

THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE PEACE

by Jacques Bainville

1920

Translated by Philip Webb

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

It was a comment by Prof Antony Lentin (Wolfson College, Cambridge), praising Bainville & regretting that his prophetic treatise had never been done into English, which first got me to take a look at it & then to set about translating it. He is also responsible for a number of corrections & improvements, which I have incorporated.

I hope that no-one will try to use this work as a basis for attacking today's European Union. While we can never know what Bainville would have said on the topic & while there is enormous room for debate on all aspects of Europe after World War I & today, there is nothing in his account which points to a belief in a Europe of isolated sovereign states.

He clearly regretted the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – a proto-EU in the East – & saw only future strife between an unreconciled France & Germany, but he was no jingoist: his attitude is sad acceptance of the facts & a hope that French democracy can defend itself. He also repeatedly stressed that the basis for peace in Europe was a federal Germany, much like the republic eventually created under Allied auspices after World War II. As for Britain & the USA, the EU's biggest detractors, Bainville is contemptuously dismissive: the former was obsessed with its Empire, which it had expanded after the war – one of Bainville's astute prophecies was that it had fatally overextended itself thereby – ; the latter's movers & shakers had little interest in the continent & had already gone home.

It took an even more terrible war, which left both France & Germany humiliated, to cause the two countries finally to come together & establish a peace which has now lasted 66 years . Anyone who wants to undermine that achievement & return Europe to the regime of factious & suspicious states & statelets which led directly to the World Wars is either utterly naïve or has some other more sinister agenda in mind.

In making his book available to an English readership, I have not tried to turn Bainville into an Englishman. No Englishman – or American or even a Canadian – could have written it. Bainville was a French historian, writing in 1920 for his French fellow-citizens an analysis of the situation of his country & the likely dangers facing it in the coming years.

While many words are shared between the two languages – though a translator has to be careful about false or more often unsympathetic friends – , the structure of French is basically that of Latin, which leads to a more rhetorical style of educated writing, & this in turn influences the very structure of French thought. Where English tends to fall away into fudge & dead clichés, French – though very rarely that of Bainville – can rise into clouds of oratory & abstraction.

I have tried to keep his word-order, often somewhat inverted from the English habit, his repetitions – a device French is fond of – & even his subjunctives, wherever these can be retained without sounding artificial in English. I have been careful to take account of those tiny French particles, reminiscent of Ancient Greek, which English tends to forget.

I have felt free to join up his too-short sentences, sometimes using colons & semi-colons, which seem to be in short supply in the French compositor's type box, & have broken up some of his paragraphs, where this makes it easier for readers to follow. I have not been afraid to mark his frequent asides with a pair of dashes rather than commas. I have incorporated his few footnotes into the text for easier processing.

The pages in the original French text are marked thus: [11].

marks the end of a paragraph, if it occurs at the end of a page.

Other priorities have not given me the time to give the translation a rigorous audit & no doubt there remain not a few errors, besides places where wording could be improved. I have left some coloring in this version, which is still basically a draft:

red marks items I remain unsure of, **yellow** items which deserve a footnote of some kind, **green** text which was originally in another language & should be copied directed therefrom. If anyone cares to offer corrections, I will be happy to consider amending the text.

I hope that readers will hear a very intelligent & literate Frenchman, as he might have made a series of lectures in a light French accent to a 21st Century English-speaking university.

Philip Webb ,
Cities Centre , University of Toronto , 2011

purslow@chass.utoronto.ca

INTRODUCTION -- Pierre Gaxotte

This is a book unique among the work of Mr Jacques Bainville. The natural bent of his mind leads Mr Bainville to understand & to explain rather than to forecast. Nonetheless in 1920, he forecasted; he wrote his book & was able without compunction to leave the calling of prophet to others, because he had announced everything, everything which has happened since 1920 & probably everything which will happen in future years. There is no reading-matter which leaves a more lively impression of an exceptional intelligence, at once lucid, firm, quick, vigorous, studious about reality, raising itself tirelessly from geographic detail to broader views & making use of historical experience with dazzling surety & a charming ease.

The most striking feature of our time is undoubtedly the breakdown of political intelligence. The conduct of parliamentary government demands from leaders cleverness rather than strength, opportunism rather than tenacity, trickery rather than vision. Inexperienced men come to power who imagine they can make up for their lack of preparation by surrounding themselves with narrow fussy specialists. Thus the details of the Treaty of Versailles are the work of experts & technicians; the whole & the large outlines are the work of amateurs; reflection & competence find themselves as mere accessories. The general & essential arrangements on which depend the solidity & success of everything else were settled by men who were guided not by a knowledge of history but by the summary principles of an orator's philosophy.

That is the drama of Versailles, also the subject of this book. From underlying inconsistency there follow consequences. Jacques Bainville has the honor of having forecast them & of having defined the policies which, as far as was possible, would have been able to avert them.

PREFACE – Jacques Bainville , 1920

It is not because an English author has written *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* that we have put together this work. This book is not a reply to Keynes: one will see that immediately. We wish to note, in the introduction to these pages, only a singular contrast.

After a war which has put into play the forces & the means of the principal nations of the World, the very idea of 'policy' has fallen into disrepute. Perhaps it was causing a headache ? It is true that such vast & confused material had never offered itself to popular leaders charged with establishing a major peace, all the more reason for reflection & much foresight. Calculation could prove tiring. In the absence of calculation, an enormous part of the future was left to the unknown & to chance, a part far in excess of the limits which the deepest minds encounter when they apply themselves to direct the course of great affairs.

In an age in which people believed in the indefinite progress of the human mind, Fontenelle said: "It is certain -- and people will be more & more convinced of it – that the political world, as well as the physical, is regulated by number, weight & measure". Poor peoples ! -- everything is done in their name & they have only to submit. At which moment did they see that the peace was violating the laws of physics ? But number, weight & measure are not neglected with impunity & the peoples will not even understand why they will have to pay yet again one day.

CHAPTER 1 -- The Shortcoming of Things & the Shortcoming of Men

It is not uncommon that after winning a war the victor -- or if there is an alliance, at least one of the victors -- is unhappy with the peace & believes he has been duped. In 1815 the Prussians complained that the Congress of Vienna had ended for them with "a farce". In earlier times, we ourselves had a treaty of which it was proverbial to say "stupid as the peace".

Mr Raymond Poincaré, who has not been sparing with his criticisms of the actions of Versailles, St-Germain & other places near Paris, was correct to write that the deceived hopes which they caused were not new.

People have said everything about the gaps in the Treaty of Versailles, what it didn't give us, the lack of reward which it represents for us: lands, frontiers, money, what it delivers is inferior to what people had generally hoped for. People have commented everywhere that we didn't even recover the boundaries of 1814, but those of 1815 -- of Waterloo -- , of which the French people had so long resented the humiliation. [11] It has become trite -- the evidence is so strong -- to say that this peace is "cash down" for England & "on terms" for us. Finally, Mr Millerand, who is heir to that which he did not make, has given a definitive judgement after several months' experience, when he declared to the Chamber that the Treaty of Versailles, despite its lengthy & fine-detailed arrangements intended to ensure the restoration of our ruins & injuries, was "heavier with promises than with real things".

It would have been possible to imagine a type of peace which would not have given us all of what we wanted, but which would have paid us in another way, a peace, for example, which, while awarding us fewer billions on paper, would have left us real profits by lessening considerably our military costs & freeing our youth from conscription. The profit would have been indirect, but it would have been immense: conditions appropriate for an end to the barbarous system of armed peace were the first result towards which it would need to lead. We would have broadly & quickly regained in security, peacefulness & emancipation from a terrible slavery the sacrifices agreed to elsewhere. That was the main point of the peace. It escaped the negotiators, & public attention, fixed on details -- if not on trivialities -- , grasped it no better.

Ordinarily in politics, effects are noticed when they start to occur, that is when it is too late. The principle of causality, which scarcely troubles individuals, is even more immaterial to peoples. It is natural that democracies concluded a major peace without bothering themselves about the repercussions. Among the Arab stories, so slight philosophically, there is a tale which doesn't express badly this childish fatalism. A traveller in the desert innocently throws around him date stones from his meal. Suddenly, a frightful genie leaps into view & says: "While you were throwing your stones, my son passed by. He got one in the eye & it killed him. That's why I'm going to take my revenge". For consequences to be made clear to nations, they need disasters or the recoil of history. They submit to living surrounded by invisible forces, like the genies in *The 1001 Nights*, which they harm without knowing it & which require a settling of accounts all of a sudden. [12] #

People have scarcely concerned themselves with the consequences of the peace. We mean the political consequences, as an English author has claimed to show the economic consequences. Keynes' resounding work is a pamphlet of scientific semblance, which has achieved a success at once striking & scandalous through the paradoxes with which it is replete. It has become the manual of those who want Germany to pay nothing – or the least possible – of the expenses of her failed enterprise. Keynes' thesis is well known. It has had a definite effect upon British opinion & the British government. What is remarkable is that the first author who has applied himself from his own particular point of view -- that of a financier -- to study the results of the peace has been led to pessimistic conclusions. It is true that this pessimism is one-sided: Keynes is gloomy about the defeated countries, he is optimistic for the victors. His assessment of the injuries which France has suffered is very low: he estimates that we will rebuild our ruins at much lower cost than is generally calculated. It is the lot of Germany which gives him concern & he repeats as a mournful refrain that if Germany is not handled with kid gloves, if she does not recover with the agreement & support of the victorious states, Europe altogether will fall into distress & chaos.

In his epilog, Keynes speaks of "those unknown currents which flow unceasingly under the surface of political history & of which no-one can foresee the results". For him -- his thought is clear & it breaks loose from his book -- , these currents are determined by economic forces & by those alone. It is another aspect -- a conservative aspect -- of the materialist conception of history.

Keynes had a predecessor, who keeps quiet today, but who spoke during the war. That man is Lord Lansdowne, who was already a pessimist before the Versailles Treaty. This great lord forgot that under Edward VII he had contributed a lot to creating the Triple Entente. He was haunted by the idea that the capital of our aged European race was being used up a bit more every day. Bankruptcy, famine, widespread poverty obsessed him. He declared the ruin of Europe, if the Allies willfully carried on "to the bitter end". It was also the favorite but secret idea of another old man, Mr Giolitti, one of those silent calculators which Italy knows how to produce. [13]

From these dark prophecies, which were widespread after the time of the war, one would have had to conclude that it was better to give Germany a win or a tie rather than confound the industrial, commercial & financial machinery of the World. Infinitely more powerful interests were at work & Lord Lansdowne cried in the wilderness. More shrewd, Mr Giolitti said nothing: he contented himself with showing by his attitude that his opinion had not changed from the beginning & that in every way it would turn out badly. Entrenched in this strong personal position, he waited only to live long enough to see his hour return. For Italy, he relied on some fraud or other & waited for an opportunity to return to power as a result of that fraud. That is what happened, but Mr Giolitti does not talk about the past, Lord Lansdowne does not murmur a word. Both were Keyneses before Keynes & they have not changed at all.

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One may regret that the Allies did not have a shrewder, more perspicacious & inventive policy, which would have allowed them to win the war more quickly & under better conditions, but whatever had been the price paid for victory, whatever were the sufferings of the present hour, no-one would dare to say: "It would have been preferable to make a whitewash peace with the Germans. It would have been even better to submit after July 1914. In that way, the marvellous clockwork of imports & exports would not have been upset".

All the same, Europe can suffer a long time of famine, can be ravaged by epidemics, threatened with bankruptcy: the governments & peoples will no less continue to live according to their laws, the interplay of economic necessities is not deniable. It comes down in the final analysis to the power to eat. One can insist that the German people decided on war in 1914 because the ground they occupied was not enough to feed 68 M human beings & that that instinct pushed them to risk the great venture, but if the German Empire had not had such & such historical antecedents, such & such a structure, if the balance of forces in Europe had been different, the alliances otherwise -- or even better -- arranged, if England, instead of being held back by hesitation by its Liberal Party, had got involved right away & intervened without hesitation, then the price of meat in Berlin would not have been motive enough for Germany to run the risk of the war. [14]

If there is room for being a pessimist about Europe after the treaty, it is from a different point of view from that of Keynes. Economic chaos runs deep, but political chaos runs even deeper. Has the indescribable misery of Bolshevik Russia prevented the Red Army from fighting? Have deficit & loss of faith in paper money prevented Poland from seeking to delineate its frontiers? Over a wide space of Europe, 10 nations make war on one another despite poverty & typhus, in appalling conditions of existence which must leave men only a concern for their daily bread.

Well, next to this conflict of nationalities, religions & races there remains Germany, alone in its concentration & homogeneity, still sufficiently organised, whose weight suspended over the void of Eastern Europe risks one day see-sawing the whole of the continent. The thoughts of economists will not change one bit the effects of this essential disequilibrium.

From this perspective, it is striking to read Thiers' *History of the Revolution*. Devoted to questions of finance, where the clarity of his mind shone out, Thiers was able to recount all the diplomatic & military events of Europe under the Revolution & the Empire without the assignats & partial bankruptcy of 1797 in France & the "redemption certificates" in Austria taking more of his narrative than as an episode which changed nothing in the course of affairs. In its obvious prejudice for Germany, Keynes' thesis is already decided; its general futility subsists in that other example.

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The political consequences of the peace are therefore much more important than the economic consequences. It is also more difficult to deduce them rigorously, but several principles drawn from experience & common sense can help with this. It is certain that the greatest statesmen cannot foresee everything & above all that they cannot foresee more than 1 - 2 repercussions of the arrangements they have undertaken. There are, however, causes whose effects are so certain that it needs an act of will not to see the result in advance.

We have proceeded in this book from the most simple to approach the complicated upto the limits where the complicated begins to dissolve into impalpable detail: that's the only method to be found in this work. It is above all formed of analyses & hypotheses derived from those analyses. We present probabilities -- even simple probabilities -- rather than certainties. In this realm, certainties are always weak when it is a matter of knowing unquestionably how things will develop. [15] They are already more serious when it is a matter of determining the course which events will take.

In 1871, at the establishment of German unity, the English -- many of them -- who were pleased that a large empire would henceforth be placed between France & Russia, because it would be an assurance of security for themselves & for Europe, those Englishmen obviously deceived themselves. It was easy to tell them so. However at the Congress of Berlin, this estimate did not appear false & it was necessary to wait for another 20 years for the flaw to be perceived by the interested parties. When Bismarck, having communed with himself for a long time, opted for the Austrian alliance & distanced himself from Russia, he recognised the risk of the transaction. He warned his successors than in no case must Germany throw herself into a war & expose herself to the danger of hostile coalitions due to a plea from Austria: he showed precisely the obstacle on which William II was going to stumble. These are 2 instances among 1000 errors due to lack of foresight & to the limits of foresight.

The most noteworthy prognoses which have been preserved by history rest on very simple -- one could even say trivial -- ideas, within the capacity of the most ordinary men. That of Thiers at the moment of Sadowa remains the model of the genre. Thiers starts with an idea which a grocer would have had in his place, if instead of watching the advances of Prussia, the grocer had watched with disquiet **the enlargement of Felix Potin**. "The summary of all precepts for living consists in common sense", said Louis XIV, who had a lot of it. There are therefore things which everyone can declare with a little experience. One does not need to be extremely insightful to discover that these few words -- "and Germany for its part" -- in the Treaty of Versailles were like the worm in the apple. When the representatives of the German Empire were signing that treaty in the same Hall of Mirrors where German unity had been proclaimed for the first time half-a-century earlier, any man of modest education could already conclude that it would be a miracle if their undertakings were held to.

