and a Roosevelt when there are worlds to defend. Certainly, success becomes empty and even dangerous unless the individual is convinced of inherent unselfish right in the line of action embarked upon. Napoleon fell when he could no longer continue to flatter himself. Hitler and his gang disintegrated when their vanity had only themselves left to prey upon. Even when the wrong man does the right thing in the right way he fails, whereas the right man who does the right thing in the wrong way cannot fail. When Roosevelt's convictions were right, things conspired to assist. In 1912 he was certain that Wilson was the right man for the Presidency. So convinced was Roosevelt, he defied Tammany and led the fight among the delegates of New York State in favour of Wilson.

Roosevelt's decision to support Wilson proved to be a turning point in his career. When Wilson became President, Roosevelt became Assistant Naval Secretary. He had always had a hankering for ships, and now he had the whole American Fleet. Roosevelt threw himself into the task and effected, in America, lasting improvement in naval administration, as well as in submarine defence policy.

As a matter of fact, even to the last, the sea came out in the President. He always regretted that Hoover sold the Presidential yacht *Mayflower* in 1931. Roosevelt went down to the sea in a former coastguard cutter called *Electra*. He renamed her *Potomac*, and went forth in her for week-end jaunts. This craft can do a doubtful seventeen knots. She was accompanied by *Cuyhoga*, capable of forty knots, just in case. Officially, nothing of a serious nature was discussed during these jaunts. Nevertheless, it is said that the destroyer deal with Britain was worked out on one such trip.

When Great War I. ended it was clear that Franklin Roosevelt was more than a coming man. He kept arriving, but he had not come to the full tide of responsibility Destiny had prepared for him. In 1920 the Democrats nominated him for vice-President. Defeat was in the air, maybe just as well, because few vice-Presidents ever assume the Presidency. Roosevelt resumed his law practice. Nevertheless, his spare time was devoted toward the rehabilitation of his party. It was during this period that he was stricken with a severe attack of infantile paralysis. For some months his life was in danger. Churchill had been cast down by Destiny at various periods in his

life. The blow, however, was always one that could be rectified. This blow, which struck down Roosevelt at the threshold of success, hit him where it hurt most. He had been a crack tennis player, a good swimmer, and an ardent, active lover of outdoor life.

Even in 1928 Roosevelt felt that his disability would lay an unfair burden upon a community who selected him for any responsible task. Eventually he yielded to the importunities of Governor Al. E. Smith, of New York, who was retiring. He agreed to run for Governor in Smith's place. The decision, however, was much against his own personal feelings. Roosevelt was elected Governor by a majority of over 100,000. It was not long before Roosevelt's name was mentioned as the Democratic Presidential nominee. He was actually nominated in 1932. In November of that year Destiny decreed that he begin his record-breaking term at the White House.

If proof were wanted of the trust that a majority of average Americans had in Roosevelt one has only to point out that he was elected their leader for four terms, a period, all told, of thirteen years, to his death. No other American had occupied the political stage for longer than eight years. It is probable that history will record that this period has proved to be the most critical in American history. In that period was worked out, not only a home policy of far-reaching implication, comparable, in fact, with the Russian experiment. But in that period the very destiny of America was hammered out in a terrible world war.

Abraham Lincoln gave the United States of America a course upon which to sail into the future. He gave them cohesion and understanding. It was left to Franklin Roosevelt to give those same States a destiny. Even in 1932 it was becoming uncomfortably clear to many comfortable Americans that the leading nations were heading for war. Franklin's cousin, Theodore, had said a generation before that if Britain found it impossible to safeguard civilisation, America had no choice but to come to her help. His words were put to realistic test in Great War I. Roosevelt realised soon after he had got into the Presidential saddle that another test was inevitable. Roosevelt watched Hitler gesticulating over Europe. He also watched Tojo tank-thumping all over China. There would come a time when the democracies would be compelled to take action to safeguard their positions. Sooner or later Hitler, or Tojo, or both, would go too far. It was Roosevelt's task to prepare a peace-loving Sinatra-swooning public for the storm ahead. Despite the fact that a President of the United States of America has more power than a king, and certainly more power than a British Prime Minister, Roosevelt could not act, except indirectly, to prepare his people. He could not wave a wand which would open the eyes of the isolationists; he could not pull the ostriches out of the sand by the rump. Roosevelt had to use the type of infinite patience a mother uses with her child.

Roosevelt was assisted by the trust which the community placed in him —the trust of a child. Though Big Business had few kind words for a man who sought to ameliorate the condition of humble citizens at their expense, Roosevelt was able gradually to influence the outlook of his people. His task of saving America from America for Americans persisted even after Great War II. had started.

Meanwhile, he was faced with the fact, on election in 1932, that the Home Front was in need of considerable attention. He had to restore economic prosperity after a slump which had hit the lowest ever in personal misery. A second task had been to check the social infection raging in the body politic. This disease made itself manifest in many curious ways. Regular soldiers, for example, had to be ordered to march against veterans

of World War I. and expel them from the National Capital. The National Guard, moreover, had to repress forcibly a revolt of milk farmers in the Mid-West. Mobs were pulling Judges from their benches to prevent foreclosure on the farms. A reality, which in fiction had produced *Grapes of Wrath*, showed every sign of shaking the whole American structure to pieces. Roosevelt had to get the cog wheels overhauled and where necessary redesigned. Whatever may be said for or against Roosevelt's New Deal, at least, it inspired in the community mass a faith in the sanity of their country and in their leader. In fact, just when Hitler was hypnotising an errant German community, Roosevelt was inspiring trusting faith in peace-loving Americans. If the will to win be absent, if a nation loses faith in itself, no weapons will avail. Roosevelt gave to Americans, unconsciously at first, a will to win.

Possibly only a few long-sighted experts appreciated fully what Destiny was doing with their President. In 1928 he won the Governorship of New York. In 1930, after the people had watched him for two years, he romped back. In 1932 he beat Hoover for Presidency. In 1936, after the whole nation had seen the man at work, he was returned, almost without opposition. It is rare that a leader has a slate wiped so clean. In 1940, with war looming and uncertainty everywhere, he beat tradition, isolationism, and Wendell Willkie. Americans selected, as leader to guide them through the shadows, a man who dominated the imagination of the community.

Even before Great War II. overwhelmed the American community, Roosevelt was in a position sufficiently strong to render much-needed aid to Britain, against whom the storm was shrieking with increasing noise. He gave her people the destroyers for which they prayed. America was the only country with sufficient forethought to keep a nest egg of Great War I. naval craft. In Britain they had all gone to make razor blades to scrape the chins of a new generation and trim the cigars of the older. In return, Britain gave America naval rights at certain bases in the West Atlantic. Roosevelt, moreover, saw to it that Britain got much-needed materials and weapons. He safeguarded Iceland and Greenland at a time when German occupation would have suffocated Britain. He froze important enemy credits. The hand of America stretched across the Atlantic on a scale which every month became more and more generous. There was, admittedly, a feeling in America that helping Britain also helped America. Nevertheless, slowly, inexorably, Roosevelt led his people to a frame of mind in which war could be contemplated.

One can only stand amazed at the extreme lack of psychological perception on the part of the Japanese. They completed at Pearl Harbour, on December 7, 1941, something which would have required another couple of years, if left to its natural course of development. Roosevelt found his task solved. In a few hours the Japanese had united the United States. The isolationists were blown sky high by Japanese bombs and submarines. A nation which Roosevelt had been patiently preparing for war now impatiently demanded war. "Remember Pearl Harbour" was worth more than a billion-dollar propaganda scheme.

The industrial outpouring of the greatest industrial nation in the world helped to overwhelm the forces of Evil. Destiny had led her man to his task. The dark days in the Pacific, those grim moments at Guadalcanal, the turning of the tide. All these were but factors in a vaster stage, which Roosevelt had been preparing for years. On his death on April 12th, 1945, his people found a way to thank him for his lofty farsightedness. This combination of the man and the nation made possible a victory where lay only grim defeat for many dark months. But like Moses of old Roosevelt was destined never to see the promised land.

