

be resisted or expelled by any European effort. On the other hand, if the victorious Powers who were once allies withdrew and left Europe to her own devices, Germany would again dominate Europe, as she did between 1941 and 1944, within five years' time. So much for the Balance of Power. As for British naval supremacy, the facts are very simple, though we have hardly begun to absorb their meaning. When the late war broke out, the British and American navies were of about the same size (ours a little larger)—something over a million tons each. During the war we lost a great many ships and built a good many; we ended with a fleet about the same size as we started. Meanwhile the Americans have increased their fleet six times over. That is the end of three hundred years of history: the American navy is six times as big as ours.

There is no Balance of Power in Europe; there is no British naval supremacy. But that does not mean that these things have ceased to count; English people will go on thinking in these terms for a long time, and even foreigners will not abandon them altogether. It is this challenge to all our existing assumptions which justifies discussion, even controversial discussion, about foreign policy. It is often said that there ought not to be controversy on foreign affairs, that we ought to present a united front against the foreigner, at present of course against the Kremlin. I do not agree at all. In my opinion all this talk about "objective" discussion of foreign affairs is mighty great nonsense; objective merely means swallowing the arguments of the government of the day and not saying anything that will make a Member of Parliament of limited intelligence ask indignant questions in the House of Commons. A recent Prime Minister—I forget his name for the moment—said that to criticise his policy was "fouling our own nest," an elegant phrase. The policy we had not to foul was Munich, the policy of appeasement.

### Wrong Horses

Or take an example further back in history, the Crimean war. Who was the more objective—Lord Palmerston and others who became the idols of public opinion for going to war to defend that great civilised Power Turkey, or John Bright who condemned the war against Russia as criminal and unnecessary, and was shouted down even in Manchester, his own constituency? Well, within 20 years, all the surviving members of the Cabinet which went to war—Gladstone, Sir John Graham, Lord John Russell—told Bright that he was right and they had been wrong. Who was more objective in 1878—Disraeli who said that the safety of the British Empire would be threatened if the Russians had control of Constantinople and who was seconded by the bellowings of the music-halls—you remember, "We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do. The Russians shall not have Constantinople"—was he the more objective, or was Gladstone who said we should co-operate with Russia in a common system of security in the Near East? I am not ashamed to be on the side of Bright and Gladstone, nor was Lord Salisbury, who had been Foreign Secretary under Disraeli, but who later said that he had backed the "wrong horse" in Turkey and who came down on the side of co-operation with Russia. No, in the best periods of our history there has always been controversy and disagreement on our foreign policy; and so there should be in a democratic state.

When I was thinking of these things, I came across a passage in one of Bright's speeches, in answer to the charge of being un-English and anti-national, which I should like to quote. He says: "How indeed can I, any more than any of you, be un-English and anti-national? Was I not born upon the same soil? Do I not come of the same English stock? Are not my family committed irrevocably to the fortunes of this country? Is not whatever property I may have (the mill-owner touch) depending as much as yours is depending upon the good government of our common fatherland? Then how shall any man dare to say to any of his countrymen, because he happens to hold a different opinion on questions of great public policy, that therefore he is un-English, and is to be condemned as anti-national?"

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