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What one cannot declare, for example, is when the most essential outcomes will occur & how they will reveal themselves. Di Rudini, who had entered politics very young & had lived to be very old, used to repeat: "Avoid saying 'It's a serious matter': I've heard too often people say that it's serious. And above all, never gives dates". [16]

There is a certain degree of complexity which lies beyond reasoning. No-one will disagree that that degree was reached by Europe in the state in which it emerged from the war & the 5 treaties of Versailles, St-Germain, Neuilly, Trianon & Sèvres. Very few people hold in their minds the full detail of those diplomatic instruments, which constitute many volumes. Even rarer are those who can create for themselves a precise image of the extreme confusion into which the continent has relapsed. We have not attempted to describe the indescribable; one cannot flatter oneself to encompass this chaos. We have endeavoured to seize & not to lose the end of the chain & the end of the chain undoubtedly lies in Berlin.

Many questions are left aside in this book: it is useless to lead the reader to the foothills of the Caucasus. It is in such a subject that one must restrain oneself & even proceed by exclusion to reach a relative clarity.

One also risks falling into a deadly pedestrianism, if one sets oneself to study one-by-one what people call "the big problems", whose classification does not always correspond with reality.

The French people have been confined for a long time in Europe & in the Mediterranean basin. Our attention must be fixed first of all on what happens at our gates. Moreover, the further we travel from our frontier, the more matters grow dim & the more one is reduced to vague assumptions. One of those simple notions which misleads rarely & which allows progress in such matters, is that what happens right on our doorstep is also the most important.

Without ever losing the picture of a united Germany in contrast with a chopped-up Europe – a contrast which appears in almost all the chapters of this book -- one ends by setting out a certain number of questions. If there are points to which we return insistently at the risk of repeating ourselves & even sometimes seeming to contradict ourselves, it is because they dominate everything. Similarly in the mountains, the biggest peaks re-appear at every turn of the trail until they haunt the traveller, but they re-appear each time under a different guise.

During the final year of the war, we wrote a book which appeared very few weeks before the Armistice of 11 November 1918 & which was intended to show via examples still fully fresh & bloody -- via the history of 3 generations, of which the third had paid for the other two -- that there are moments when some ideas which control some minds [17] – some decisions taken under the influence of those ideas, some words written in diplomatic documents following those decisions -- lead through long years to consequences which could not be calculated.

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"It often happens" -- to quote Louis XIV again -- "that people want to cover up the merit of good actions by imagining to themselves that the World runs on its own by certain chance natural turn-about, which it is impossible to frustrate, an opinion which common minds accept readily, since it flatters their dearth of vision & their sloth, allowing them to call their mistakes mishaps & another's industry good fortune". Therefore from 11 November 1918 to 28 June 1919, it is not chance which decided, it is not the power of inanimate objects: it is men with their characters & ideas. 1000 other contrivances than those which were adopted were possible.

People have been well aware of this along the way, since by various interventions many arrangements of the treaties have been changed, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse. Today, we can only wait & if possible anticipate & correct the results.

"There will be consequences", said the Jewish wise man, tired of seeing the rulers start the same mistakes again & the masses entrust their lives & their destinies to the same rulers. The consequences always come & we have them already.

CHAPTER 2 – Characteristics of the Peace [18]

On 3 July 1919, Mr Lloyd George asked the House of Commons to ratify the Treaty of Versailles & he set out the reasons why the British Parliament ought to approve the peace. "I ask anyone", he said, "to show for any of these principal conditions whatsoever a single unjust feature or a decision which a perfectly impartial court of justice would not have taken in exactly the same way as was decided by the Council which sat for 6 months in Paris, while scrupulously examining all these clauses". And the British Parliament ratified it.

There was nothing to reproach in this peace, because it was good from the point of view of justice & consequently quite as reasonable as it was just. Some other treaties had been political treaties: that was a moral treaty. It was moral that Germany would be disarmed & that in the matter of territories she would lose those she had taken from other non-German peoples & those alone; it was moral in the highest degree that those responsible for the war would be judged, William II at their head [19] -- it is true, all the same, that they have not been – ; it was moral that Germany would be deprived of her navy & her colonies: she had kept them only for a bad employment: "It would have been to extend the realm of injustice in the World & to offer Germany fresh opportunities perhaps to do evil in the future"; finally, it was moral twice-over that Germany would be compelled to pay, first of all because she had to repair the injuries caused to others, next because it was necessary that the German people should understand that war is a bad undertaking & that it yields nothing. Thus this peace, represented as a legal arrest, would moreover have the benefit of moralising at the condemned man: "I hope", continued Mr Lloyd George, "that Germany will understand that its defeat has created its salvation in ridding her of militarism, Junkers & Hohenzollern. She has paid a high price for her salvation: I believe she will find that it is worth the pain. When she believes it, then Germany will be worthy of admission to the League of Nations".

This speech of Mr Lloyd George has as many bright spots as shadows. Undoubtedly, he silently passes over the profits which Great Britain drew from the victory, the most important of which is that she is relieved of a redoubtable naval rivalry. Obviously, these gains were perceived by the English public sufficiently that it was needless for the Prime Minister to insist on it. On the contrary in France, Mr Clemenceau & his colleagues, in order to get the approval of the country & the ratification of our legislatures, did not grow tired of counting up our gains: Alsace-Lorraine free of all charge returned to France, ownership of the Saar mines, Morocco freed from its mortgages. A big difference between the English & ourselves: what went without saying for them, their profit being so clear & tangible, had to be proved for us & everyone was far from being satisfied. But the contrast between England & France extended further. On the guarantee of peace by the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, the French & British governments presented 2 almost opposite theses: a 15 year occupation, said our negotiators, which could be prolonged if Germany did not keep her undertakings; an occupation which will seem quite long, said Mr Lloyd George, but which will be able to be cut short because at the right moment the question will be examined afresh. [20] #

Thus Mr Lloyd George perhaps had need to make a case for the peace which he brought back to London, but it was only puritan liberalism which he sought to convince. England had been gratified beforehand, ever since the Armistice, since the German ships lay in British roads. England really had no more need to think about the benefits of the war: she had received them straight away, she was already in possession & she was tasting without scruples or remorse what that "just" peace was giving her, so just that during the speech of Mr Lloyd George it ended by seeming to lack a material component.

In reality, it lacked a material side to the whole extent that it was not a political peace. No question, the authors of a treaty do not customarily state in public the reasons why they have taken one course rather than another. When it is a matter of coalition partners who adhere to diverging interests when once victory is gained, that dissimulation is even more natural. The language of idealism is handy & had already already come to the lips of the victors in 1815. We know today what had been the calculations, the concerns, the disputes of the Allies of the other century. Already, we are scarcely less informed regarding the Conference of Paris than regarding the Congress of Vienna: the revelations have come very quickly.

What has anyone revealed which was not perfectly clear ? The Treaty of Versailles speaks more loudly than anything else. Served by a powerful instinct, by the tradition of the Admiralty & the Foreign Office & by favorable circumstances, very clear interests -- the maritime interests of Great Britain -- had been satisfied at once & without discussion. The remainder was not inspired by any general concept & that remainder was the establishment of a new Europe, nothing less.

To the Supreme Council, Mr Clemenceau recalled the rights & the sacrifices of France. He recalled them energetically, but with an energy a bit monotonous because he upheld at all times the most severe resolutions for Germany without breaking the circle of ideas within which his two interlocutors had confined themselves, ideas he believed in rather feebly but without believing in others any more. Thereby he succeeded only in giving Mr Lloyd George & President Wilson the impression that France showed a "nervous apprehension" at the thought that she would find herself again alone in face of Germany after the British & Americans had gone home [21] & it was to calm these "legitimate" anxieties -- as the English Prime Minister called them a bit loftily in the same speech 3 July 1919 -- that the British & Americans had promised to return in the event of "unjustified aggression". That was the "guarantee" added at the last moment to the Treaty of Versailles.

What prodigious childishness from men who were however more than grown-up ! Did they suppose then that things would start again in the same manner as they had seen them before ? that there would be once more a telegram from Ems or an assassination of an archduke & that Germany could barefacedly attack France as it had in 1870 & 1914 ? In that case, they were also admitting that they had left Europe in the same state as on the day when the war had broken out. There was there perhaps the opportunity for the French negotiators to show that the peace was imperfect & to introduce a different picture of the European settlement.

The recourse to the guarantee -- whatever the destiny of the treaty, whatever practical value it would have -- bears witness from every angle against a peace which was not recognised capable of holding up on its own & had so little changed the face of the World that it was important to envisage the hypothesis of the same war coming about again in the same conditions.

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Composed by readers of the Bible for readers of the Bible, the Treaty of Versailles was also composed by men of affairs, what one calls today 'technicians'. The arrangements which relate to commerce, to tariffs, to railway charges, to river navigation etc were the object of special care. The specialists from all the allied countries, who had experience with these questions & during the war had thought about the conditions to impose on Germany when she had been defeated, were consulted & invited to edit the commercial clauses of the treaty. It is well understood that -- in our day -- nothing is more important than commerce & therein there exists a "specialism" which -- in a scientific age -- calls for deference from statesmen. [22]

It really is probable that the knowledgeable specialists & devoted experts of the Conference introduced into the Treaty of Versailles clever clauses, harmoniously combined in such a way as to make inoffensive the agreement of the German Empire. It has been explained to us that these clauses, especially insofar as they concern France, do not content themselves with expunging the Treaty of Frankfurt, but give to our country such a superiority & such advantages that it needs only knowledge & a desire to profit from them for her industrialists & businessmen to have a privileged position in the World, everything having been forecast & arranged, especially so that German production would be her maidservant instead of being -- as before -- her mistress.

These chapters of the Treaty of Versailles -- without any doubt excellent -- will be as deceptive & will be as valid as that treaty itself. That is what had happened to the same chapters of the Treaty of Frankfurt, so artfully conceived to favor Germany. And we do hope that France will have the organisation & the persistence needed to ensure that these articles of the treaty do not remain a dead letter. What we have been trying to show is that neither thought nor "competence" were lacking in this area of the peace, while its general & essential arrangements, on which depend the solidity & success of all the others, have been hindered by men who were not guided according to experience, which is the only "technology" of politics, but by some very brief principles of an orator's philosophy.

The drawing of new frontiers, for example, was entrusted to utterly distinguished geographers & ethnographers, in whom one may have complete confidence & who certainly in the performance of their task would have allowed only insignificant errors to slip by. As far as concerns the plan according to which the states have been assigned & modelled, it is enough to cast one's eyes on the map of the new Europe to recognise that it has been governed only by a spirit of whim & contradiction or rather at the hazard of sympathies or simply of discussions among the Allies. Everyone knows, for example, that after having declared that a composite state

like Austria-Hungary was unworthy to live, the Supreme Council fell over itself to create in Czechoslovakia a new Austria, where are to be found 6/8 of the nationalities of which the old one was composed. There will not be a single frontier-post in the Czechoslovak state which was not established according to the most rigorously scientific methods: [23] as to knowing how long these landmarks will remain in place & the chances that they have of remaining, that is not the business of geometer-surveyors.

Thus the details of the treaty are the labor of experts & technicians; the whole -- the major outlines -- are the product of amateurs. From that it derives its 2 dominant features: a pronounced moral aspect, because it is easy to put the commonplaces of morality in place of political reasoning, which demands an intellectual effort & a special preparation; then, an "economic" aspect -- no less suspect --, which corresponds to the puritanical moralism. This alliance is not new. Here, it has the effect of excelling all truly political considerations.

The celebrated *Economist* of London on 5 July 1919 finished a study of the value of the Treaty of Versailles with these words: "Germany is not naturally belligerent. Well, it has just learned that war is not very profitable. The new states have yet to learn that lesson: it is the role of the League of Nations to teach it to them". These prodigious simplifications ought not to surprise. Did not President Wilson ordain the destiny of the World in 14 points? Does not Mr Lloyd George preach in the non-conformist church in his Welsh village? For Mr Clemenceau, did not the Austrian question come down to knowing that Count Czernin had lied?

The Peace Conference was a conclave. After it had been understood once for all that one would not go over again the freedom of the seas or the colonies or the German ships, the principal negotiators, strengthened by the army of experts & technicians who brought them memoranda & solutions concerning particular questions, constructed a new Europe. And after there came forth from the silence, sometimes broken by disorders in the place where the Supreme Council had locked itself up, the most important of the treaties, that of Versailles, which was to give shape to the others, this is the monster which one saw.

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A Germany, reduced by approximately 100 K sq Km, but in that reduced territory still mustering 60 M inhabitants [24] -- 1/3 more than France -- held good in the centre of Europe. The essentials of the work of Bismarck & the Hohenzollerns were respected; German unity was not only maintained, but re-inforced. The Allies had affirmed their intention not to interfere in German internal affairs, yet they did intervene there: all the measures which they had taken resulted in centralising the federal German state & consolidating the former victories of Prussia. If there were aspirations for autonomy or federalism among the German populations, they were smothered. The treaty pushed, enclosed, penned up 60 M people in straitened frontiers. That is "German for its part", in the name of which 2 ministers came to sign at Versailles on 28 June 1919. #

From the depth of the Hall of Mirrors, Müller & Bell, dressed in black, had answered the summons before the representatives of 27 united peoples. In the same place, under the same paintings, 48 years earlier, the German Empire had been proclaimed: it was returning there to hear itself declared at once culpable & legitimate, untouchable & criminal. At its sentencing, it won recognition. Were Müller & Bell, obscure delegates of a defeated Germany, thinking about the essentials which defeat allowed to survive? Perhaps for many by-standers & judges it was a pleasure to see the redoubtable Empire of William II humiliated in the persons of a socialist intellectual & a provincial solicitor. The laconic voice of Mr Clemenceau added to the humiliation: "It is well understood, messieurs German delegates, that all the undertakings which you will sign must be held to with integrity & honesty". We still hear that sharp verb & the 2 indifferent & soft "Ja's" which came from the mouths of Müller & Bell, led like automata by the chief of protocol. Feeble voice, weak guarantee. What could Müller & Bell undertake? The Treaty of Versailles set in motion forces which were already escaping the will of its authors.

"A peace too soft for its hardness": since it had been recognised, we had given it that definition. One will see that it remains fair & that it has withstood experience. The treaty took everything from Germany except the main thing, political power, the mother of all the others. It believes it suppresses the means of nourishment which Germany possessed in 1914; [25] it yields her the first of those means, that which permits her to reconstitute the others, the State, a central State, which commands the resources & forces of 60 M human beings & which will be at the service of their passions.

The treaty leaves these resources & these forces in the hands of a single government, which Müller & Bell represented the day before yesterday, on which Hugo Stinnes leaned yesterday, whose next shape & name are unknown to us, but which is still the heir of the Prussian state. As for the passions -- national, human --, the natural & animal instincts of the German people, the treaty contains everything which is needed to over-excite them.

The guarantee which it prides itself on offering is disarmament. The authors of the peace reasoned thus: possession of an excessive military force pushed Germany into war & conquest; a Germany which will have the right to keep under its flags only 100 K men -- just what it will need to keep internal order -- will be peaceable & inoffensive.

"The German army", said Mr Lloyd George, "was the key to the vault of Prussian politics. We must scatter it, dissolve it, disarm it, make it impossible for it to re-assemble again, make the fitting out of a credible army impossible".