STALIN

Joseph Djugashvili, bearing the revolutionary name of Stalin, "Man of Steel," emerged as the real inheritor of Lenin's power and authority. Between him and Lenin there were vast differences. Lenin dominated by intellect and personality. Stalin reached his position of power by efficient organisation. It was a method which was to stand the Russian peoples in good stead when the real test was thrust upon them in the crucible of war. In fact, Destiny appears to have especially selected Stalin for this terrible test.

Stalin's early days made him particularly suitable to take his country through the worst war that has ever blasted its way back and forth across Russia. In his youth, Stalin was rough, blustering, and impetuous. In Czarist days the police described Josef Djugashvili as "rough, insolent, and disrespectful of authority." Yet, Destiny selected this man to conduct 200,000,000 people of Russia through the supreme test, transcending even that of the Revolution.

Stalin was born on December 21, 1879, at Gori, Georgia, Russia. His father was a drunken peasant cobbler. His mother, Catherine, was meek and brow beaten. She was of the Ossete race. Destiny introduced a cruder, harsher outlook through Stalin's mother. Indeed, it is ridiculous for the Western World to judge Stalin as if he were of the Western World. He must be judged by the Georgian standards of Russia. He was brought up in a harsh school where the struggle for existence, usually under the heel of a conqueror, made men hard at core, suspicious, and cruel to their enemies. The Caucasian mountain chief survived thanks to caution, secretiveness and taciturnity. Fate chose well when she arranged for the mantle of a chief to fall upon this son of Georgia. He was destined to walk amid cross-currents of the East and the West. Indeed, Viscountess Astor put an ingenuous question to Stalin just before Great War II.: "How long do you intend to go on killing people?" she asked. "Just so long as I find it necessary," retorted Stalin. Here, indeed, was a man more than a match for Hitler.

At the age of fifteen years, Stalin was already involved in revolutionary movements. All told, he was exiled seven times and made six escapes. His early days have been turned almost into a religion by his devoted followers. In contrast, they have been belittled by his opponents. Somewhere between the two extremes probably lies the truth. He himself has admitted that much of his apparent harshness is attributable to those days when the iron entered into his soul. As a rough, young revolutionist he took part in the fierce fighting that swept the Caucasus in 1905, following "Bloody Sunday" in St. Petersburg.

Stalin's mother had piously planned to put her son into the priesthood. However, the five years which Stalin spent in the Tiflis Greek Orthodox seminary made him into a dyed-in-the-wool revolutionary, not a priest. He still speaks bitterly of this period in his life. The atmosphere of the place was like a prison. Spying was rife. The letters of those incarcerated in the place were read. The regime was humiliating. In this soil, secret circles and revolutionary ideas flourished. With his major energies diverted into revolutionary channels, it is not altogether surprising that Stalin left the seminary for "reasons of health," as his mother put it.

During the Russian Revolution, in February, 1917, Stalin was in exile. He was immediately released, and returned to Petrograd where he directed the activities of the Central Committee and edited *Pravda*. Stalin was now

accepted as an efficient official, not yet in the front rank with Lenin, Trotsky and Zinoviev, but plodding close behind with a ruthless efficiency. The time had come for Stalin to be tested.

When the Communists took control of Russia they declared, as part of their programme, a policy of self-determination for the different nationalities forming the old Russian Empire. In reality, this old Empire was a loosely knit confederacy speaking well over a hundred tongues and divided up into communities whose only unity was an agreement to differ upon nearly every subject. The Revolutionists soon discovered that it would be disastrous to permit the many nations which went to form the entity, Russia, to set up as independent States. Stalin was given the ticklish task of keeping these communities within the Republic by goodwill, not force. It was an assignment calculated to test a Solomon. Stalin qualified for the high position he subsequently assumed by making a big success of this difficult task. It was his first important administrative post. His organising ability stood him in good stead. Subsequently, his name came prominently before the outside world by his astute management of the Russian Communist Party, of which he became secretary. In fact, toward the end of 1924, he conducted a drastic purge of the Party. Trotsky was ousted, subsequently recalled, and later dropped overboard. Stalin next disposed of Zinoviev on the grounds that his extreme Communist tactics were offending the outside world. If the reason was ironic, at any rate Zinoviev struggled in vain. The machine, even then, was too strong. The machine, in fact, became closer and closer associated with Stalin until it was impossible to differentiate between man and machine. When Lenin suffered a paralytic stroke, leading to paralysis and subsequently death, the tides of Destiny were washing round the feet of Stalin. From his sick bed, Lenin sensed the enmity between Stalin and Trotsky. It would seem that Lenin was rather frightened of the way in which Stalin was going to use his increasing power. "Comrade Stalin," wrote Lenin in a document known as Lenin's Testament, "having become General Secretary, has concentrated enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power." Lenin decided to disarm Stalin and throw him into the discard. Lenin proposed to attack Stalin on the score of alleged mismanagement in the Caucasus. But this bomb never exploded. By a curious act of Destiny, Lenin suffered a fatal stroke and died on January 21, 1924. It was Trotsky who came unstuck. Had Trotsky remained and Stalin gone it is doubtful if the Russians would have weathered the first six months of Hitler's military hurricane which swept eastward into Russia on June 22, 1941. A man of steel was required at the helm, not an idealist. Had, then, Destiny played her third ace against the forces of evil brewing in Germany—Churchill, Roosevelt, of the Democracies—Stalin of the Revolution, linked together for good. It was a curious re-arrangement of the chessmen on the board of Fate.

The Russians got, in this their time of trial by war, a man who understood war and men. He could not stand superficiality. To incompetents he was merciless. He had a difficult job ahead. But then, Stalin summed up difficult jobs in these words: "Here we deal with nothing but difficult jobs. Just say what help you need, and see that everything is done properly and to schedule." In fact, to visitors he said: "Please, do say only what you really think. Do not try to say anything just to please me. Don't think it a bad thing if your reply doesn't correspond to my opinion." In fact, he sacked one responsible functionary because "Before ever he answers a question, he tried to guess how he should reply in order to please the questioner. A man like that can do a great deal of harm without meaning to." Stalin

has set a standard for himself, as well as those who work under him—that is, every Russian. "If you are firmly convinced that you are right, and can prove it, never worry about somebody else's opinion, but act as your mind and conscience prompt you." This was the man entrusted to take the Russian people into war against the most terrible tyrant in Europe. Joseph Stalin, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., Chairman of the State Defence Committee, and People's Commissar for the Defence of the U.S.S.R., Marshal of the Soviet Union, was fighting this time, not only for his own existence, but for the existence of everything he had created—for the existence of Russia itself.

Stalin's methods may have tended toward the Oriental as regards his internal policy. Slow and plodding, he hastened slowly with a thoroughness and subtlety which made him undisputed controller of peace-time Russia. In war, his methods were instituted on a grand scale with a thoroughness which placed him high up in the ranks of strategists. When asked if he considered himself to be a dictator he replied: "No, I am no dictator. Those who use the word do not understand the Soviet system of government and the methods of the Communist Party. No one man or group of men can dictate. Decisions are made by the party and acted upon by its chosen organs, the Central Committee and the Politburo." The efforts of the party to convert Russia into an industrial nation formed part of the prelude to war which ended when Hitler attacked Russia on June 22, 1941.