Well, that would be enough: Germany would no longer be Germany. Feeble reasoning, unworthy of a statesman. Napoleon had done the same concerning Prussia & one could find it curious that Mr Wilson, Mr Lloyd George & Mr Clemenceau had renewed the error of that militarist, if Napoleon had not taken his general ideas from the 18th Century, that is from the same sources as they did.

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It is the very nature of Prussia -- land of colonisation & conquest -- , which created Prussian militarism: the Knights of the Teutonic Order preceded the Hohenzollern, they bequeathed them a need & an instrument. On the frontiers which are uncertain & continually disputed between Germans & Slavs, in a country without natural boundaries, open to the 4 winds, military force is a necessity. The **Il Eimaischutz** formed itself before our eyes almost by spontaneous generation like a Teutonic Order of democracy; the remnants of the former imperial army, the bands let go at demobilisation, found refuge [26] in the border territories of West & East Prussia. Perhaps new forms of militarism are in the process of being born there. There is lacking only the opportunity & the man who will set this militarism in motion. If Stein & Scharnhorst had re-organised a Prussian army with new principles, Major Schill had taken it upon himself to revive the warrior spirit. Nevertheless after Jena, Prussia had been disarmed, but the Prussian state was extant & it was remilitarised in 5 years. The prohibitions of the conqueror had been turned & violated, until the day when -- circumstances in favor -- the Prussian army had the same legitimacy as the Prussian state.

Today's Prussia is Germany: the Treaty of Versailles confuses them. And what Prussia resents, so does Germany. The disarmament ordered by the Treaty of Versailles is a guarantee even weaker than what Napoleon was able to obtain, who had even so marched into Berlin. We must not forget besides that Prussian militarism before being a danger to Europe was a danger to Germany: until 1866, when it had subjugated resistance, Prussian militarism found limits or correction in the constitution itself of Germany, in the balance of forces & in the customs which resulted from the federal government. In 1813, the militarism disposed only of the resources of Frederick's Prussia, in 1870 those of Bismarck's Prussia. For its rebirth, it will have those of the whole German Empire, just what the Treaty of Versailles has recognised & consecrated.

The peace has preserved & tightened the unity of the German state: here is the soft part. This basic concession not only aggravates for disarmament the difficulties of inspection. We repeat that political power leads to all the others & a state of 60 M people, the most numerous in West & Central Europe, possesses from now on that political power. Sooner or later, Germany will be tempted to use it. She will be pushed thither precisely by those just harshnesses which the Allies have placed in the other parts of the Act of Versailles. Everything inclines towards making 60 M Germans feel they underwent in common -- indivisibly -- a painful fate. Everything inclines to give them the idea & the means of freeing themselves from it & the shackles themselves will serve as goads. [27]

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What is it which can be the most painful for the defeated Germans ? What is it which can any further incite them towards freeing themselves ? The territories which they are losing or the reparations which they owe ? Both of them, to the same extent & for the same reason. They bind the provinces to the money & an inhabitant of Baden feels himself as interested as a Saxon in retaining Upper Silesia, both remaining citizens of the same unique country.

Under the pretense that the credit would thereby be better, the treaty made the Germans equally & jointly liable for the debt. One also made them jointly responsible for the protest. Silesia, Posnan & Danzig were Prussian conquests, which for half-a-century interested only the true Prussians. The loss of them is felt by a man of Stuttgart or of München, because the man of Stuttgart or of München says to himself: "Wurtemberger or Bavarian, I own & I owe as if I were a Prussian: our active is the same as our passive. Everything anyone takes from Prussia, they take from Germany. They take it from me. What we will recover, we will recover together as well". There are 60 M people to reason in that manner, rivetted to the same chain of reparations, but who will be better aware of their power with every year which passes by, for the treaty gives them a common obligation, a common interest & a common state: a hope beyond the despair.

During more than 1 generation, the Germans will be obliged to pay tribute to the Allies. They will be obliged to pay the main tribute to the French, who are 1/3 fewer than them: 40 M Frenchmen have as debtors 60 M Germans, whose debt cannot be liquidated before 30 years, perhaps a half-century. Children who are not yet born, who will know of the war only by hear-say -- by a legend whose nature may already be guessed: "We weren't defeated" -- , these children will have arrived at the age of manhood & out of the produce of their toil it will still be incumbent upon them to pay in advance part of the reparations. What guarantees, what precautions would have been called for by this formidable credit ! -- at least, that these millions of creatures would not have been chained to the same ball, with a single government & perhaps tomorrow a single leader to raise them up to break their chain. [28]

Now look at the map of the new Europe, if by the time this book falls under your eyes, she has not been rended & upended into several of her parts. Germany is seriously cropped. We said just now, she is losing approx 100 K sq Km -- 1/5 her area -- , but where is she losing them ? Above all in the East, on the Polish frontier. Alsace-Lorraine, **Eupen & Malmedy** , the northern belt of Schleswig: light prunings next to those which the Empire undergoes on the other side. To the young & weak Polish state it has had to yield up Posnan, it is under threat of restoring to it Upper Silesia & Danzig forms an exit corridor which from now on separates East Prussia from West Prussia, as in the 18th Century, as in the time when the kingdom of Frederick was only a "kingdom of outskirts", as Voltaire joked.

The Allies have not split up, they have not even federalised Germany: they have said that **one does not go back upon the evolution of history**. And yet they have gone back there on one point & what a point ! -- Königsberg, the city of Kant, the city where the first King of Prussia had himself crowned. The Prussian state of old, so weak, so ill-formed -- " 3 anvils on which beat 3 hammers" -- , **had never stopped demanding** that Königsberg should be welded to the rest of the kingdom & the Polish corridor closed. And yet the Treaty of Versailles has re-established the islet of East Prussia while allowing a great Prussia-Germany to continue to exist ! We shall examine in the next chapter the psychological & political effects of this half-measure, so ill-considered.

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Therefore, one cannot say that the treaty does not dismember Germany. It dismembers her plainly in the East, at a sensitive point, very far from the influence of the Allies. It dismembers her for the profit of Poland, 3 times less populous than her & more than 20 times less strong, if one takes into account the internal weaknesses of the Polish state & the dangers it runs. Look again at that map, so expressive. Cowering in the middle of Europe like an ill-natured animal, Germany has only to extend a claw to re-unite again the islet of Königsberg. In this omen are written the approaching woes of Poland & of Europe.

In the very strictest sense, it could be admitted that on the western side German unity – kept in awe by France, by Belgium & further away by the Anglo-American guarantee -- would no longer be dangerous [29] or that the danger would be slight, vague, that it would be easy to ward off. Perhaps. The experiment was, however, quite dangerous, for we have so many burdens, so many obligations to impose on that Germany -- always apt to become again a powerful state -- , which she will put up with impatiently !

But the authors of the peace do not appear to have thought that on the other side there was nothing & that the great German weight would make their Europe see-saw into that hole. For the little states created or recreated to the east of Germany to be able to grow, organise themselves, develop, pass through the maladies & crises of growing up in relative security, it was not necessary that an enormous Germany should weight down on them. The policy of nationalities, even more than the policy of equilibrium, required the break-up of Germany. Little states are not secure next to a single one which remains big.

It seems that the authors of the peace believed that they had succeeded in reconciling the principle of nationalities & that of equilibrium, since the peoples set free in the East are given the job of balancing the German mass. It is a problem of mechanics solved by a metaphor, that of the "girdle" or of the "railing". By what is Germany girdled ? -- by a garland of Serbs.

And there is more ! Look again at that strange map. Put yourself for a moment in the place & inside the head of someone who lives in those new states. For them, Germany can be only a menace or an attraction: between submission & struggle there is no middle way. For Poland, there is no choice: it is struggle to the death. But the Czechoslovak state ? Far from hemming in Germanism, it is Germanism which hems it in, which prevents it -- if it wishes – from breathing, which holds its commerce & its industries at its discretion. And then -- we are not afraid in this book to repeat elementary facts, but insofar as they are important to have them continually present in mind – there are 3 M Germans in Bohemia. A war with Germany would be suicide for Czechoslovakia. Extreme caution is prescribed for the Prague government & caution is another name for neutrality & unconditional absolute neutrality is soon another name for subjection.

Further south, it's worse. Here's Austria, a genuine piece of Germany. She alone is cut off from German unity. If one cuts off Austria, it makes no sense that the other parts should be bound around Prussia: [30] if Vienna remains the capital of Austria, it makes no sense

that Bavaria & Wurtemberg should gravitate around Berlin & from the moment one wants to create an independent Austria, it is necessary that there should be other independent pieces of Germany. The subordinate is within the reach of the principal: too big a temptation for Germany to re-incorporate into the German fatherland the Austrian regions; too big a temptation for the Viennese state to rejoin a broad & powerful community. Already, it is an object of derision & pity for the World: people nickname it the abortive state. If it was surrounded by other states of its size -- it comprises about as many inhabitants as Belgium -- , it would not be ridiculous, but this odd little German group next to the German colossus, no-one takes it seriously.

To endure, Poland, Czechoslovakia & Austria implied that they would not have at their side a big Germany: the existence & the security of these little states implied other little states. No consideration of this kind is to be found in the Treaty of Versailles. It does not even appear that at any point the authors of the peace thought about questions of balance. The Treaty of Versailles is not a political treaty.

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Politics consists essentially of forecasting. The treaty of June 28 is remarkable for its lack of foresight: it piles up the difficulties & it puts off the solutions for later. It bequeaths to the future lawsuits & hearings, not only with Germany, but with our allies. How will it be with Germany in 15 years? How will it be with our allies? Nonetheless, that date is that on which the occupation of the 3rd zone, that of Mayence, must come to an end, if Germany has kept her undertakings, & as she is already in default, the French position is that the extensions are suspended: will that position be accepted everywhere? To what conflicts will it give place? But the year 1935 is still when a plebiscite will decide whether the Saar valley remains with France or Germany & if the plebiscite comes out against us, Germany will have to pay the price of the mines of which the treaty makes us owners. Big complications. To what degree will they be increased by the condition of Europe at that point [31] & by the condition of Germany? At that moment, what will be the ratio of the forces face-to-face? We are reduced to guesses. Big problems are left to chance.

Undoubtedly, so general a peace, embracing as many objects at that of 1919, must admit of a measure of uncertainty: it must be a "continuous creation". The Peace of Westphalia itself had not escaped that necessity, since it had given the right of guarantee to France & her northern ally Sweden, which moreover quickly became incapable of exercising it. But what did the guarantee of the Westphalia treaties make a point of? -- something relatively simple, something clear, the **regulation of the Germanic regiment**, which no German power was permitted to dominate. This principle was absolute: it was unalterable & of a **construction** which did not allow any room for doubt. The guarantee of the Allies in 1919 applies, on the contrary, to a multitude of questions about details, which give way to controversies & compromises:

we saw it concerning coal at the Spa conference & we shall see it again. As to the most important of the points, the one which keeps the rest dependent upon it, the balance of forces, it is on the contrary the one which is not even considered.

This omission gives the peace its main characteristic. It is a peace which did not choose to look for the establishment of balance. Respect for German unity led it there & all the other consequences flow from that & will flow from that. For France, the most serious is maintenance of the armed peace, possession of a big military force remaining indispensable to us, whether for our security or to seize the pledged objects which would be rendered necessary by failure to execute the treaty. A year's experience has already shown that occupation of the left bank of the Rhine is not enough: it was necessary for the first time to go to Frankfurt. Seizure of the Ruhr valley had to be given as a sanction in the "codicil" at Spa. One could say that the Treaty of Versailles arranged for eternal war.

It has not even put us in very good conditions to wage it. The frontier which it awards us is that of 1870. It is a frontier for invasion, laid out in 1815 against France. The advice of the military leaders, who asked for a strategic frontier, has not been retained. On that point, the "technicians" were not listened to. [32] Two historical examples prove, however, that it is helpful to listen to the technicians in those types of matters. When a general staff officer says: "Here I can be confident of my defense & there I cannot be confident", he has his reasons, his technical reasons. In 1866, after Austria had given Venice up, the Austrian general staff had set new boundaries for the empire. The result: during 3 years, the Austro-Hungarian Empire made do with weak forces to break the rush of the Italians & from its peaks & its Alpine cols it twice flung its troops onto the road to Lombardy. In 1871, the Prussian general staff had wanted to protect Metz: it carried the day & that is why in 1914 we could not even defend Briey. In revenge, Bismarck had passed over the opposition of Moltke & had left us the gap of Belfort: we entered the Sundgau starting in 1914 & we have always remained there, just as Moltke predicted.

Since France remained in contact with a big Germany, she needed at least a rational frontier, a frontier agreeing with that policy. We have not had it. For natural strategic safety by land, which could not itself make up for the absence of political security, there were substituted judicial precautions, prohibitions for Germany to keep garrisons on the left bank of the Rhine & within a zone of 50 Km on the right bank. It is clear that these clauses, like those about disarmament in general, are as valid as the circumstances & the ratio of forces between the states. It is continually to the balance of forces – to the political balance -- that one finds oneself brought back.

Perhaps it was because he was the opponent & denier of the classic principle of balance that President Wilson desired that the covenant of the League of Nations should precede & have authority over the Treaty of Versailles, like all the other treaties.

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What is the League of Nations ? -- unreal balance in place of real balance.

The League of Nations denies what one might call subjective balance, that which does not allow a disproportion between neighbouring states or those exposed to conflicts.

It equally denies objective balance, that which results from the contrivances of alliances.

It intends to make one & the other useless by taking on the job of establishing justice between peoples, of making righteousness respected & harmonising self-interests.

The day Germany will be judged worthy [33] of entering the association, that day

-- according to Wilson's system -- peace will have no further need of any other guarantee.

A single article in the covenant of the League had a pure & positive sense. It was Article 10, that by which the members of the League mutually engaged to protect & defend their territorial integrity & their independence. Alone among its kind, a great political assembly, the Senate in Washington, had the courage & the freedom to say loud & clear that it rejected such a burden & such a duty. The governments & parliaments which accepted them were not sincere & did not believe themselves really obligated by so wide an undertaking or rather they had not measured its extent. In rejecting Article 10 the Senate in Washington destroyed an illusion. It rendered an immense service. Each people from now on must look for its way & its policy according to the data of ordinary experience. They will look for them in the midst of a wide confusion which the Treaty of Versailles did not entirely create, but which it aggravated to a considerable extent by its appendices, the Treaties of St-Germain, Neuilly, Trianon & Sèvres.

Throughout this chaos French policy remains dominated, as before 1914, by the German problem.

The peace has not alleviated it. From now on, what will be the nature of our relations with Germany ? That is the first of the questions, that is the end of the chain

& there there's no doubt & there's no choice. If we have escaped dependence upon Germany, we remain dependent on the German problem.

CHAPTER 3 -- What Saved German Unity [34]

Everyone today agrees in regretting that the defeated Germany has kept her political unity, the main result of the earlier victories of Prussia. The French negotiators themselves do not deny it: it would have been better that German unity should not have survived our victory. Mr Tardieu pleads "force majeure". No-one contests the justice of Thiers' sentiment, 6 weeks before Sadowa: "The biggest principle of European policy is that Germany should be composed of independent states tied together by a simple federal bond". Mr Tardieu simply alleged that Mr Clemenceau & his colleagues ran foul of impossibilities, of which the principal was the opposition of our allies & the general principles enunciated by Mr Wilson & accepted by everyone, on which the peace was based.

We leave aside the question of knowing whether those principles were untouchable & whether the conversion of Mr Wilson could not be attempted. The British government, for example, had obtained the abandonment of the freedom of the seas. Would not the French government also, by presenting suitable arguments at the time when the positions were defined [35] – that is between the Armistice & the convening of the Conference – , have obtained agreement that respect for German unity should be set aside ?

There was no such attempt & the reason for it is simple. It is that the "big principle of European policy" of which Thiers spoke was absent from their minds. It had already been terribly obscured under the 2nd Empire. One can say that in our time it remains alive only in the form of a historic memory among a very small number of people, who were not among those to whom the job of conducting the negotiations was entrusted. If one or other of the members of the French delegation had at certain moments a glimmer of the politics to come, it would have been only whims, as behind-hand as they were fleeting. The heart wasn't there, the ideas no more or even less. Before & during the war, Mr Clemenceau had had the opportunity to show his own ideas: he collected them in a book about Germany which betokens a sincere patriotism, but one searches it in vain for anything resembling the views of a statesman.

Mr André Tardieu, in his exculpatory memoirs, recalls that none of the governments which preceded that of Mr Clemenceau had set down, even in its secret documents, the division of Germany among the number of our war aims. However, there had been a discussion of it in the personal conversations with Emperor Nicolas II, who whole-heartedly accepted that idea, a proof that it could gain additional supporters, for it was not in the traditions of the Russian court, which at least since the Crimean War had never opposed the progress of German unity & did not contest it in 1871. But Mr André Tardieu was correct: there had been during the war only isolated attempts in this direction, transient rays of light. Neither in 1916, at the time when the main allies had concluded their agreements with a view to victory, nor in 1917, when in response to the German offer of peace they had defined their war aims, had there been any question of restoring Germany to a federal state. The agreements of 1916 even placed the left bank of the Rhine under our authority without taking heed that the rest of the German land would remain centralised under the direction of Prussia, so that that contrivance had the same short-comings as those of Napoleon III. [36] #

All that Mr André Tardieu has succeeded in proving is that during the war the French state had neither doctrines nor principles concerning German affairs. The orator who would have spoken in the Chamber about the Treaties of Westphalia would have had no more success than Thiers in 1866. Those who wrote about it in books or in the press gained the approbation of informed men & Mr Paul Deschanel for example did not grudge his own, but those ideas were undoubtedly too unfamiliar or rather came from too far away & they required a preparation which was not widespread enough effectively to convince people. Everywhere else, they were turned into derision. The establishment, to whom they were foreign or too unfamiliar, would have participated in them or put them into effect only if they had conquered the public mind. The conquest of public opinion demands efforts & time: it had merely begun. It needed the experience of the post-war period & it is now perhaps too late.

No doubt, people will say that during the war it was unwise to threaten Germany with dissolution & that that threat would have served only to tighten national unity. The same argument could also have prevented the announcement that the war would be pursued till complete victory, till Germany was on her knees; it could have prevented promising William II the ultimate penalty, for till the final weeks of the war the spell of the Emperor was not affected. When did the Germans overthrow William II ? -- when they understood that the deposition of the Hohenzollerns was necessary to obtain peace. At the beginning of November 1918, Scheidemann & the majority Socialists were still hesitating.

It is probable that the same result would have been achieved, if the Alliance had announced that it would agree to peace when Germany had broken up its unity & then alone. Perhaps that announcement would have been received with scorn, with a really sincere indignation. As long as Germany believed in victory, she did not agree to disown William II nor even to renounce the Belgian "stake". In 1918, she was still saying "Never!" for Alsace-Lorraine. With the progress of our arms, the idea would have made headway. We know today that well before the Armistice Bavaria was weary & that King Louis III began to think it would be better to withdraw his chips from the game. What would have happened if that escape-hatch had been shown to the Germans ? No-one can say that they would not have renounced [37] their unity as easily as they renounced their monarchy. It was no longer impossible to show them that their unity was the cause of their misfortunes & of our own, insofar as the Hohenzollerns were responsible for them.

To show that, it would have been necessary to know it.

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The Allies had denounced "Prussian militarism" & autocracy as the enemies of Europe & the authors of the war. It had not entered into their minds not only that German unity was the work of that militarism & that autocracy, but even more that she would always be inclined to resort to the means which had created her. There was never at all in the councils of the Allies a reasoned examination of the German question. The historical causes of the European catastrophe, which made everything clear, did not retain the attention of statesmen whom nothing had prepared for this type of study. The Germany which they had known was a united Germany. Its unity was seen as a fact which moreover conformed with the principle of nationalities & the right of peoples to settle their own affairs. Into the structure raised by Bismarck & by the Hohenzollerns it was enough, after having reduced it to those parts which are genuinely German, to pour a measured dose of democracy. Then, by means of a few precautions of the military kind till the conversion of the German people might be complete, one would have done all that it was humanly possible to do for peace in Europe & human progress.

We are not sketching a caricature of the "baptism of the Saxons". Either this philosophical picture guided our negotiators or they did not think about anything at all. According to what was said in Mr Clemenceau's circle, one can deduce that the head of the French government considered German unity as an event due to the general evolution of the European peoples in the 19th Century, which one could not revisit in virtue of the adage that there are no regressions in history.

Mr Clemenceau was not of the school which teaches humoring the enemy. His romanticism about the war, after having contributed so widely [38] to saving France, ended by helping save the German Empire. The change of direction was unforeseen, but like the devil, romanticism is a logician. At bottom, Mr Clemenceau loathed distinguishing between Germans & it was Germany as a whole for which he reserved his harshness. "Differential" treatment applied to Bavarians & Rhinelanders would have grated on him twice, first because the Germans, who formed a whole in his eyes, were all equally culpable, then because a distinction among those all-equally-culpable Germans would have been ancient history & would not have responded to any reality of the present day: on this point equally we do not believe we are misrepresenting his thought.

At that place, the ideas of the republican generation to which Mr Clemenceau belongs had their meeting-point with its lively patriotism & its burning consciousness of the war & of the culpability of aggressors. But to punish Germany it would have been necessary to think as well -- as at the time when Austria was destroyed -- how not to punish ourselves. The circle of Mr Clemenceau strove moreover to translate into positive language its theology of evolution & its doctrine of vengeance. Not once but 10 times during the peace negotiations, several of his immediate colleagues explained before us or before credible people who reported their words to us that separatist forces no longer existed, that the Hanoverian Guelphs were only a handful -- "a half-dozen" -- , that we couldn't roll back 50 years of history, that the war & the defeat itself had tightened German unity, finally that that unity, after having been

moral & political, had become economic, that it had been composed of a network of railways, of canals, of exchanges, by the organisation of industry, & that realism required one to take note of these facts ... There is room to believe that Mr Clemenceau did not bother himself with so many reasons: he had an abstract view of Germany, he judged her from some distance & without putting himself to trouble concerning her particular characteristics. Addressing the Chamber shortly before the Armistice, when William II, like an old Germanic emperor among his predecessors, had awarded his subjects a "golden Seal", Mr Clemenceau had mocked this imperial democracy. A few months later, the Weimar Assembly coupled to the Empire -- whose name & idea were maintained -- a republican constitution in which the word 'republic' was mentioned only once. There are more varieties & more contradictions among German affairs & German minds [39] than a weak knowledge & a brief philosophy might understand.

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The hard Right was much less numerous in the Reichstag of 1912 than in that which resulted from the elections of 6 June 1920. However, that Reichstag of the war years responded with a display of indignation after it became apparent that the Allies were demanding, in order to grant peace to Germany, the abdication of William II. Soon Germany & its military chiefs -- who had always had a perfect contempt for the sovereign, whom they held responsible for 1000 errors & above all for not having declared war sooner --, everyone became convinced that the sacrifice of the Hohenzollerns was necessary to escape total disaster. Were the Allies correct to make the overthrow of William II a preliminary condition? A well-known radical English newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*, has since regretted it. If William II -- said this paper after the nationalist successes of 6 June -- had signed the Versailles peace, it is he, not the socialists & democrats, whom the German people would have reproached for its troubles & the reactionaries would not have found their most perfidious & most unerring weapons. Thus it is not certain that the downfall of the Hohenzollerns, at the time when it occurred, was a good thing for the future of democracy in Germany.

But the fall of this detestable dynasty, which we saw disappear with a deep relief & a burning vengeful pleasure, was accompanied by a wholesale collapse of thrones. It is from that collapse that we have gained nothing. On the contrary, the middling & small German dynasties had been in the past the prop of separatism. It was universally admitted that in the case of disaster, the dissolution of the Empire would begin with the German princes. Bismarck knew it well. Also, the Germany which he established rested upon a double insurance against "centrifugal tendencies" -- ie separatists -- & against revolution. In his system, the German princes, vassals to the Hohenzollerns, had to be all too happy at keeping their crowns without having to fear popular movements, [40] since the Empire of 1871 reconciled the monarchical principle with that of liberalism & unity. Their tractability was assured: they were interested in being no more than "loyal confederates". On the other hand, the survival of the petty dynasties guaranteed the Hohenzollerns in their turn against revolution. Bismarck had calculated that the Germans would always hesitate to up-end the Emperor-King of Berlin, because a revolution in Prussia would free the princes of the South & proclaim the end

of German unity. For the downfall of the Hohenzollerns to be able to take place without injuries to unity, it had to be that this exceptional condition would have been fulfilled, the preliminary fall of all the other German thrones.

These things were known in Berlin: it was an *PONS ASINORVM* of German politics. From the moment that it was apparent to the imperial government that the war threatened to turn out badly, its attention fixed itself on the 2 dangers of revolution & secession, the one necessarily accompanying the other. It was not by accident that the last-but-one chancellor of William II was Count Hertling, chairman of the council in Bavaria, & the last was Prince Max von Bade, heir to the Grand-Duke's throne. On the eve of the disaster, the German emperor's solicitude therefore sided with South Germany & the monarchies of South Germany, as it went to Austria & the Habsburg monarchy, so sure was he that if revolution broke out only in Berlin, Germany would tear itself apart & the work of 1866 & 1871 would be abolished. An overthrow of the Hohenzollerns while the Habsburgs & Wittelsbachs were spared with the other German dynasties, would have had incalculable consequences. The face & future of Europe would have been changed.

The preoccupations of William II were those of a German emperor; they were those of German nationalism, be it liberal, democratic or socialist. They should have instructed the Allies & guided their policy, above all French policy. There was nothing of it: the Allies did not want to make the distinction, they demanded from the German peoples a thorough-going revolution. Above all, they demanded a democracy. That was the salvation of German unity. The revolution of November happened as it had to happen in order that dissolution might be avoided, in order that in the disaster the "centrifugal tendencies" might not get the upper hand: William II fell last. Officers & MPs, pressed to get an armistice [41] before the catastrophe & to give satisfaction to the Allies, made William II flee to Holland only when separatism appeared to be warded off by the revolutions which had started in München & in Stuttgart. The extraordinary -- almost improbable -- condition which allowed the Republic & the Bismarckian Empire to marry, had been fulfilled. It happened thus in conformity with the program which the Allies had laid down.

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The disappearance of the secondary dynasties did not make impossible a policy of splitting up Germany, but it made it infinitely more difficult: the separatism personified by the princes would have made the first steps for us on its own; the interests of those princes would have engaged them & they would have possessed the diplomatic means of getting in touch. Let us imagine William II chased out of Berlin, while Charles I remains in Vienna, Louis III in München, the other William, King of Wurtemberg, in Stuttgart etc. Immediately, they turn to the victor; they implore his protection; they seek to obtain from him advantages, security for themselves & for their peoples. Charles I communicates with Paris -- as he already sought to do during the hostilities -- via the court of Madrid. Louis III addresses himself to Brussels & bears in mind that Albert I married a Bavarian princess.

The Wurtemberg prince, less well placed because his Russian kin cannot do much for him, finds in his genealogy other intermediaries; the same for the princes of Saxony & Baden & the lesser nobility. It's upto the one who will hustle most & be the first to give securities.

After the tidal wave of November 1918, these opportunities no longer existed & the German revolution, due to its character of expediency, proceeded in a unifying direction. Defeat left separatism without a voice or the means of action, surviving all the same in the form of a vague desire & instinct because it corresponded to the nature of things, but deprived of the political instrument which would have allowed it to make itself known. Social democracy, the main beneficiary of those days of too easy revolution, worked moreover immediately in the direction of re-inforced centralisation. *Vorwärts* had said on 3 November [42]: "The more the Empire is democratic, the more its unity becomes secure & the greater its attractive force. Greater Germany, which already seemed to take shape in 1848 & whose outlines delineate themselves once again before us, had been conceived in the form of a democratic state". Insofar as those days of November were republican, they were favorable to German unity: on 20 July 1920 in the National Assembly of Vienna, the Greater-German -- ie a supporter of re-attaching Austria to Germany -- deputy Angerer declared: "We will not allow the restoration of the monarchy in Austria because it would bury for all time any possibility of Anschluss". One could not put it more clearly that the dynastic element is essential to separatism & what is true of Austria is equally true of Bavaria & the other German states.

Did the leaders of French policy have a clear idea of it ? Their minds were visibly elsewhere: they were thinking of heavens knows what plans for intervening in Russia, just when all their attention should have been turned towards Germany. No more at that moment than at any other in the war did they have any plan, because they had no guiding idea. Nonetheless, one could ascribe to them the intention of turning the victory to account by attempting a dissolution of the German Empire. To spare them their errors & deficiencies, it was important to warn them that German democracy was not working in that direction, that it represented a historical current favorable to unity, the same from which the Hohenzollern Empire emerged.

In the memoir in which he defends the work of the French delegation to the Peace Conference, Mr André Tardieu, appealing to our own evidence, affects to believe that we then considered dissolving German unity impossible & any policy leading to that result impractical for us & for the Allies. On the contrary, we warned that conditions had changed, that one would have deceived oneself in every respect if one had believed that the ties of unity had been loosened by the November revolution & that consequently it required thinking of different means for splitting up Germany.

The warning was certainly useless, since it was taken as a counsel of abstention when it was intended to excite imaginations & make them more inventive. It would have served nothing not to take into account that the Germany of 1918 was no longer that of 1866, [43] when the German princes were fighting against Prussia. There was no longer a question

of effecting separatism in Germany, as we said, "to order". German separatism has never been instigated from abroad: the experiences of Napoleon I were decisive in that regard. The true policy of France consisted in favoring secession movements which arose naturally internally & an instruction from the 18th Century to the French minister accredited to the German Diet put it in excellent terms: "It is well understood that Mr de Chavigny will carefully avoid ever appearing to be the author of these types of movements, for it would be enough that the origin should have been ascertained for the opposite effects to take place". Which did not prevent French policy, following a principle maintained ever since the Peace of Westphalia, from intervening with all means -- including those of force -- , after one of the German states showed any sign of wanting to subjugate & muster the others.

There was certainly no need of historical knowledge to recognise those rules of conduct, as simple as they are wise: common sense is enough. Moreover, German separatism has roots so deep -- it is so far ordered by the genius of the race & that of its lineage -- that a wandering philosopher & bohemian politician Kurt Eisner, having become by the accident of revolutions dictator of München, did not delay to turn to France & by the summons of a whimsical idealism, sought to enter into contact with the French government. A German officer killed him like a dog.