Three men of Destiny saw the writing on the wall as far back as 1930. Each, in his own way, set about preparing for war. One was unable to assist until, in the hour of their need, the people of Britain turned to him when the enemy was only twenty-one miles away. Stalin was more fortunate. He was able to set into activity long-range plans. It is said that Russia's first Five-Year Plan was an answer to the depression which swept across all countries, leaving economic disaster in its train. The Second Five-Year Plan was, however, definitely designed to prepare Russia for war—possibly on two fronts. Stalin summed up the situation with the words: "In my opinion there are to-day two focal points of real peril to us all. One is the Far East, owing to Japan's expansive policy. The other lies in Europe in the German ambit, as Herr Hitler views it. It is not easy to say which of these is the more menacing. Perhaps, for the moment, the East Asian field is the more explosive; but the centre of the shock may, at any time, spread to Europe." Stalin noted the insistence of the New Order in Asia fostered by Japan. He observed Hitler's insistence on a re-division of the world. He could not avoid noting that, geographically, his own country stood astride the continents of Europe and Asia. When asked what was his foreign policy a few years before Great War II, Stalin said: "Trespassers who push their hog-snouts over our Soviet potato-patch will get the devil's own thrashing. That is our foreign policy." It required painstaking organisation to create an industrial self-sufficiency to enable the thrashing to be delivered.

It is a curious fact that, both in peace and war, Russia was destined to associate herself with the United States of America. In order to carry out his industrial preparation for war, Stalin needed American co-operation. He needed American machines, and American experts to teach his own people how to use the machines. It was a curious state of affairs. America had whole-heartedly supported, indeed, worshipped, capitalism; Stalin had supported the very antithesis. Moreover, Stalin had to find staggering sums of money, which made even American capital insignificant in comparison.

It is probable that Stalin will go down to history as the man who succeeded above all others in preparing his country for Great War II. He was,

in fact, the only man who could go straight ahead with a long-term policy without interference. Roosevelt patiently converted his people toward the idea of war; Britain doodled with the abstract principle. Stalin realistically created armies.

The task of preparing Russia for a modern war must have seemed hopeless, even to a man of steel. Not only did he have to teach his people how to make munitions, but he had to find men for his armies. Organisation and administrative ability were required far ahead of anything ever previously heard of in Russia. Moreover, before the armies could be built up, severe pruning was required. The outside world was surprised at the purges which, apparently, eliminated most of Stalin's generals in 1937 and 1938.

Stalin succeeded in building up a powerful modern army without letting the secret out of the bag. He kept his armies in modest seclusion, deep in the heart of Russia. Even Hitler was fooled. While these Russian armies were in an embryonic stage, Europe was criss-crossed with powerful currents. Chamberlain was stubbornly trying to divert eastward Hitler's schemes for war. Instead of co-operating with Russia, this policy split what might become a united front against war. Stalin now realised that Hitler was priority danger number one. It had become clear that Hitler was winning the armament race. Both Britain and France seemed incapable of staving off the danger. Stalin may have been a man of steel, but above all he was a realist in a decade when, apart from Hitler, Europe sadly lacked this type. In 1939, Stalin realised that his war machine required another two years to reach its peak and compete with Hitler's armies.

It would thus seem that force of circumstances beyond control of Stalin led to the sensational climax in August, 1939, when Hitler's Foreign Minister Ribbentrop signed a pact of non-aggression with the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov in the presence of Stalin. The result was war. Hitler had eliminated an eastern front. France was now at his mercy.

Anti-climax came two years later when, on June 22, 1941, Germany, Hungary and Rumania fell upon Russia. Stalin, the realist, had gained the precious time required to save Russia—admittedly at a terrible price for France and Britain. One cannot, however, blame Stalin. He had been prepared to co-operate with both those countries. In fact, he had signed a pact to that end with France. Chamberlain, however, had given him the cold shoulder every time.

Stalin the General, now took charge. His realistic strategy saved Russia. Hitler became involved in a war on three fronts. His reeling armies bled to death on the Steppes of Russia. It will remain, however, a matter for argument whether Stalin made the correct move. His action had staved off disaster. Nevertheless, if he had not signed the pact with Hitler, Germany would not have been given a free hand in the west. France would not have fallen, Japan would not have been tempted. The war would have been delayed, or even avoided, and anyway confined to one hemisphere. It is a matter of academic interest. One must accept Stalin as a realist who countered Hitler's military preparations by even more effective preparations. There can be no argument that from the time that Hitler attacked Russia the main battlefront was Russia. Stalin defeated Hitler's main armies, and in doing so contributed a major share in ending the war.

HITLER

Adolf Hitler, son of an extremely drunken customs officer and his third wife, Klara Polzl, was born in Austria on April 20, 1889. He was destined to convulse the world more profoundly than even Genghis Khan of old. History fails to record another man who during his life was directly and indirectly responsible for the deaths of well over 20,000,000 people. He was, in fact, directly responsible for the death of at least 3,000,000 people. This ability for one man to massacre whole nations and blot out communities is a tribute to the machine age into which Hitler was born. Other historical tyrants can argue that they, too, would have done as well, if only they had been allowed the dangerous weapons available to Hitler—master of massacre.

Just how this man developed tendencies which made him king of all historical ogres is a matter concerning which psychologists will argue interminably. Yet, it would appear as if Destiny was preparing, even before his birth, to make use of this man on a stage so vast it became part of the incidental life of nearly everybody in the world, some 2,000,000,000 souls. Hitler came from purely peasant stock established exclusively in one region. No less than twelve generations of Hitlers, Huepplas or Hiedlers had not moved from the land where they settled several centuries ago. These families lived in little villages, in Upper and Lower Austria, far off the beaten track. They tilled the soil in the forest district between the Danube and the then Czech-Austria frontier. Even to-day the family tree reveals only fifty-eight family names.

Moreover, from a sociological aspect, Hitler's family tree reveals nothing remarkable or startling. It gives no clue, whatsoever, as to why this man should have emerged, to shoot like a comet, before the ken of all the nations of the world. The first Hitlers were recorded as being in the same district which gave birth to Adolf no less than 400 years ago. Hitler's grandparents on his father's side, Johann Georg Hiedler Schickelgruber, watched Napoleon rampage across Europe. He would have been pained and astonished to know that their son, Alois, would produce a son even more rampagious.

Let it be recorded that Adolf's father, Alois, born June, 1837, was the first Hitler to raise himself out of the humble ranks of peasantry into the higher social class of Customs official. At the age of fifty-six, while Hitler was a small child, he had earned a pension sufficiently adequate to keep him chronically drunk. It would seem that Destiny had been at work already, because, if there had been no French Revolution, Alois would have remained a peasant, and Adolf would never have received an excellent education at the Linz secondary school as prelude to the avalanche to come.

The best that can be said for World Ogre Number One is that he rallied a beaten nation and hurled it at the world. Only by a hair's breadth did he fail to bring the whole world down into disaster more catastrophic than the Middle Ages. A Destiny which gave power into the hands of this man offered him the whole world and arranged for him to fall by the abuse of that very power, just when the offer was on the point of realisation. One can only wonder what power for good such a man as Hitler could have wielded had he been so moved. Like Ghengis Khan, he performed a purpose. Ghengis Khan awoke Europe. Hitler awoke the British Empire from a dangerous slumber after 300 years of inspirational activities. Hitler awoke the United States of America from perils of isolationism and soft living even more accentuated than that which had caused the decay of Japan at the

time that Queen Victoria came to the Throne. Hitler administered to France a shock which remains indelible for centuries. He taught the nations, now destined to co-operate in roles greater than ever before, the dangers of apathy. If any man picked out with flame and consuming fires the selfish policies of many pre-war statesmen, that man was Hitler. Let us hope the communities have learned their lesson.

One may well wonder how this man, Hitler, an adventurer without a nationality, contrived to become the living god of 80,000,000 Germans. Born near Linz, Bohemia, where the Germans were hated, he lived his youth amid bitterness. His father, Alois, died when Hitler was thirteen years old. Alois had been in the habit of reeling home drunkenly, to beat his wife and put the fear of God into young Adolf. In an atmosphere of domestic dictatorship the young boy grew up, nervous, introspective, and fearful. His mother was doomed of cancer even when her husband died. Adolf clung to her for the four remaining years of her life with an affection he never displayed to any other human being. She encouraged him to become an artist. In later years, at the height of his power, Hitler drew strange pictures of crooked houses, red sunsets, and windswept destruction depicting decayed buildings.