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"He has done me too much good for me to speak ill of him": thus ought the French to think of Georges Clemenceau, but his ideas & his work -- which flows from them -- need to be judged. A man of war, Mr Clemenceau had not been prepared for peace. He dreamed of doing the worst possible to Germany & in that matter Keynes, who saw him at the Supreme Council, has given him a brilliant testimony. Only his hate was neither informed nor discerning, like those old **briscards** whom we saw at Mayence laugh bitterly when a open-minded leader asked them to distinguish Rhinelanders from Prussians. [44]

The same day when, pleading mitigating circumstances for the Treaty of Versailles, he begged the Senate to believe he would have split up Germany if he had been able, Mr Clemenceau furnished the proof that he did not believe in the efficacy of that dissolution. He invoked his memories of 1870 & gave as an example Bavaria, which not only marched with Prussia, but had shown an unforgettable ferocity in the war. There are, however, other things which policy must not forget. In 1870, the Bavarian army, even though led by a Prussian prince, was still distinct from the Prussian army. Above all, it had received only a small amount of Prussian training. Its military inferiority was clear & it was due to that that the French won the majority of their success during the campaign. The Bavarian army in 1870 was as comparable to that of Prussia as was the Austrian army in 1914 to the German army. When the independence of the German states, even in a federal system, would serve only to maintain those differences & those inequalities of level, it would not be of negligible weight. Thus from the point of view of European security, Prussian centralisation is what it is important above all to avoid.

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It is unfortunately undeniable that that salutary principle was foreign to the minds of the French negotiators & even more to the minds of the other negotiators for whom the existence of a German state was not only a fact, but a legitimate fact: that is where we start.

And even every question of international public law was set aside: when Mr Jules Cambon had a qualm & asked whether Bavaria, possessing a diplomatic representation – following the Constitution of 1871 -- ought not to be summoned to the signing so that the instrument of peace should be in order, the problem was examined & settled there & then with a denial.

Since then, everything follows. When the Allied Council sought the means to disarm Germany, it forgot the best, which was to allow the existence only of small armies assigned to each of the German states. It did not recognise those states: it gave an army to the whole of Germany, a single army, that is it gave it to Prussia, giving thereby to "Prussian militarism" almost as much as it was taking away. That day, the French public had a first uneasiness, but one had embarked. Once only, the French delegation -- we believe the honor of this initiative belongs to Mr Stephen Pichon [45] -- attempted to manoeuvre in the direction which events indicated. They proposed timidly to revictual the Bavarians in preference to others. That was when a neutral observer said: "Germany will belong to the first man who walks by with a big sausage on the end of a rod". The French suggestion was rejected; they didn't insist.

There is no doubt that from the very beginning Mr Lloyd George & Mr Wilson were not on guard: they were not in favor of a dissolution of Germany. They were not in favor for reasons both philosophical & political. The French negotiators put nothing in opposition to these reasons, because they had nothing. They had nothing, because their philosophy was at bottom the same as that of their Anglo-Saxon interlocutors: first, the right of nationalities & the German nationality ought to have the same rights as any other; then, evolution & since evolution forbade one to return backwards, 50 years must have rendered German unity indestructible. And starting thence, they did what they had to do: they gave it the consecration of public law which it was lacking, they assisted the Prussian centralisers in completing the work of Bismarck. They told us that a realistic & practical policy required it too, that a big Germany with simplified machinery making an economic whole would be a more trustworthy debtor for our reparations than a Germany composed of little states of mediocre prosperity. That reasoning begins to look like one of the most remarkable follies of modern history. We have gained from it that 40 M Frenchmen are creditors of a mob of 60 M Germans for money recoverable in 30 - 40 years.

One has to ask oneself how in these conditions permission was not allowed to Germany to annex Austria. After all, Austria -- a German province, represented in 1848 at the Parliament of Frankfurt -- had been kept aloof from Greater Germany, the mother community of Germans, only on historical & dynastic grounds. The Habsburg state having ceased to exist, there were only political reasons which could decide the Allies to forbid the Germans of Austria from re-uniting with the other Germans. Those reasons were so strong that they triumphed

over the principle of nationalities & the right of peoples: [46] it would have been absurd & scandalous to allow the defeated Germany to play at "who loses wins" & to recover more territories & population than she had given back. Still, we cannot be very sure that without the press & public opinion, which this time growled, the separation of Austria would have been upheld & that the French government would not have surrendered its opposition. There was little certitude, little stability among our negotiators & their advisors, because they had neither a common insight nor a doctrine. At one moment, they even thought of the dangerous game of "compensations": in return for the left bank of the Rhine abandoned to our control, Germany would have annexed Austria.

Oh naive Napoleonic diplomats, we were saying at the time, do you know what will happen ? -- it is that you will not have the Rhenish provinces & that Germany will keep Austria.

She does not give up the hope of one day grabbing it: within reach of her hand, it is a permanent temptation. She has others such. Concentrated internally, Germany has been separated at its circumference. Millions of Germans live in the immediate neighbourhood of her frontiers, 6 - 7 M in Austria, 3 M in Czechoslovakia. The dissolution of German unity, which the Allies have not sought at home, they have achieved abroad. Reason & experience show it: that work is fragile & unpleasant. If it was good that parts of the German lands should be set aside from German unity, it was also necessary that other parts should be detached from it. If not, the pieces, having fallen under the attraction of a big German state, will fall sooner or later under its subordination.

Thus the Allies have drawn back before the final consequences of their principles. They have dismembered Germany while also unifying it. Thereby their work is illogical & incoherent. It is also fragile & the men who have succeeded the peace negotiators – who have received their legacy -- find themselves today greatly embarrassed before that compact unified Germany, at whose periphery there appear irritidisms which rouse her to pursue the completion of her unity. After having turned the German problem on all its sides, Mr Millerand, having at hand only the Treaty of Versailles & deeming himself bound by that treaty, was constrained at the Spa conference to test the collaboration & co-operation of that over-large Germany.

Whatever may be the difference which there is between victory & defeat, it is somewhat the situation & the state of mind of Thiers after 1871. [47] No better that Thiers had proclaimed the difficulties & misfortunes which would result from German unity. That unity having been achieved, he felt himself overwhelmed. He thought that we no more had any other resort than to come to terms with that powerful Germany & to collaborate with her. The man of prophetic words in 1865 & 1866 opened the way for a policy which had to expand one day with Mr Joseph Caillaux. Let us be aware that we are again set upon that dangerous highway.

In 1919, as in 1866, everything depended on the ideas which held sway in France. Is it necessary to accuse only Mr Wilson ? After he disembarked on the European continent after the Armistice, the President brought home to us the ideas of Napoleon III, a bit like the way Ibsen restored to us

George Sand & Tolstoy restored Jean-Jacques Rousseau. His success was of the same order: Mr Wilson found the ground prepared. Against his "Napoleonic ideas", people's minds had no defense. They had no others to oppose to his own & a general ecumenical peace like that which it was a question of concluding came about with principles & ideas.

Those which prevailed even among the French negotiators were favorable to German unity. They did not believe that dissolution might be possible; they even had a slender desire for it. And it was not in that, but in the revolution -- in the conversion of Germany through democracy -- that above all they put their hope of making Europe habitable & secure. What had happened in the German lands between the fall of William II & the signing of the peace, the movement of centralisation which followed the collapse of the dynasties, everything was a pretext for persisting in abstention. They refused to take seriously -- when they did not discourage them -- the endeavours for a Rhenish republic & it is quite just if their promoters have not been turned into ridicule -- as if forerunners, insofar as they have not succeeded, were not always a bit ridiculous !

A very honest man, then in high office, a very good patriot, moved by the best intentions, to whom we spoke about Dr Dorten & the disquiet he gave to the Prussian authorities, replied that it was very interesting, but that it was not necessary to forget that the unity of nations tightened itself & steeped itself in defeat & misfortune. Those reasons were decisive. They went through the analogy of the history of France & the doctrine of evolution, that uniform evolution which must impel all peoples, all races, along the same roads, to centralisation. It is a bit as if they said that evolution had to lead the German language [48] to become analytic in place of synthetic, to renounce composite words & no longer to set aside participles & infinitives to the end of sentences.

Thus was German unity preserved. At Versailles, where it had seen the light of day in 1871, it was sanctified by the Allies under the chairmanship of a Frenchman & the peace was signed with "Germany for its part". That does not mean that German unity is sheltered from accidents: we have even seen separatism reborn under new & still timid forms insofar as Germany reacts against socialism & revolution.

Perhaps nothing is finished & the fragility of the peace allows one to catch a glimpse of more than one possibility of disorders in Central Europe. Those disorders will not necessarily be favorable to us & they will expose us to new dangers, they will require new efforts from us. An appointment at another time is probably ordained for Germany & for France. On that occasion, it will be necessary that French policy be no longer disserved by her ideas.

CHAPTER 4 – 60 M Germans in Debt to 40 M French [49]

The French military budget for the year 1920 on its own equals the total of all our expenditures for the financial years prior to 1914, maybe c FRF 5 G . As for the new formation of the army, the Minister of War has not been able to promise better than a return to a call-up of 2 years ; all able-bodied men will remain subject to call-up until they are 50 years old.

Why, Germany being defeated, this unwieldy charge, this unyielding effort ? -- because, according to the words of the minister, Mr André Lefèvre: "Germany does not accept her defeat". But why does she not accept it ? Why is the idea of German revenge so little absurd that we would be obliged to return to the regimen of armed peace ?

What therefore are the forces & influences which will determine the nature of the relations in which France & Germany will live in future ?

From a purely human point of view, it is normal & natural that a decisive war – above all when it was a war of people versus people -- [50] leaves to the loser some resentment against the winner, whereas the winner in his satisfaction does not understand that the loser owes him a grudge. Such -- to sum it up coarsely – was the history of Franco-German relations from 1871 to 1914. That history was, if you will, that of an enormous misunderstanding, but one which was fatal on the part of the Germans. It came to an end in a manner which down the centuries will equally fascinate virtuous moralists & jeering moralists: the winners of Sedan by themselves called their victory into question again. Bismarck, however, had sufficiently repeated some wise advice which he summed up by the precept: "QVIETA NON MOVERE". In the absence of Bismarck, common sense indicated – & that was what prevented certain Frenchmen from believing in the possibility of war – that Germany had to avoid breaking anything at all in a Europe fashioned for her convenience or making a criminal attempt on a state of affairs of which she was the unique beneficiary & in the maintenance of which she was the most interested.

The German Empire had had to be conservative. It was that empire which became responsible for knocking everything down. To what was this dreadful blunder owing ?

The Germans praise the objective method: no doubt, it is because they are the most subjective of men. One can say that from the Peace of Frankfurt to the declaration of the Great War, the attitude of Germany with regard to France was an instance of remarkable lack of intelligence. From beginning to end, she deceived herself about the French people. Furnished with an improved intelligence service, the Germans forgot to watch only one thing, which everyone else could see without any spies. One of their best-known caricaturists a long time ago left this portrait of the "psychologist": the psychologist is walking along the road; in the garden of a rural house, a family is gathered & everyone can see from outside what they are doing, but the psychologist draws near, glues his eye to the keyhole & watches carefully.

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It was pretty much thus that the Germans had studied the French nation & they had not comprehended what escaped no-one else. Bismarck, then William II, had several times sought to win the goodwill of France, but in addition they had sought it without dexterity, with a surly hand, the cold shower alternating with the hot shower: as in the song, they always seemed to be saying: "If I love you, take care for yourself". And besides, their advances had a secret motive, which was to enroll France [51] into the service of German politics: when Bismarck supported our colonial enterprises, it was with the scheme of putting France at odds with Italy, France at odds with England. With an exact instinct, French diplomacy & even better the French nation easily penetrated these calculations. France remained polite & hard-hearted. Then the vexed German made threats, vindicating our wariness, himself provoking our precautions for legitimate defense.

During 44 years, Germany committed error after error in her relations with France because she treated as non-existent the question of Alsace-Lorraine & the question of our security. Those questions, which the whole World understood, Germany did not even put to herself; she based her policy on the denial of those realities. To hang onto conquered French provinces against the wish of their inhabitants was for her the exercise of a natural right; to arm herself unceasingly in such a way as to be able at any moment to invade her neighbours was the exercise of another right. Here were the conditions in which France succeeded during nearly a half-century by dint of moderation & dignity in living in peace with the powerful Germany without giving away her independence in relation to her. During that time, Franco-German relations were not made of anything else until they were broken off by the will of Germany herself.

1000 years of history had already seen lots of mutations, lots of reversals in the situation between the German Empire & France. The period 1871-1914 saw an altogether extraordinary experiment fulfil itself. France & Germany had consummated their unities, but French unity was purely national without one protester; German unity included Frenchmen, Poles, Danes, annexed by force. Moreover, Germany, formerly "a republic of princes", had become a military monarchy; France was a peaceful democracy. Between that Germany & that France so constituted there was neither proportion nor balance nor a method of living other than under a regimen of armed peace.

That experiment was short relative to the extent of centuries. It was decisive. Germany took it upon herself to prove it: she threw herself into the war. The state of affairs, which France & Europe tolerated, Germany, which received the benefits of it, was the first to render null. [52]

This glance backwards was indispensable for clarifying the future. Whatever the immensity of the results -- & there can be none of them which surpass those of the World War -- , there still remains a connection between the situation which follows the political ruin & what preceded it. Continuity -- the commonplace law of history which is evident across vast revolutions -- would explain itself by the sole fact that the men who are present at the great changes or who led them, lived & formed their habits & their ideas under the previous regime. Things evolve more or less slowly, but it is contrary to nature

that they go in bounds: the generations interleave too intimately, there are too many steps between old men & youngsters for abrupt jumps or complete metamorphoses to be possible. To that is joined that which does not change, ie the laws imposed on peoples by their geographical & political conditions, their interests & their character.

Due to their proportions, the outcomes which fulfilled themselves from 1914 to 1918 may have had the air of escaping the ordinary rules & of resembling one of those catastrophes which create a TABVLA RASA, yet they themselves submitted to historical antecedents & obeyed the common law. From the war to the peace, their course depended undoubtedly for a large part on the will of the peoples -- itself tied to their heredity -- , but also & for another part, it was determined by forces foreign to that will.

To cite only one example, Mr Clemenceau, leader of the French government during the latter part of the struggle, leader of the French delegation during the preparation of the treaty, wasn't he among those Republican deputies in the Assembly of 1871 who with Gambetta wanted war to the bitter end ? Hadn't he entered political life before the fall of the 2nd Empire as a Republican, ie with the romantic idealism of his party, attached to the principle of nationalities, to the fraternity of peoples, to disarmament, to the delusion of the end of wars ? Mr Clemenceau belongs to a generation which one could call that of the Exhibition of 1867. In him the majority of the currents of the 19th Century meet & he has had his biggest period of activity in the 20th. That instance suffices to show how much the past kept a place in that conflict, which looked like a revolution & remaking of the face of things.

In what concerns France & Germany, the war having ended with our victory, the peace being concluded, what remains of that past ? What are the new components ? [53] At this point, not to lose our way, it is necessary to go back a bit further in time.

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Seen as a whole, in very broad strokes, the history of the relations of the French nation & the Germanic nation can be summed up thus: there was antagonism, violent conflict, each time Germany was a large political edifice, as was the Germany of Otto (Bouvines), of Charles V (200 years of struggle against the house of Austria) or the Hohenzollerns, with all the differences which the regimes of Otto, Charles or the Williams admitted of. On the contrary, each time Germany has been made up of several independent states, having between themselves only the loose ties of a more or less coherent federation, not only have wars been rare, localised & deprived of that national character which makes them unpitiful, but in addition the multifarious German peoples have shown themselves accessible to French civilisation. One cannot cite a single epoch when the Germanic impression might be deeply marked on France. On the contrary, there was one epoch when France found admirers, allies & friends in Germany: it is in the 17th or 18th Centuries, while the Empire, in the words of Prince von Bülow, was a "disjointed mosaic", instead of constituting the body of a nation.