Hitler contrived to remain bottom of his class at school, in a non-co-operative effort to prove to his father that he wouldn't be suitable as a government official. His school report monotonously ran: "Adolf is inattentive. He doesn't want to learn, and dreams at his lessons—although he is intelligent and could learn if he wanted to. But he is lazy." This day-dreaming outlook changed when he found, among his father's books, two illustrated volumes on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. An ambition to become an Abbot and enter a monastery gave place to dreams about war. It was at this phase of his life that Hitler's mother died. He made his way to Vienna, but the Academy of Art turned down his pictures for lack of talent. Hitler got a job as a painter's labourer. He proved to be a bad, lazy workman, and was reduced to selling matches in the gutter. It was at this time that his first bitterness started toward the Jews on account of their ability to make good.

Just before Great War I., Hitler went to Munich. He joined a Bavarian regiment and fought in Great War I., reaching the rank of corporal. Any military ability he had did not take him to the Military Staff College.

Psychologists declare that all the murderous and trickster impulses in the soul of Hitler can be traced to a desire, when a child, to defend his mother from his father. His neurotic over-emphasised reactions came from the same source. From that self-same source also came his power over a whole nation. Moreover, he found, in the works of Niccolo Machiavelli, information which showed him how to convert an Oedipus complex into a world danger.

When World War I. ended Hitler received a written invitation to join a new party called the German Workman's Party. He joined and changed the name to National Socialist Democratic Workman's Party. Later, the name was again changed to National Socialist Party, which, when abbreviated in the German, became "Nazi." His party was penniless and faced bankruptcy. Hitler contrived to persuade wealthy industrialists that it was to their interest to provide this money. Hitler, thus first fooled German industrialists, then he fooled Chamberlain, and subsequently the whole German nation. It was with funds from the industrialists that Hitler fought for many years a bitter underground war with the Russian Communist Party. Industrialists of the calibre of Krupp, Kirdoff and Thyssen backed Hitler. Behind the subsequent demands for the Sudetenland, Alsace, and

other rich areas, were greedy industrialists who were offered on the cheap the minerals and assets of the areas concerned. Even in 1927 these industrialists were giving Hitler powerful support. They managed to forget his previous history of failure and his term of imprisonment subsequent to the abortive putsch of 1923. By 1932, all the big magnates, including the coal magnates, were pouring money into Hitler's party chest. One may, therefore, attribute Hitler's initial rise to other people's money. The Big Industrialists of Germany made Hitler. When he was secure he unmade the Big Industrialists. In this Hitler was running true to form. He got what he wanted by paving the approach road with broken pledges.

It is no exaggeration to say that Hitler has betrayed everyone foolish enough to trust his word. First, he betrayed Ludendorf, who, despite the fact that he was in high position, faced trial for high treason as a result. In January, 1934, he signed a ten-year agreement of peace and amity with Poland. Five years later he bombed open Polish towns. Later in 1934, Hitler massacred his old associates in cold blood, so cold it almost started an ice-age. In July, 1936, he guaranteed the independence of Austria. Two years later he invaded Austria. In 1938 he affirmed that the Sudetenland was his "last" territorial claim in Europe. A year later he overran and annexed Bohemia and Moravia. In 1939 Hitler tore the Munich Agreement to pieces and ushered the nations of the world into Great War II.

Here are some of the falsehoods taken direct from Hitler's own mouth. "I trust that no mother will ever have cause to weep in consequence of any action of mine."—Nuremberg, September 8, 1938. During operations which led to the fall of France, German aviators were instructed to shoot up refugees who flocked the roads. German tanks ran over them like insects. In Poland and Russia poison-gas camps were set up, where at least 3,000,000 civilians were "destroyed." This omits British air casualties, and war casualties. In the Reichstag, on September 1, 1938, Hitler stated: "I will not war against women and children. I have ordered my air force to restrict itself to attacks on military objectives." There were women and children on board the *Athenia*, torpedoed a year later without warning by a German submarine and shelled as she sank. Across the page of history the trail of Hitler leaves a track slimy with blood. He betrayed everyone foolish enough to trust him. Eventually, he even betrayed his own principles. He proclaimed his mission to be to erect a barrier against Communism. He denounced the rulers of Russia as enemies of civilisation. In 1939 he concluded a Soviet-German Pact of friendship to enable him to start in safety his first move in Great War II. He vilified and persecuted the Jews, preaching an exclusive racialism and a happy paganism for Germans. In September, 1939, he declared that "racialism was dead" and tried to lure Jewish experts back to Germany because he needed them for war. Finally, he betrayed the German people. He promised them peace. He gave them war, leading to the disintegration of their whole community. He finally destroyed the German nation, forcing it at the pistol point to fight a series of suicidal last-stands. Those who opposed this mad policy were shot—not only them, but their whole family, until there was not one remaining of that name.

It is even claimed that Hitler stole the manuscript of *Mein Kampf* from a German Jew named Lieberknecht. This was the story of Lieberknecht's own life and struggle. He showed it to Hitler before the Jewish purges started. Hitler kept it, altered it to suit his own purpose, and sent Lieberknecht to a concentration camp.

Whatever be the reasons for Hitler's dislike outside the borders of Germany, the fact remains that in Germany there was a period when he was

worshipped as a god. He was worshipped, talked about, admired, trusted, more than any other leader in German history. Hitler the vegetarian, non-smoker, misogynist, supernatural deliverer, replaced God. He became a fount of national inspiration. How did this come about? The answer is fifty per cent. personal magnetism and fifty per cent. propaganda. Steady, unending auto-suggestion pumped into a nation from every street corner eventually deprived the Germans of any vestige of discrimination. His personal magnetism was peculiar in that it failed to move any one not a German. Ever since he poured out his own bitter soul in the very first outburst he delivered in an obscure beer-house in a dingy street in Munich, he has held German audiences spell-bound. His first audience of four found in Hitler's pent-up bitterness a reflection of their own feelings. It was the same with other audiences. Hitler, in some way, expressed the feelings of a defeated, bitter community at the point of despair. He touched chords which responded in the sub-conscious to the defeat of Great War I., to the realities of the Versailles Treaty, to the hunger and despair which stole across 80,000,000 people. Furthermore, Hitler gave the defeated Germans hope. He gave them a way and a will. The instrument, which was the German people, was tuned to a certain pitch. Hitler found he could play upon it.

Hitler's success was, therefore, a mixture of many things. The Allied nations, themselves, contributed to his success, for it was they who had helped to prepare the soil. Saviours only come to the fore when there is a people asking to be saved. The dangers of a peace beyond all understanding created a situation in which Hitler was inevitable. His methods inside the Reich might have gone down in history as not without merit. His methods outside Germany, where his magnetism failed to get across, sealed his fate and eventually brought any good he might have done to the German community crashing into general catastrophe. Hitler's methods in Great War II. are too well known to stress. He instituted a ruthless policy, calculated to destroy the manhood of nations unfortunate enough to come into his clutches.

The German community condoned the monster they had worshipped. They shut their eyes to the repercussions which Hitler's methods piled up for the future. The very fact that the German community condoned Hitler when he seemed to be succeeding stresses their liability now that the future has come—piled up with the mangled remnants of a terrible past.

It has been claimed that a frustrated sex instinct led to the development of self-love in Hitler, which created an overwhelming urge to become a superman. Certainly, Hitler never showed the slightest inclination toward wedlock. It may be that his father's record served as an awful warning. Alois, his father, was himself an illegitimate child. This incurable roué married three times. Before his first wife died he had a child by the woman who became his second wife, and another by her twelve weeks after their marriage. Before his second wife died he had illicit relations with their domestic servant, Klara Polzl, whom Alois made his third wife. She presented him with a child four months after the wedding. Adolf arrived later. Alois, thus, had three wives, seven children, one divorce, one birth before marriage, two births shortly after marriage, one wife fourteen years older than him, and another twenty-three years younger.

Hitler had, thus, been able to contemplate wedlock from a domestic front seat denied many others. Nevertheless, he did have his loves. His first was at the age of seventeen years, while in Vienna. He became infatuated with an attractive Austrian girl, who worked as cashier in a large store. His suppressed nature prevented him adopting the role of what has been described

as a "fast mover." Lack of money prevented him entertaining her. One day, however, he unexpectedly earned five gulden. He waited outside her store, with plans to take his beloved to the opera. As she emerged, Adolf approached trembling with the repressed emotion of youth. Just as he reached her a young man, well dressed and smiling, stepped forward, raised his hat, and walked off with her. He was a Jew; hence Hitler's reference in *Mein Kampf* to "the black-haired Jew boy, with Satanic joy in his face, for hours on end lying in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he pollutes with his blood." The jolt Hitler received on this occasion kept him from paying attention to women for twelve years. When not quite thirty years old, Hitler fell in love with a girl named Geli Raubel. He spent much time with her at the Opera, drinking beer in the gardens, or sitting with her at the pictures. They planned to legalise the relationship by marriage. Geli was the daughter of Hitler's step-sister, and thus his step-niece. Her family brought pressure to bear. Eventually, the girl was torn between her love for Hitler and her duty to her family—she committed suicide. It was suggested that Hitler killed her. A charge was actually entered against Hitler, but it was quashed by a friend named Guertner, Bavarian Minister of Justice. Hitler sought an emotional escape into politics.

In the year when his second love affair was frustrated he started the movement which carried him to the top. It was, however, a near-shave for Destiny who would have had to find another scourge with which to whip the nations. Had Hitler married happily, it is unlikely that he would have closed in on himself. He would not have fulfilled his function of tyrant, alternately based on self-love and self-exultation, which eventually reached pathological dimensions.

Subsequently he became associated with one or two women, but the bitterness had eaten into his soul. None had the steadying influence upon him necessary to keep him normal.

There has always been a tendency to imagine Hitler as an hysteric ascetic. It may be correct, but, at any rate, his income has never become reconciled to that role. He was probably one of the richest individuals in the world, not excepting the prodigious incomes of eastern potentates. His salary, as Reich President, produced £16,000 a year. Added to this was another £20,000 a year for out-of-pocket expenses. His salary as a Member of the Reichstag was an insignificant £600 a year, but it was boosted up by another £3,000 a year as leader of the National Socialist Party. These tit-bits were merely the hors d'oeuvres of his income menu. It is probable that the huge personal fortune of over £1,000,000 he has amassed was derived originally from his book *Mein Kampf*. It is, however, given to few authors to be able to push their wares so unblushingly as did the Fuehrer.

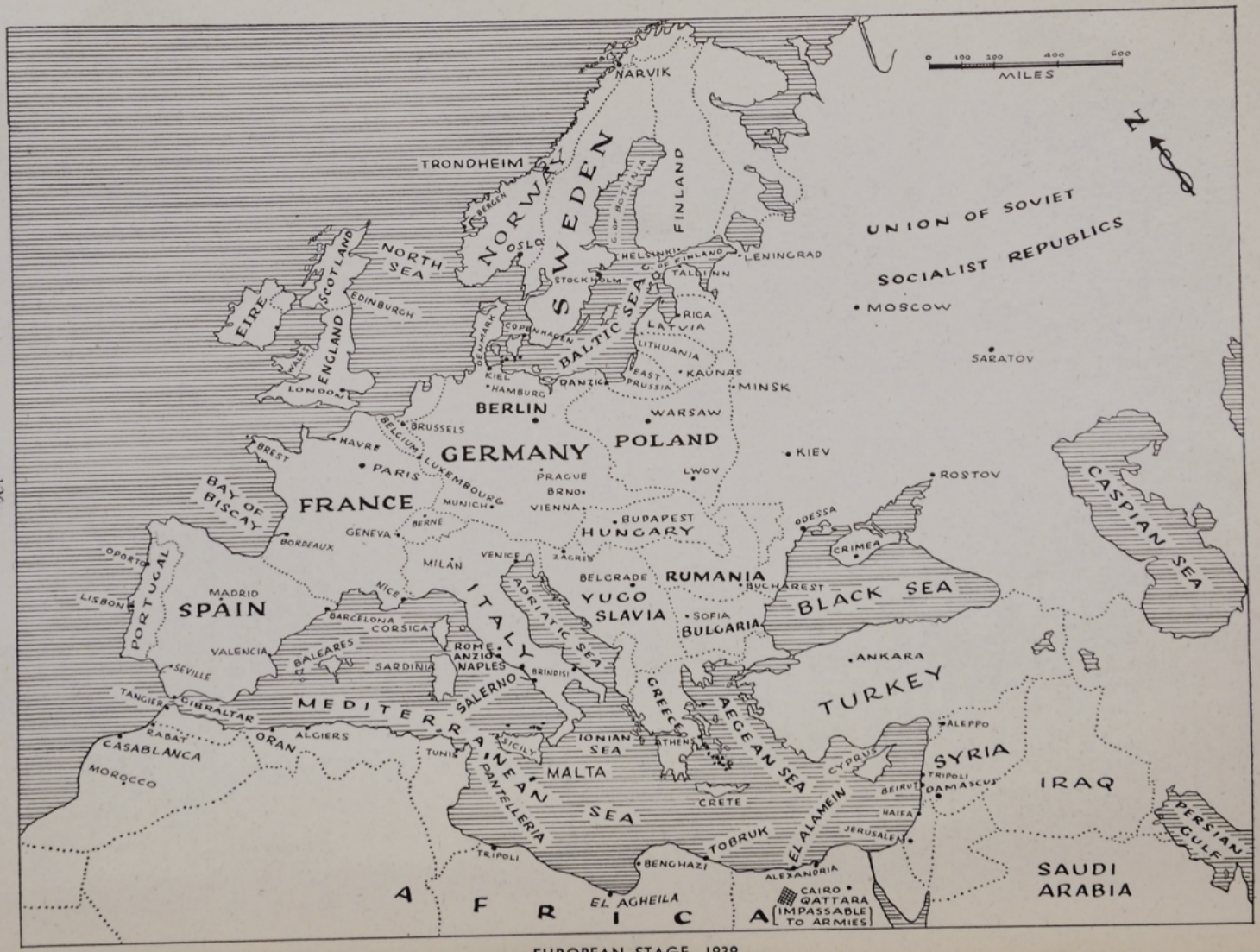
Even in peace time, the world was told that every couple married in Germany was presented with a copy of *Mein Kampf*. The world was not told that these copies were not free gifts. Hitler passed the buck on to the German taxpayer, which meant that the State paid for each "presentation," the German people footed the bill, and Hitler pocketed the cash. Moreover, booksellers who dared to try to sell second-hand copies of this book quickly got into trouble. Hitler thus got down on this, the main leakages in royalties. It has been estimated that the minimum yearly income which Hitler received from sales of *Mein Kampf* were £170,000. In war time the sales trebled. Every soldier, as well as every married couple, was expected to possess the book. Royalties on other published material amounts to £21,000 a year, and dividends from Hitler's daily, *Volkischer Beobachter*, bring him some £20,000 a year. Thus, Hitler, the ascetic, contrived to manage, in peace time, on a mere £200,000

a year, all of which was pocket-money. One wonders what St. Francis of Assisi would have to say about it. Certainly, it compares favourably with the modest £500 a year which Stalin is reputed to receive.