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Experience has therefore proved that the two peoples were not impervious nor condemned to an eternal hostility, but upto now that understanding between Germans & Frenchmen could be got only on one condition: that is, that Germany be decomposed into her natural elements, that she not form a single centralised state in possession of a political power which might generate a military power & which itself summons up that military power. A German state -- given the place which Germany occupies in the centre of Europe without firm frontiers, with disputed territories along all her circumference, Germanic promontories & islets which create an open or latent irredentism as soon as German unity exists as a centre of magnetism -- that state requires & demands militarism. Whether it be that of the Knights of the Teutonic Order or that of the Reichswehr, it's all the same: Germanism invented militarism because Germanism needs a big military force as soon as it is the expression of a state, ie a political power, [54] or -- what comes down to the same thing -- Germanism at that moment was persuaded that it had need of militarism in order to exist, to protect its jumbled "marches" of diverse races.

From defense to aggression, there is only one step: the motives are the same. Possession of a good military tool inevitably gives the desire to make use of it. Here is that which has made the security of France & the tranquility of Europe in times ancient & modern incompatible with a strong German political organisation, whether its seat might have been situated in Vienna or in Berlin. It's not only the history of France, it's those of Poland & Bohemia which lead to the same conclusions.

Is there then neither the means nor the hope that a Germany enclosed inside her proper borders, having achieved her national unity as France had achieved her own, may live in harmony with her neighbours ? Having got her right -- all her right, but nothing but her right -- , couldn't she become a peaceful member of the European family ?

Let's allow that in that respect she would have the same conception of her right as other peoples. Here we are, in the full political tradition of liberalism, at the principle of nationalities, at the supposition which in last-century France set by the ears the **speculative** diplomacy represented by Napoleon III & the **experimental** diplomacy represented by Thiers. From Michelet to Jean Jaurès, an uninterrupted school has taught among us that a Germany whose national aspirations would be at once satisfied & contained inside her proper limits ought to live not only in good-neighbourliness, but in friendliness with France, & that that big Germany was necessary for the moral harmony of the World.

"May God give us", said Michelet in his book *Nos Fils*, whose preface is dated October 1869, "to see a large Germany ! ... The conclave of Europe remains incomplete, inharmonious, subject to cruel phantasies, to impious wars of kings, as long as those lofty spirits of peoples do not hold their seats in their majesty, do not add a new element of wisdom & of peace to the fraternal balance of the World". What was lacking from this dream ? -- Michelet lived long enough to see it. In February 1871, he wrote under the shock of disillusion: "For us, we have always wanted German unity, true consensual unity, [55] not this savage, violent, unworthily compelled unity". And he recalled -- to compare his feelings at that time

with those of the day before – his emotion, the emotion of republican Paris
"when on the festival of 4 March 1848 we saw before the Madeleine among the flags of the nations, which the deputations of exiles from each country had brought along, the great flag of Germany, so noble, black, red & gold, the sacred flag of Luther, Kant & Fichte, Schiller, Beethoven ... ".
That black red & gold flag is that which the new German Republic has re-instated.
Would the prayer of Michelet be fulfilled ?

But the results never follow the path which one assigns to them, above all when one wishes that things may be otherwise than they are, which, Bossuet said, is "the biggest disorder of the mind". After Michelet, Jaurès repeated that if German unity had been created peacefully by liberalism & by democracy, then a great France & a great Germany would have been naturally friends Few sentences could have been as fruitless as those, for we know only one thing, but it is certain, it is that German unity, attempted in 1848 by the ideas of liberalism & democracy, had failed & that it succeeded in 1866 & in 1870 under Bismarck & under the Hohenzollerns, by diplomacy & by war, by force & by conquest, by iron & by fire. No regret, no hypothesis, no prophecy from the past, no "uchronie" will change anything in this fact. That which was, was. Under its first form, its original form & the only one which has existed, German unity -- conquering & victorious -- could not be followed by friendship between Germany & France.

But in 1919 German unity survived defeat, the fall of the Hohenzollerns & the Treaty of Versailles. Not only did the Allies respect it, but also they consecrated it with their seal, they gave it the international legal basis which it had lacked since 1871. The makers of the Weimar Constitution were responsible for the rest: they tightened national unity. The Empire of William II was, despite all, a federation of states: the Republican Empire centralised itself & recognises only "lands". It is still by war -- unhappily this time – that this Germany, more united than that of yesterday, has achieved her fusion. And this new determining factor, that of defeat, weighs upon her & upon the future of Franco-German relations exactly like the factor of victory after 1871.

[56] Among speakers in the Bourbon Palace during the discussion of the peace treaty, we heard expressed the thought of Michelet, of Napoleon III & of Jaurès. They told us that Germany, liberated from the Hohenzollerns, converted to democracy & liberalism, could & had to be still a big Germany, that her unity was necessary, that she would be beneficent & that that new purified Germany, amputated -- for her own good -- from everything which was not German, would live in fraternity with the peoples who are her neighbours. That is the pure doctrine of nationalities, with regard to which the German nationality has as many rights as the others & ought -- with the others & like the others -- to form the great human federation.

After a sleep of 50 years, the principle of nationalities, inscribed on the banners of the Allies, was applied with all the rigor of which human realities & the theoretical mind of the principal negotiators were capable, but as in 1866 & 1870, the principle of nationalities could not perform

without submitting to the necessities & the pressure of politics, war & history. As then, it resolved itself by contradictions; it left deceptions & grudges. That is true of several of the Allied countries: at what point is it not even more so of Germany ?! It was said that a spell was cast over German unity to make it incompatible with the reconciliation of Europe. If German unity as it had emerged from the victories of 1866 & 1870 could not be an assurance of fraternity & of peace, German unity as it emerges from defeat promises no better: yet again, the antecedents will have decided it.

Let us accept, for the convenience of the account, that Germany will remain republican & that she will be a democracy according to the custom & the conception of Western nations. This democratic Germany has to pay the Allies the costs of the war, to make amends for the immense injuries for which she has rendered herself responsible. Could we have exempted her from it ? No, under pain of ruin for the peoples who were victims of her aggression: from all angles, impunity would have been impossible; it would have been a scandal, a prize for political immorality, an encouragement to do it again. It follows from that that 60 M Germans [57] -- " 12 - 15 too many for the territory", said Arthur Heichen in *Neue Zeit* on 3 October 1920 : a few words which open strange horizons -- , forming a single state, having behind them a great past, are condemned to pay a fine whose settlement will extend itself over 2 generations at least. Just & even insufficient for us, that fine is resented as exorbitant & iniquitous by Germany. As memories of the war & the impression of defeat distance themselves, the force of that sentiment will grow. Nothing can help it: a further inevitability has decided it. Those Frenchmen would be insane who count on the friendship of the German people -- who have become their debtor -- & who even discount the natural desire for the loser to tear up a treaty which obliges him to work 30 - 40 years to pay off his debt. To satisfy him, it would be necessary that it would have been reduced to zero: then it is us who would suffer, who would be ruined, who would take the place of the losers, & Germany, making use of her resources, would avail herself of it to annul the other clauses of the treaty. It's a vicious circle.

On these 60 M people, citizens of a single country, it was necessary not only to impose the tribute. It was necessary also to take legitimate & indispensable precautions against them. It was necessary to set the number of soldiers & cannon which they would have the right to keep & consequently to limit the right of sovereignty of the German state.

That is not all. New frontiers were drawn & it would be a miracle that Germany would consent very long to regard those frontiers, to which she would perhaps resign herself in the West, as definitive on the Eastern side. There, her conquests over Poland have been taken back from her & Prussia, which elsewhere keeps the territorial position which Bismarck had given her in 1866, is brought back to the point where she found herself before Frederick II : Königsberg is separated from Berlin, as in the 18th Century. It is on the Eastern flank that Germany has had to restore most of her ill-gotten gains & it is there that she is still the strongest in face of young & scarcely formed countries, in an area where the great Western nations have little direct leverage on her. The old Prussia is cut in two, as in the time when the Germanic Empire was under the regime

of the 'Kleinstaaterei', of separatism & the little states. Even then, Prussia **had never stopped demanding** that her 2 stumps should be reunited: today, the 'Kleinstaaterei' no longer exists [58] & it is not only the Prussian state, it is the whole of Germany, concentrated in its other parts, which will naturally aspire to re-establish the weld between the 2 Prussias.

Thereby an appeal is launched to the future, Frederick would have said. It is, in our opinion, one of the most egregious vices of the peace. To revive Poland, it was necessary to prune Germany to the same extent, but so that Poland -- & consequently the whole European edifice constructed by the Conference -- might be in safety, it would have been necessary that the operation not be attempted on one German nation nor on a German state. Let us imagine for a moment that France has been defeated & that -- for whatever reasons -- the victor has thought it good to give Spain a corridor ending in Bordeaux, while leaving us the department of the Lower Pyrenees & Bayonne. For how long would France, remaining moreover a nation & a state, submit to that amputation? -- just as long as the victor obliged her to submit & Spain was capable of defending her corridor. It could not be otherwise than that for the Danzig corridor & East Prussia.

It is the same thing in that which concerns Austria. The logic of the principle of nationalities would have required that the German-speaking Austrian provinces -- the Austrian provinces properly so-called -- should revert to Greater Germany. Were they not represented in 1848 at the Parliament of Frankfurt? Had not the re-union been inscribed in the earlier program of German liberalism? The separate evolution of Austria outside the outlines of the Empire restored in 1871 was related to a dynastic question. The House of Habsburg having fallen like that of Hohenzollern, Germany having become a free nation, the re-union -- 'Anschluss' -- found no political obstacles & obtruded itself on people's minds. However, the Allies could not -- & ought not -- consent to it: to admit that Germany might annex Austria, even under a "moral conquest", would still have been to recognise her right of conquest; it would have been to compensate here territorially for what she had lost elsewhere, to favor her at the game of "who loses wins", to make good, in the name of Wilson's principles, the 'Mitteleuropa' conceived by Pan-Germanists.

The re-union is & remains prohibited, but as with Poland the contradiction arises with the same characteristics. It resides in the facts & in the consequences even more than in the ideas. That Germany to which it is prohibited -- justly prohibited, for reasons of European interest -- to complete her unity by the 'Anschluss', even so keeps that uncompleted unity before her eyes. [59] She remains a powerful centre of attraction for the little Republic of Vienna: the subordinate is separated from the boss & the subordinate is defenseless, reduced to a wretched & precarious life.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was still sufficiently vigorous to keep 10 M Germans outside the Germanic community. Within reach of her hand, Germany has henceforth these millions of poor naked brothers, reduced to a paradoxical political & geographical situation. There too, for 60 M Germans the temptation is too strong. The appeal to the future is too clear.

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They would not tell us, but it would still be certain that in their eyes the Southern frontiers, like those of the East, are provisional. As with liberated Poland, as with a Czechoslovak state stuffed with Germans, independent Austria, to remain without peril, implies in Germany some independent German states.

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Such are the conditions in which Europe, for the second time since 1871, makes the experiment of German unity. From the point of view of politics & of psychology, these conditions are unpropitious. Without an act of faith -- which cannot be procured rationally -- in the beneficent influence of democracy, without a blind belief that the new Germany, touched by grace, will become a convert to the idea that she is a major criminal, a major sinner, that she deserved her lot & that she does penance justly, unless -- to say it all -- a blow from a magic wand may have changed not only German nature, but human nature & the nature of affairs, without that, all the probabilities -- & the duty of politics is to take account of them -- are that Germany may resent -- & resent more & more as unbearable -- the Treaty of 28 June. All the probabilities are that she may make it her business to liberate herself from it & destroy it with those means of breaking their chains which can remain to a nation of 60 M humans. It is enough to call to mind the feelings which the treaties of 1815 had inspired in France & which governed our internal & external policy from the downfall of Napoleon I till the accession of Napoleon III. [60]

Today's Germany could fail to protest against the Treaty of Versailles, could execute its clauses with good will & a contrite heart, but our warning would remain the same. That good will, that contrition do not exist. It matters little. Equally little matter the protests which the Berlin government & public opinion have heaped up against the peace. Even less does it matter whether those protests may have been sincere or may have been AD HOC : a defeated people has more than 24 hours to curse its judges.

What we are examining -- & the only thing in reality which politics needs to keep hold of -- is a situation taken by itself: it is a problem of forces & of mechanics. The forces are not adjusted in such a manner that the conditions necessary for a consummate peace-making may be fulfilled; those for a reconciliation between France & Germany are no longer thus. The French cannot renounce the money owed to them; the Germans assess the tribute as exorbitant & do not recognise the grounds for it. Where can be the space for agreement ? It is besides extremely unbelievable that Germany may accept as definitive the frontiers which have been set for her to the East & to the South. On the French side, how can we rely on the assurance that the political rivalries are finished ?

The obstacle to the birth of friendly relations between the 2 peoples is not connected so much to cruel memories & grudges from the war as to the arrangements of the peace treaty. The typical Frenchman is not vindictive: he is eminently sociable. It is even one of the traits of his character to like being liked & to be painfully surprised when he discovers

that he is not liked. For very long periods in olden times, the French & a large number of Germans have lived -- as we recalled above -- in complete cordiality & friendship to the point that they often fought together under the same flags. The name of Marshal Saxe, well-known to history & literature, illustrates that epoch. There is therefore no incompatibility of humor or hostility of principle between French & Germans. For them to live in good-neighbourliness, it is enough -- but necessary -- that the political conditions may have come into existence again which are necessary for that mutual intimacy. [61]

Unfortunately, they do not exist. By which side do you want France to take hold of the German block? The moral influence of a foreigner slips fatally on a numerous people united by a solid national bond. A Kurt Eisner, a Dorten have shown themselves open to sympathetic sentiments in regard to ourselves. They have been denounced as traitors to the Germany fatherland. Kurt Eisner has even been assassinated; Dorten just missed it. That is not what will encourage others.

What then remains for us to do? -- what we are doing: take precautions, remain on guard, bear in mind to be suspicious. By a monstrous injustice, people reproach France for that state of mind: it was created & legitimized by the conditions of the peace. Those who accuse France of "militarism" forget that for 2 - 3 generations we have suffered the military harness, that we have never wanted it & that an adverse organisation of Europe still imposes it on us. No reasonable man has ever conceived it as a good & desirable thing that the French & the Germans should have to continue through the course of centuries to regard one another as dog & cat, but it will be thus as long as circumstances propitious for a reconciliation have not appeared & those circumstances cannot come together as long as the German Empire stays as it is. France & Germany remain condemned to antagonism.

It is not a moral question: it is a political question.

Exactly like the Treaty of Frankfurt, the Treaty of Versailles has posed it.

CHAPTER 5 -- They Will Not Know [62]

At this point, let us ask for a pause in the midst of the recital,
a moment to meditate upon our destinies.

Our fortune is pledged for several generations. New tribulations begin.
How many have seen it ? How many suspect it ? Why these things & not others ?
To prodigious amounts of devotion & sacrifice correspond chasms of ignorance.
Large is the number of the men who submit, live, suffer & die without having questioned;
small is the number of those who seek to decipher the causes for which they pay in their very flesh.