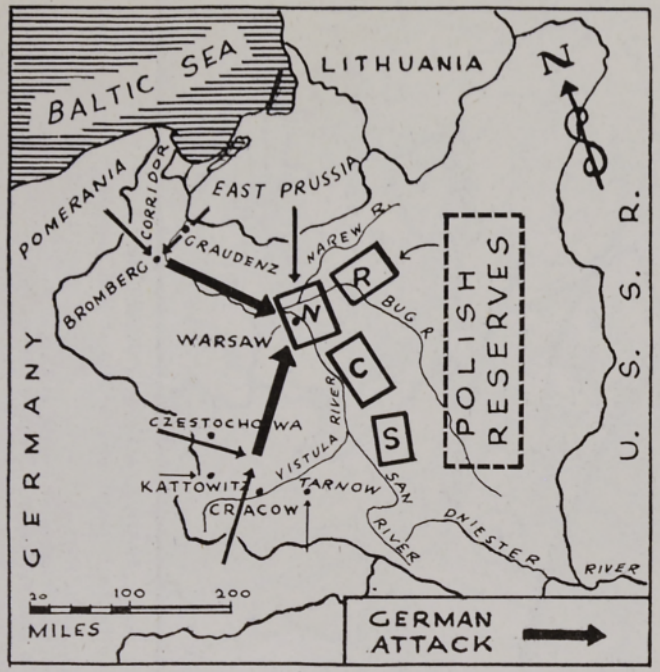
It is probable that no other ascetic in history has ever let himself go as did Hitler in houses, pictures and motor-cars. It was never revealed what his millionaire's dream-house at Berchtesgaden cost. It contains the largest window in the world for a private house, and a Vermeer canvas worth £20,000. Indeed, this simple mountain retreat is approached by bronze doors leading into a tunnel, through solid rock, 450 feet long. At the end, a shaft fitted with a lift ascends 700 feet to the establishment above. The mountain peak is tunnelled to provide bomb-proof suites for Hitler, of a type which might be styled "superior" even for an ascetic who, like Moses, set out to lead a people out of the wilderness.

If Hitler ever earns for himself an epitaph, one may justifiably wonder what should be inscribed. He has left the German people nothing but a burden of broken pledges, mourning families, and catastrophe so catastrophic no word fully describes it. He found a nation, numbed by defeat in one world war. He conducted them into defeat in another world war, so complete that even their previous numbness appeared as a highlight. Hitler fooled a nation of 80,000,000 previously sane folk into make-believe about a Herrenvolk who have now become the outcasts of Europe. His desire for power overwhelmed everything; even sound advice by his generals. Hitler fooled a whole nation by glittering promises—it is no use for them to try to save themselves by reviling the man they once worshipped. A bewildered people remain—and a world bitterly lays its dead at the feet of that evil man —Hitler.

Hitler died officially on May 1, 1945, amid the smoking ruins of his Chancellory in Berlin. The Russians were at the very gates. How Hitler died will probably always remain a mystery. He was officially stated to have died as follows: Haemorrhage of the brain, suicide, or as the result of a shell burst as he was seeking safety. No proof has been given that he did die. The world, therefore, can take its choice—but Hitler, dead or alive, killed the German Reich. He condemned the whole German nation to walk through the shadows until they become fit to be accepted as something better than outcasts by their fellow-men.



EUROPEAN STAGE, 1939.



The Beginning.

The End.

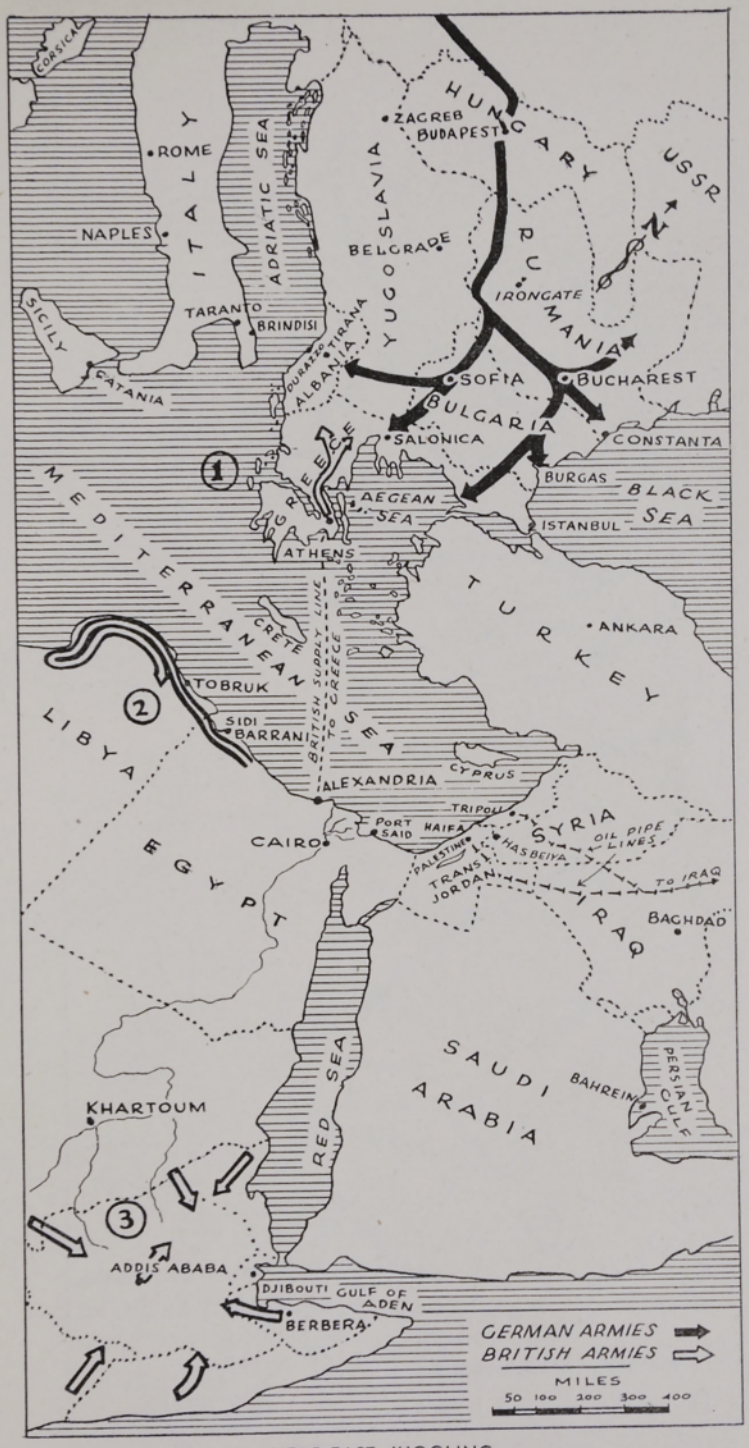
HITLER SWALLOWS POLAND, SEPTEMBER, 1939.

N.—Northern Polish Armies.
C.—Central Polish Armies.
S.—Southern Polish Armies.
R.—Polish Reserves.

FRANCE FALLS, MAY–JUNE, 1940.

(Figures in circles refer to Chronological Sequence.)

1.—Hitler attacks Holland.
2.—British and French dash through Belgium.
3.—Hitler smashes through at Sedan to Channel Ports.
4.—Dunkirk.
5.—Hitler defeats the French Armies along Somme and Aisne.
6.—Rundstedt and Leeb burst through Maginot Line into Southern France.



1.—Greece, April 6-27.

2.—Libya, January-March.

3.—Ethiopia, January-March.

NEAR-EAST JUGGLING.

Britain Keeps Three Balls in the Air, January–June, 1941.

1.—Attack to secure Baltic Flanks.

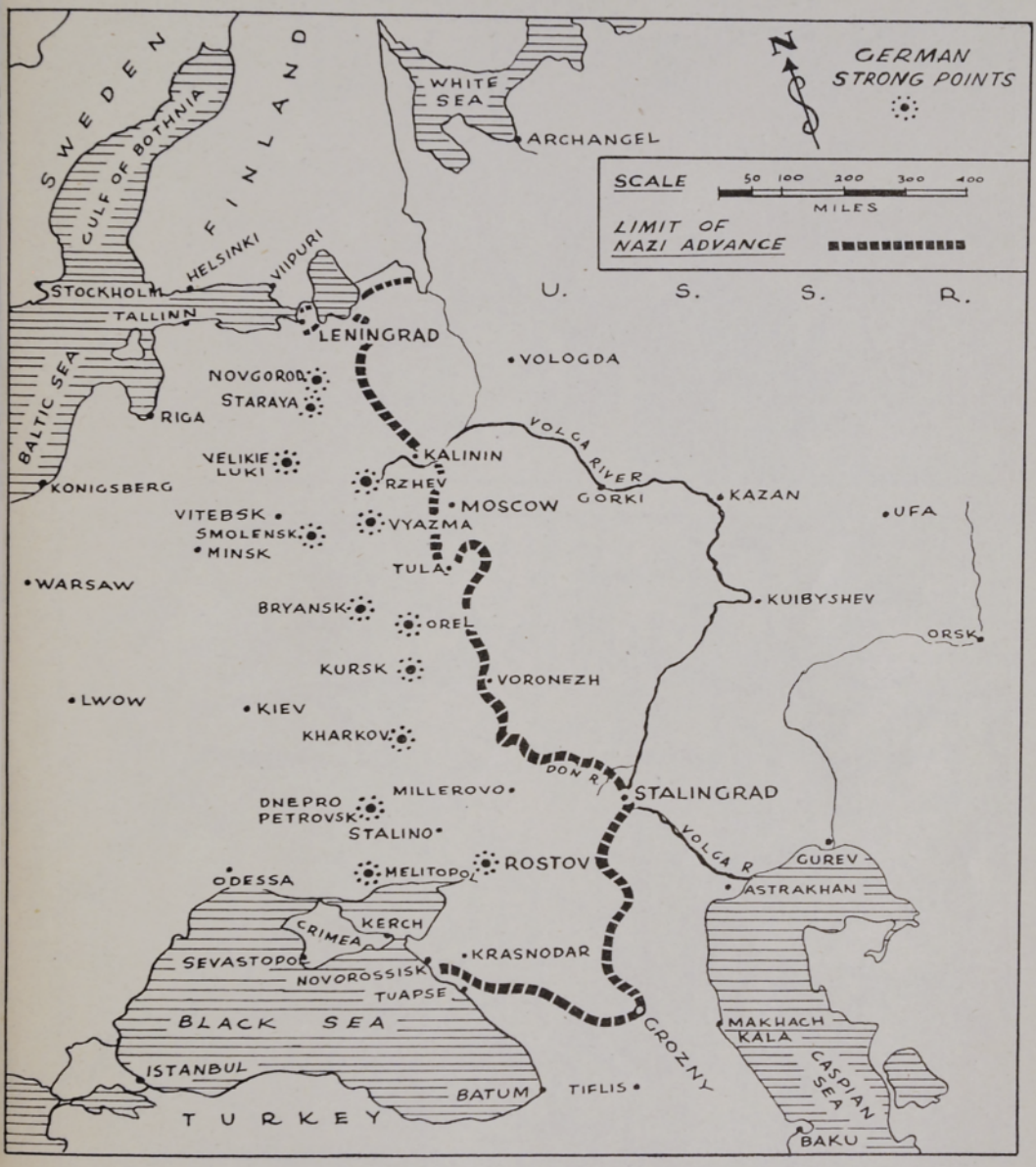
2.—Main Attack.

3.—Anvil of Main Attack.

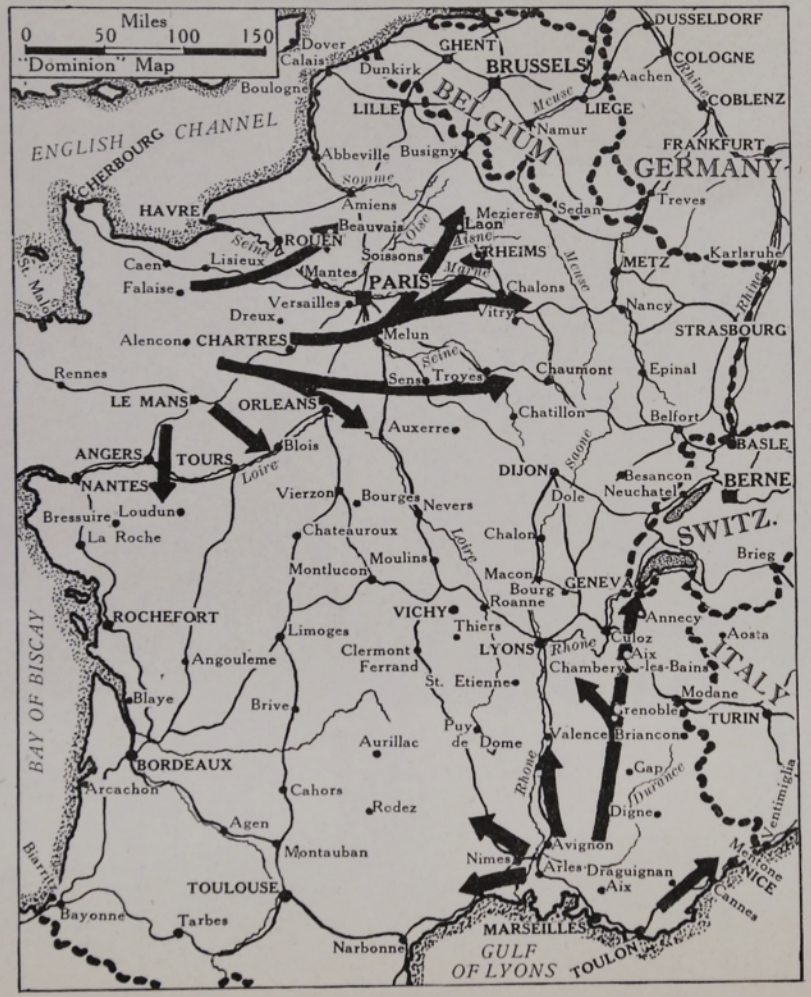
4.—Subsidiary Attacks.

5.—Attacks by Hitler's Allies.

HITLER GATE-CRASHES RUSSIA, JUNE, 1941.

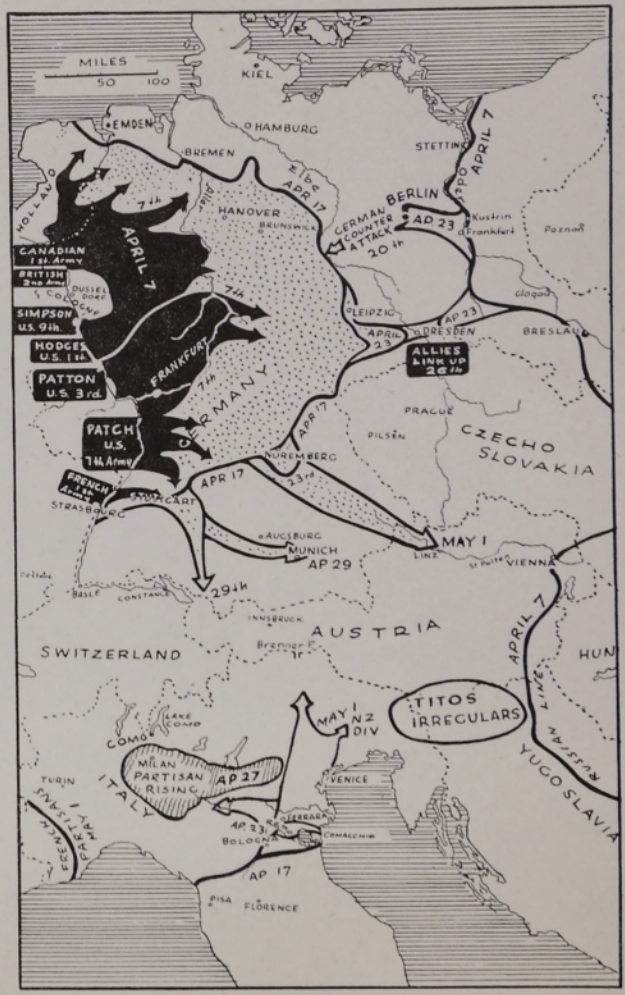


NAZI HIGH TIDE, NOVEMBER, 1942.