Through the dying Macbeth, Shakespeare directs to the World his farewell & his scorn:
"A tale told by an idiot, full of sound & fury, signifying nothing". Voltaire saw men as restless.
He wrote the history of 10 peoples. He gave up all hope of explaining. He refused to encourage
politics or historians: "The bulk of the human species has been & will be always idiotic;
the maddest are those who want to find a direction in those absurd tales & put some reason
into the madness". Shakespeare & Voltaire met one another in disdain & in pity. [63]
Nothing informs & nothing improves. The experience of the fathers is lost for the children.
Humanity turns in a circle of pains. Before that vain theatre, which restarts without end,
the prophets of Israel used to veil their faces: the peoples labor for annihilation,
weaken themselves for the benefit of the fire.

It is necessary to take delight in this pessimism or to shake off its oppressive cape.
One can end with the indifference & uselessness of everything. It's alright if for his own part
each is resolved to undergo the consequences of the nonsense by consoling himself
for what he suffers with the bitter pleasure which the spectacle of universal insanity provides.
But the least mad, **the most undeceived of the Jews** had already said it: we will have
the consequences. And we will all have them: they will come to seek out the ironist
& the philosopher. One does not separate one's fate from that of the nations or rather
one separates it only on the condition of renouncing oneself in order to scoff at the human species.

One day, in our country, war claimed the man bent upon the soil, the economical
& prudent townsman, the detached thinker & the great mass of those who think that after all
-- in every age & under whatever regime -- one makes a fortune & freely organises one's life.
The existence of the majority was based on calculations which presupposed a long stability;
those who predicted disasters had no audience or met only the incredulous.
Moreover, no-one would have dared to announce the half of what we have seen:
the extraordinarily perceptive man who had merely got near the reality would have passed
for a fool. It was accepted that everyone is his own master & that the peoples are the masters
of their destinies, but 100 causal factors made use of them -- distant obscure causes, inaccessible
to the crowd -- , so many, so mixed that they resemble what one calls, for lack of anything better,
chance. 100 causes, which likewise escape the crowd, are all ready to make use of it still.

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After that immense upheaval, one single thing remains intact: the conversation of the French people & the German people. The roles are reversed: the victor has become the vanquished. Revenge is no more to be taken by the same side, but this time the vanquished will have reasons to take it which we did not have; he will have opportunities which we did not have.

60 M Germans have become our tributaries in a Europe where since 1914 war has not ceased [64] & has been put out at one point only to flare up again at a different point: the peace has reared up like a homicidal machine.

And the same question besets the mind.

Why these things & not others ? Why this peace & not another peace ?

In 1917 the end -- a better end -- would have been possible.

Whoever had a sense of politics was thinking of the dislocation of the enemy coalition.

The King of Spain did not restrain himself from counselling it: he offered himself to undertake it.

Incompetence, frivolity, inexperience, prejudice: there was everything.

The offered thread was not seized. The life of thousands of Frenchmen killed after that date & the future of those who remain were due to a clumsiness which cannot be redeemed.

Finally, the enemy falls on his knees. Hours -- days at the most -- are given to the victors to profit from the victory. Hesitations, uncertainties. The German army with its arms recrosses the Rhine. While the careless crowd rejoices -- lets out a big "ouf", relieved of the weight of the war -- , unique moments flee never to return.

And still later, there occurs a phantastic thing. Several men had met to institute the peace: their power was immense, such as one had never seen its like. They settled humanity; they created at their pleasure -- or upturned -- whole states. And the most powerful of those men equal to gods, he who was obeyed because he seemed to speak in the name of 100 M individuals, he was at that same moment disowned by his sovereign Senate.

And not only was his authority artificial, but perhaps already it was no longer entirely ruling his mind. Returned to his capital, the dictator tumbled down. People feared for his reason:

"Is that that man who shook the Earth, who made empires fall ? " -- 6 months earlier, that stroke victim would have changed the face & the future of the World.

That stupendous history found itself mixed up with our national history.

There is nothing as cruel in *Candide* & in *Gulliver*.

The Frenchman who would see only ridicule in these things would have neither children nor brothers nor friends: all his feelings would be dried up. Already in 1914, a nihilist roused by the desire for ruins or again a sterile & spiteful emigrant would have been able to relish the nightly comedy of the new invasion, that moral of the tale exercising itself for the 5th time in 3 ages of man at the expense of democracy. [65] And even today, democracy has fallen back into its previous errors, into its old delusions. What temptations for irony !

But it would be necessary that the banterer himself should not be exposed to suffer from the outcome either in his person or in his interests. In our time, Ecclesiastes would be

in a position to be called up till he was 50 years old: he would thereby lose some of his serenity of mind. As for Voltaire, he would hold back his pen in order not to be accused of affronting the public misfortune.

One day perhaps the time of transcendental mockery will come, if men rediscover the leisure & the humor of mocking. So many expectations cut down, sacrifices half-lost, efforts to begin again would rather wring tears from a great patriotic poet, a Vergil if we had one of them. Till later the lamentations, like the irony which arises from these immense wastages.

It will certainly be necessary to take up again what has not been achieved: the surgeons of Versailles have sewn the stomach of Europe up again without having emptied the abscess. Well, France must look at herself & around herself. After that war & after that peace, here are the dangers with which she remains surrounded, what she has still to do so that her victory may not fly away & so that she may keep something of it beyond the gleam & the fragrance. In this widespread confusion, what policy can she follow? What are her resources & her chances? The German bulk still throws its shadow over us. Beyond that, in an area of barbaric or almost barbaric confusion, what will we find?

CHAPTER 6 – The Game of 32 Cards [66]

Thus our victory has reversed the positions between France & Germany without the tragic dialog having ceased & the turn which this dialog -- already violent -- will take will be subject to all the internal & external circumstances. As before 1914, what happens inside & outside the 2 states will have an effect on their relations, which will remain the essential element of continental politics & in relation to which alliances, interests, rivalries & conflicts will order themselves. A big Germany alone in its wounds, attached by ties which are fragile & which she will endure worse year by year, a big Germany always impelled to be an obstacle to the country which, after having been her principal enemy during the war, has become her principal creditor: behold that which will dominate from on high the whole of Europe.

Which Europe ? -- undoubtedly, the map & the face of the old world have been renewed to the point of being unrecognisable to it in several areas, but where have the most serious transformations taken place ? -- at the points where France has always had to seek a counterbalance to German power. By definition, a counterbalance is not to be found on the same side as oneself: [67] we are led to seek it on the other side of Germany. During the war, the Western coalition, as formidable as it was, was able to drive back the German invasion only after very long efforts & it is probable that in 1914 without the Russian diversion the West's dam would have been swept away.

Well, it will be wise to take into account that England, situated on the margin of the European world & on the beam of the scales, conceives of the equilibrium less absolutely than us & not only in relation to Germany. We will not be able to count on a positive & formal alliance, which was repugnant to her already before 1914 & whose reason for existence is no longer apparent to her since the German naval & maritime forces have been smashed. Moreover, the experience of the war has shown the mediocrity of the military means which the United Kingdom can call into play to resist a first assault.

The Franco-Belgian combination is the only one in the West upon which we could rely with certainty. France & Belgium will still not suffice alone. A combination of England, France & Belgium itself would need re-inforcement in the East. It was moreover in that frame of mind that King Edward VII, after having reconciled England & France, had further brought about an Anglo-Russian reconciliation, whatever it might have cost the English to put their hands into the hand of Russia. That work of diplomacy, which seemed to have had to succeed of itself, had required many cares & troubles & the situation of Europe was simple & clear beside that which exists today.

To find a serious effective gathering of peoples capable of taking Germany from behind, we will need to do more than one experiment. And where first are we to appeal ? Who will want to be the counterbalance ? What will the serious counterbalance be ?

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In this regard, one can say that our policy down the ages has exhausted the series of possible combinations without forgetting the best of all, which consists in having in Germany itself helpers against the House of Austria or against the Prussian state: that ideal solution is excluded by the preservation of German unity. For further safeguard apart from those precious German alliances, France had by turns the alliance of the Scandinavian kingdoms -- during the Thirty Years War -- , the Polish alliance, the Austrian alliance, the Russian alliance. Finally in 1916 for the first time, we cast our eyes even further & solicited Romania. Each of these alliances, of which several repeated themselves at long intervals, had its own history. [68] None was everlasting. It is that they responded to a certain state of Europe & that they were not connected solely with our whims & our diplomatic dexterity -- still less with the disinterested affection which those countries could have for us -- , but with their position & their policy, both changing, amenable to circumstances & opportunity.

Following the present-day map, let's make a tour of the elements -- old & new -- capable of being re-assembled. For the Scandinavian states, the period of political & military activity is long gone. It is not impossible that it may revive following the changes which have happened in the so-called Baltic regions, but the signs of that revival of activity are not apparent. Neutral during the war & allied in their neutrality, the Scandinavian states have shown by their prudent & conditional adherence to the covenant of the League of Nations that they intend to keep themselves aloof from European conflicts. Denmark itself, which had serious grievances against Prussia, abstained till the last minute from provoking her. By way of reparations for the violence of 1864, it contented itself with a single zone of Schleswig, for which it even paid an indemnity so as to be in order with the neighbouring Empire, still too powerful for it & which it still fears. The Scandinavian watchword is reserve & prudence. Thus for now & doubtless for a long time, nothing in the North.

Let's move on to the East.

In the 18th Century, harnessing the Polish alliance & the Austrian alliance was the puzzle of French diplomacy, which found itself solicited continually to sacrifice one or the other. Thence came the famous "secret of the king". One was -- & one still is -- harsh about the foreign policy & the "secret" of Louis XV. People will find out better after a few years that the Polish alliance, whose weakness was shown by the crisis of 1920, has to bring similar complications, if not worse. We shall see if today's France manages any better.

Everything points to the direction of those complications. They cannot fail to occur from the Russian side. Since there has been a Russia, the Franco-Russian alliance has been attempted -- or the knot tied -- 10 times, so natural did it seem for our need for an Eastern counterbalance, [69] so much did Russia seem to us created to respond to that need. It is so strong that one wanted to see in the Franco-Russian alliance a pre-established harmony. However, each time it has been put into practice against Germany, that alliance has been ended by defection by Russia. So serious was the treason of 1917, so harsh for France both the separate peace & the betrayal of Brest-Litovsk -- where in short the Bolsheviks

renewed **the coup of Peter III** -- , that it is necessary to recognise that, if Russian military co-operation during the collaborative phase had been less than the delusions which were nourished among ourselves, it had still been extremely useful: thus was demonstrated the necessity of a strong diversion in the East for the security of the West. The Russian alliance rendered incontestable services. Do we have the right to hope that that alliance will revive ?

If French diplomacy persists in counting on the return of a loyal Russia, liberal in addition, attached to us by sympathy, gratitude, ties of popular friendship, still more faithful & constant than the Russia of Nicolas II, if one counts on a Russia which would even have no more **Stürmers**, it is probable that France would procure for herself another kind of aftertaste.

No-one knows what will come out of the Republic of Soviets nor what will succeed it; no-one knows whether it will be violently overthrown or will transform itself by evolving; no-one knows any more whether Russia will pass through another kind of anarchy, another "time of troubles". But on any hypothesis it is scarcely conceivable that the Communist regime, after having obeyed in its foreign policy several of the historic laws of Russia, may not employ the remainder in the future. However little "democratic" -- in the sense in which Westerners understand it -- may be Lenin's government, it is difficult to think that the Bolshevik autocracy may have moved against their will 100 M Russians more easily than the Tsarist autocracy moved them. In case it should turn out that we would see the Red Army refuse to continue the struggle against Poland & the "Allied agents" -- as the Russian army of 1917 refused to continue the war against Germany -- , many hopes would be permitted. If it is otherwise, one will be led to think that the war against Poland & France's allies was more popular than the war against Germany & that if Lenin has succeeded where the Tsar came to grief, perhaps it is the case that the foreign policy of the one responded better than that of the other to the aspirations, even if unconscious, of the Russian masses.

In this uncertainty, we will be reduced to groping at Russia & the gratuitous confidence [70] which we placed in an improved Russia risks being betrayed. At least, it would be foolhardy to count on its immediate alliance & to sacrifice whatever might already be secured for the hope of such an alliance. Watchfulness & distrust will be healthier & as regards Russia the wisest policy will probably consist in trying to neutralise her as far as possible.

There remains Romania, the last in time of the allies which we may have found for the war. Her example is instructive: it concerns a state organised by 50 years of peaceful rule, which occupies a very honorable rank in Europe. By its resources, its finances, its civilisation, its administration, it was simply superior to the average of the little states. However, abandoned by Russia, it underwent the same fate as Serbia & its military role was quickly ended. There cannot be a better state of affairs or more favorable for an alliance with a people whose population & forces are limited. The services which those sorts of alliances can render us in case of conflict with a major continental power are also judged by that state of affairs. One must further not neglect the fact that in taking back Bessarabia, the Romanians know that they incur the hostility of the Russians: there will be at least distrust between them.

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On this point again, how difficult it is to reconcile peoples as we would wish that they would be reconciled !

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Let us summarise again this brief review. No more Austria-Hungary; Russia for the moment barbarous & hostile, its future disquieting; between that Russia & Germany, from the shores of the Baltic to those of the Black Sea, a scattering of nations, of which the most populous -- the Polish nation -- is caught between 2 fires. There no longer exists on the European continent any great power to help us establish a balance which the presence of the Germanic mass makes necessary & that mass is the only one which may be homogeneous & organised in the midst of a widespread decomposition: that's what it is impossible to lose sight of. [71]

Statistics teach us that the Europe of 1914 counted 26 states. There are in the Europe of 1920 around 32 of them, a number which is still not definite, as there continue to be uncertainties concerning several, without mentioning, of course, the fragility of several others, whose existence could be short. These new states detached themselves or have been detached from the Russian Empire & the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They are from north to south Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia. There is no longer a tie between Austria & Hungary & each counts as a unit.

All these states offer a common characteristic: they are deprived of natural frontiers. Their boundaries are roughly – for better & for worse -- those of the nationalities whose names they bear. Again, it is appropriate to make many reservations: the Polish nationality is diffuse & above all in the east on the Russian frontier it is extremely difficult to make out where it comes to an end; Czechoslovakia, as we have already pointed out, is almost as motley as the old empire of the Habsburgs & the national element -- the Czech element properly so-called – does not predominate as it should; Hungary, on the contrary, complains of not having its full reckoning of Hungarians & declares "irredentism"; as for Austria, on paper it is a state, but it is no more than the residue of a state, which lacks the conditions not only for long life, but for life itself.

Whether they may be revived or whether they may be the remains of something larger, these new-comers have unequal extents & populations. The largest would be Poland, if there was still nothing less assured at this moment than the frontiers & perhaps the fate of the Polish Republic. The others vary between 15 M inhabitants in Czechoslovakia, 7 - 8 M in Austria & Hungary, 1 - 3 M for the rest.

In the whole of Eastern & Central Europe, there are "marches" & "borders" **which do not result only from the configuration of the ground & from the absence of natural limits.** The so-called natural limits are far from having an absolute character: if in the West, the geography seems to mark them, history there has still more of a part; elsewhere, there are many nationalities & few nations. #

What makes a nation is the habit of living together. The frontier has a precise meaning [72] when people know that beyond the signpost the manners, customs & memories to which they are attached come to an end. In the new states, there is nothing similar to this imaginary outline, more resistant than any rampart: everything is new, imprecise & amorphous.