THE EBBING TIDE.

Hitler Chased from France, September, 1944.



FALL OF GERMANY,

April, 1945.

CHRONOLOGY

July 21—Attempt on Hitler's life by German General Staff 86
Aug. 15—Allied landings in South of France 77, 83
„ 25—Germans leave Paris 83
Sep. 15—Armistice terms for Rumania announced 90
„ 18—Allied airborne landings at Arnhem 87
„ 20—Armistice terms for Finland announced 90
Nov. 20—French reach Rhine near Mulhouse 98
Oct. 3—Red Army offensive against Hungary 93
„ 5—Allied landings in Greece reported 91
„ 18—Red Army attack in Slovakia
Dec. 16—Rundstedt starts his Ardennes offensive 96
„ 27—Red Army in suburbs of Budapest 93, 99
1945.
Jan. 12—Red Army winter offensive starts 99
„ 18—Warsaw falls 99
„ 21—Red Army forces enter Silesia 99
Jan. 23—Red Army reaches line of Oder 99
Mar. 6—Cologne falls 99
„ 8—Allies cross Rhine at Remagen 99
„ 22—Rout of Germans in Saar Palatinate 99
„ 25—Battle of the Rhine Crossings 100
Apr. 9—British offensive in Italy starts 101
„ 11—U.S. Forces reach Elbe 101
„ 12—President Roosevelt dies 115
„ 13—Vienna falls 101
„ 18—U.S. troops enter Czecho-Slovakia 101
„ 20—Russians enter Berlin 101
„ 25—N.Z. Div. crosses Po 102
„ 26—Western Front and Eastern make contact at Torgau, Germany 101
„ 29—Execution of Mussolini announced 102
May 1—Death of Hitler announced 102
„ 2—Berlin falls 102
Germans surrender in Italy 102
„ 3—N.Z. Division reaches Trieste 102
„ 4—Germans surrender in north-west Germany 103
„ 7—Final German surrender. End of war in Europe 103

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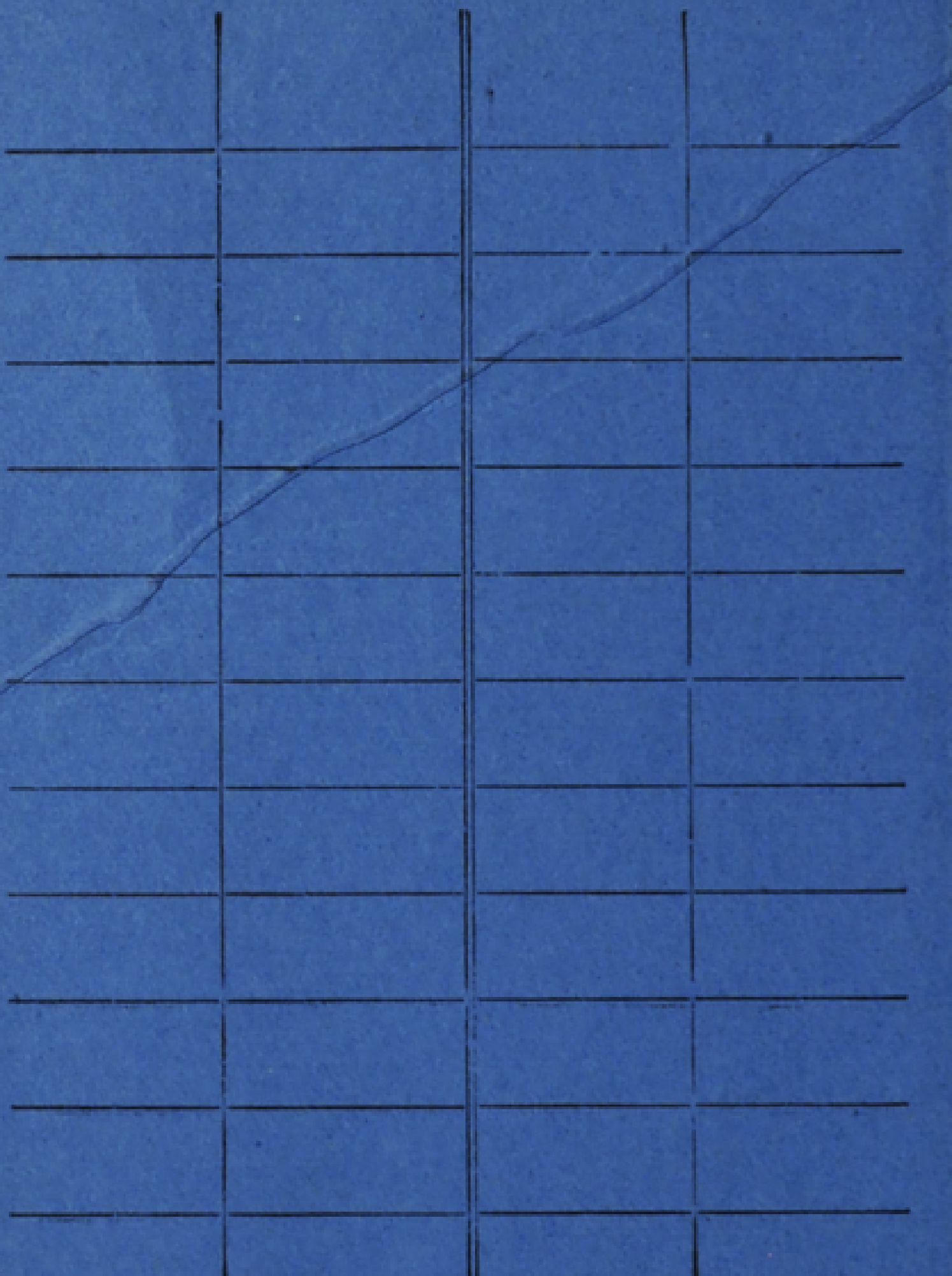
Out of the Shadows



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Anson E.

Out of the Shadows

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

The Story of the Second World War

By Everard Anson

THIS book seeks to give in simple straightforward narrative the story of Great War II, including the incredible ten-year prelude which led to the worst war in history. Events in Europe are dealt with in as great a detail as the space permits. The tale of the Pacific has not been treated in as great a detail. That theatre of operations requires a book in itself when Japan is defeated.

Readers should appreciate the fact that this history of the war has had to be written while the war was in progress. For that reason it cannot attain to the detailed accuracy expected of official histories of the War. If Great War I is any criterion, these tomes will continue to drop volume by volume from the printing presses for the next ten or fifteen years. Their unchallengeable accuracy will be equalled only by their dullness. This modest volume attempts to fill the gap in a style more readable to members of the general public who want to discover what it was all about before time has smudged the slate of memory. All the main theatres of war and all the main operations have been included, as well as short biographies of the Men of Destiny who played major roles on the stage of war. Numerous photographs and a number of maps have been included to assist the reader to form an opinion of his own.

The author, Everard Anson, has served on the literary staff of "The Dominion," Wellington, New Zealand, for nearly eighteen years. Previous to that he worked as a free lance journalist in London. During his term with "The Dominion" he was for some ten or twelve years the writer of a daily column under the nom-de-plume of "Kickshaws." In 1940 he gave up that column to serve in the New Zealand army. On his discharge he returned to "The Dominion" in 1944. Those readers who reside in the Wellington district may have read some of his articles on the war under the initials "E.A.A."

OUT OF THE SHADOWS — EVERARD ANSON