10 , 20 , 100 political combinations & territorial distributions, different from those which the peace has decreed, are possible & would be neither more nor less reasonable.

Why a free city of Danzig ? Why the district of **Teschen** , where there live Poles, Germans & Czechs, parcelled out in that manner rather than that other one ? Why is the **Ruthenian** nationality denied, when its neighbour sees itself **grateful** for a kind of divine right ?

An almost infinite plasticity remains the inheritance of these people & of these regions & plasticity is the same as instability.

In default of natural frontiers & historical frontiers, have these child-states at least received strategic frontiers ? Have they the means of defending themselves ? No-one thought of it for them, any more than for France. In his noteworthy report on the territorial stipulations of the peace treaties, Mr Charles Benoist notices a remarkable oversight: a Czechoslovakia has been created, but the **Quadrilateral of Glatz** -- key to Bohemia, through which the Prussian army had passed in 1866 -- has been entrusted to Germany, as if the words of Bismarck -- "He who is the master of Bohemia is the master of Central Europe" -- had ceased to be true & as if that proposition had not been demonstrated by the 2 famous battles of the White Mountain & of Sadowa.

The old states to which the war was worth considerable enlargements are moreover no better constituted than the new states. Like Czechoslovakia, Romania & Yugoslavia are **all length** : in proportion to their extent, the growth of their frontiers is excessive & consequently their defense is extremely difficult. Almost half of Greece will be only a littoral, a coastal strip: Greece, deprived of a "backbone", as Mr Venizelos put it before succumbing to megalomania, will be very exposed & very weak. Security will be lacking for all these countries, whose construction is neither natural nor rational. They equally lack strength & when peoples feel themselves neither strong nor secure, their policy tacks about. [73]

The "redeemed" or conquered provinces, which have doubled Romania, tripled Serbia & augmented Greece in excessive proportions, have moreover not added as much as it seems to the strength of these states. Let's imagine that Alsace-Lorraine may be equal in area & in population to the rest of France; let's imagine that such an Alsace had never been part of the French whole or had been part of it only in very distant times. What difficulties we would have to administer it ! There you have exactly the case of the states which have been endowed vast provinces: the assimilation of these territories & of their inhabitants will be long & delicate, when it will not be painful.

It is a labor which will leave to the governments little leisure & little liberty, at the same time that consciousness of their fragility will add to their natural fear of attacks. Much better placed than us to measure the perils of the situation in Central Europe,

far from hastening into alliances **with the aim of defensive war** against Germany – & with so much more reason against a Russo-German alliance – , the alliances which they will conceive will be concluded as an insurance against the risks. Thus the "Little Entente", which formed between Prague, Belgrade & Bucharest in August 1920, when Poland was in danger, openly took the character of a "league of neutrals".

Finally -- & it is not the least thing to consider -- , what kinds of men & principles will direct these new countries ? What is the nature of their institutions ? To what form of government are they subject ? What guarantees do they offer internally against the various blemishes with which they have been afflicted at their birth ?

National unity is, for most of them, still to be effected. Czechoslovakia undoubtedly bears that name only to intimate that the fusion between Czechs & Slovaks is far from being realised. These countries are at the age of childhood illnesses. Where is there among them a fixed element, a permanent expression, which at the origin of all the European nations which have remained stable has been a dynasty ? Except Romania, Yugoslavia & Greece, which maintain theirs -- very much shaken in the last country -- , the other nationalities have leaped **with both feet** into pure democracy.

All through the 19th Century, it had been accepted that infant peoples, more than others, had need of tutors. A nationality which one liberated or a "unit" which took shape used to receive or procure a constitutional monarchy. Those which did not have a family ordained by history borrowed a prince from a reigning dynasty to avoid competitions [74] & the grafting produced its ordinary effects: the new king quickly became naturalised; he brought foreign relationships, political experience, methods of government, sometimes even the nucleus of an administrative personnel; his presence reduced party struggles. Such was the case in Greece, in Belgium, in Romania, in Bulgaria, without mentioning Germany & Italy, whose unity had been owed to the houses of Prussia & of Savoy. Only 9 years before the war, the Norwegians, having separated themselves from Sweden, even so had freely chosen the monarchical form as the most appropriate for their first performances.

In 1919, fashion had changed. The Allies liberated the nationalities all together & they established universal democracy. All the new states without exception have as their form of government a parliamentary republic. Their constitutions are traced from the boldest patterns, a dangerous experiment. Those which perhaps wanted it only by halves had to submit to it: they would be ill-famed, suspected of autocratic tendencies & sympathies for William II & accused of imperialism, if they did not avouch their loyalty to republican ideas, so that Poland itself tried again that which long ago killed it.

Pure democracy is being introduced into countries which have to create everything, establish everything, defend frontiers, unite heterogeneous populations: a disagreeable long-winded effort, which is ill-contented with a weak, unstable & divided government. Being new, these countries do not possess the corrective of old countries which adopted democracy late in the day:

they do not have a **historical social education**, an administrative organisation, political or bureaucratic traditions. And it is not to be feared only that their development may be delayed or compromised. Their most precious possession, nationality itself, can be put into question: rule by parties opens the door to intrigues from abroad. Alliances will be at stake in public conflicts, the unending story of "caps" against "hats". As close as they are to Germany, as pervaded by her as they are far from us, these countries will have only a very indifferent defense against methodical action which will find internal accomplices.

It is far from true moreover that in these countries, as in others, the most advanced & most democratic elements -- ordinarily amenable to the influence of Germanic socialism, when they are not tempted by Russian Bolshevism -- may be naturally devoted to ourselves. [75] There is even more ignorance than self-conceit in fancying that all peoples have a natural inclination for our country. The Russian peasants have well shown us that Russia does not come into the World with a nose, 2 eyes & the worship of France. French influence in Europe was above all a creation of aristocracy: it was connected with an elaborate education, which itself implied a certain social level. It was also connected with traditions inherited from an era when the prestige of our civilisation & of our language had no rival. From that it follows -- contrary to a still too widespread presumption, despite the instantaneous proof furnished by the fall of Tsarism -- that our real clientele in these primitive parts of Europe is to be found generally in the most refined & most conservative classes. The popular masses whose representatives are in power do not have profound reasons for an attachment to France, which results above all from a good education. The law of numbers does not favor us.

Moreover, by a strange reversal of affairs, France of the Revolution has become the most reactionary country in the World. In the eyes of the proletarian masses & peasants of Eastern Europe, who lean towards barbarian forms of dictatorship much more than to parliamentary democracy, we are a "bourgeois" people. Nothing is more true. To expect that the sympathies of the "Left" belong to us abroad, that would be to expose ourselves to deceptions.

But one will find out that there is something in the World which has not changed to our advantage, when we have business with ministers who have not had a French tutor & who have studied only in German universities, if not in the school of German socialism. As a matter of course in the old Europe, we were everywhere: communication used to establish itself without difficulty through the royal courts, society, the senior administration. The reign of an uneducated nationalism, suitable for democracies which know only themselves, limits those circumstances favorable to our political action & the former comforts of our foreign relations. Lucky if, in the long run, it does not abolish them. [76]

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Thus in that vast part of Europe where we have to seek allies & the elements of a new equilibrium, all is weakness & confusion. The interchangeable elements of the old equilibrium have disappeared. Russia, for a long time without a doubt, is hostile. We have destroyed the Austro-Hungarian Empire with our own hands. 8 - 10 states, whose existence is precarious, stake out the circumference of a united Germany. Far from helping us, it is they themselves who will have need of our assistance: Poland, caught between 2 fires, shows it only too well. And even so -- nothing is certain -- it is still in her that our confidence would be best placed.

That is not all. These peoples are weak & the nature of the weak is egoism. They will be naturally inclined to search for combinations by which they believe they will put themselves under the protection of their too powerful neighbours, an infallible means moreover of putting the clock forward & of delivering themselves to them. If the nationalities which have just regained their independence had lost it long ago, that was not without a reason: they had succumbed to the superiority of organisation & mass of the big states which were their neighbours & in the Europe of the treaties of 1919 the little ones are still overshadowed by the giants.

Finally, these little states have among themselves hatreds & quarrels which make them blind to the general good & to their own good. It is not in vain that -- according to a remark of the American writer William Morton Pullerton -- the Allies have "balkanised" half of Europe while carefully refraining from "balkanising" Germany. Balkan manners, which are the unending manners of small states, will be the necessary consequence of a splitting-up which came to a halt at the threshold of the Germanic race, nonetheless as apt as the others to split up.

All that taken together has the result that the "barrier" of free peoples does not exist or that it will need nothing to overthrow it. The coalition of those peoples against Germany & on our side is a chimera. The "Little Entente" of which Czechoslovakia took the lead in August was quite simply a league of neutrals, formed at the moment when the downfall of Warsaw seemed near. Thus Poland would have been abandoned & France with her. It is a warning. If the new nations all stay alive, we have a chance of seeing -- among friends & enemies of yesterday -- the most bizarre & also the most unstable alliances. We know that the number of combinations in a game of 32 cards is almost infinite [77] & Europe from now on counts 32 states among which the combinations vary infinitely at the pleasure of events, passions & interests. Absence of equilibrium, multiplication of intrigues: those are not good conditions for the peace & tranquillity of the Old World & French policy since the 18th Century has never had so much trouble to avoid going astray.

CHAPTER 7 -- The Crisis of 1920 & the Future of the Slavs [78]

Joseph de Maistre mistrusts predictions: "If it is necessary to prophesy!", he said one day. Renan, who was a sceptic, did not hesitate to hazard several prophecies. One of those he left is famous. In the 2nd letter which he addressed to Strauss, during the war of 1870, he had threatened Germany with Slavism. "The number of Slavs is double yours", he said to the man he still used to call his learned master, "& the Slav, like the Dragon of the Apocalypse, whose tail sweeps the third part of the stars, will one day drag after him the herd of Central Asia, the former clientele of the Gengis-Khans & of the Tamerlanes".

That tail of the dragon which sweeps the third part of the stars, that apocalyptic figure, was a bit **easier to turn** than the "steam roller". At bottom, it was the same idea: Renan, who believed among men only in the aristocracy, had succumbed that day to a popular illusion, the presumption of numbers. The uncountable crowds of the Slav race appeared to him in a vengeful future. Numbers & superior numbers: the German legions, which were crushing France, [79] would be drowned in their turn. Renan forgot that the Slavs formed many nations, indifferently & diversely civilised, open to anarchy & for the most part having reached a very low level of political organisation.

However, he had had a historian's or a poet's vision, when he had portrayed Russia, in the next 100 years, throwing "the herd of Central Asia" towards the West. Renan knew or felt "that there is no European Russia". Russia, which has correspondence with the plains, the rivers & the seas of Asia -- more than half-Asiatic herself -- , could one day recruit the Tartars & the Mongols & lead them against its European adversaries. She could do it, but she could further identify herself with that Asia: instead of managing & commanding the Mongols, she could be mongolised. And above all, instead of leading the hordes of Asia against Germany, Asianism could become an accomplice of the Germans. It is perhaps today's reality as it was that of the past: Gengis-Khan -- evoked by Renan, who seems to understanding him poorly -- came to terms with Emperor Frederick of Germany in that year 1241, which the threatened West called "the year of agony", & Gengis-Khan, who had no other cult than that of the state, would have better pleased Renan than the Eastern fanatics who from Moscow wanted to propagate upon the World the religion of Communism.

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Renan deceived himself when he believed that Russia would lead the hordes of Asia only to crush Germany; he deceived himself when he imagined a crusade of Slavism against a Germanism which was its oppressor. It really seems that his delusion was shared by the authors of the Treaty of Versailles.

The whole 19th Century -- Napoleon, Tocqueville, Michelet -- had been obsessed by Russian power: it had had a horror of it. It was from 1871 that it took to picturing it as beneficent by opposing it to German power: Tsarist Russia found favor among us at the moment when she began to decline.

In tossing into currency the idea of a major conflict of races in which France would get innumerable allies against the conquering Germany, Renan was the forerunner of the Franco-Russian alliance. He gave it an ideological & mythical foundation.

What had he seen in his time ? [80] He had seen the German peoples wake up to the idea of being a nation, come together & unite themselves. The 19th Century had been the age of the Germanic race. Well, the contemporaries looked at the Slav race, still enslaved in many of its branches, & they calculated that her awakening would not delay in following that of the Germans, in creating her unity on the model of the Germans. And as the Germans in the East & in the Centre of Europe were the exploiters & the oppressors of the Slavs, it did not seem doubtful that Germany would have sooner or later to have to deal with Slavism not only as a coalition, but -- like the Germans themselves -- having become a single nation.

That is what Renan declared to Strauss in showing him all the Slav populations -- millions & millions of men, Serbs, Croats, Moravians & Czechs -- , gathered "round the great Muscovite conglomeration, designated as kernel of the future Slav unity" -- as Prussia had been the kernel of German unity -- & launched all together against Germany in revenge for an ancient oppression.

Renan -- was it forgetfulness, wisdom or prudence ? -- left out the Poles. He was correct: the Franco-Russian alliance could be based only on omission of the Polish question.

A simple idea, a strong image for a long time had an effect on people's minds. The grandiose vision of Renan **went a long way** in forming the alliance between the French democracy & Tsarism. Who will allow for the share of imagination in politics ? Who will even allow for the share of delusion ? France deceived herself when she considered herself the ally of a people or even of a race. She was only the ally of a government: people became aware of it only when Nicolas II was overthrown.

At that moment moreover the alliance had given its best results. After having drawn us out of isolation, it had undoubtedly also kept us on the path which led to a complete renunciation with regard to Germany. The war having broken out, the Russian army -- it will always be necessary to award them this justice -- diverted enough German troops so that our defense might become possible. And then, the moral help was no less: oppressed by the idea of the number -- quality without quantity -- , the French people had need of knowing that a big mass, a big reservoir of men somewhere in the World was with them. When Russia was faltering, America came in the nick of time to take on their job. [81] Such are the services which the Russian alliance has rendered us: they are far from having been imaginary.

However, Germany for its part had ended up by taking fright at Slavism. The Russian nightmare furnished at least a pretext for the war of 1914 & nourishment for German anger & the war began with Serbia: it was a sketch of the big Slav coalition.

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But afterwards ? In vain did Russia withdraw herself from the conflict by one of those defections of which she had already given an example in the past, in vain did she desert the alliances in conditions which left little hope of returning: we continued to believe in her.

The real visible Russia -- Red Russia -- had become hostile: we put our trust in an ideal Russia, an invisible Russia which secretly aspired to take up again her place in the great alliance. We could not resign ourselves to see in the Russian people, instead of an ally, a possible adversary.

When the hour comes to make a great peace, to create states & to lay out frontiers, then ancient memories, old lessons, the capital of commonplaces on which a whole generation has lived, often determine the decisions of the negotiators. In 1919, people started from the principle that the Slav nations, arranged in a circle around the German countries, would form a barrier & a rampart. People did not give up the hope of seeing these nations come together, form a federation around the "great Muscovite conglomeration".

Thus the balance, instead of being one of states, would have been one of races. It is not impossible that the idea of race still excites the Old World, but it is not certain that it may be in the desired direction: it is not certain that it may be in a direction favorable to peace. Extended to Prague & to Belgrade, the Slav brotherhood under the control of Moscow would at present be Bolshevist. Who can say what it will be tomorrow ? From the day when the idea of race was tossed into European currency date the most atrocious convulsions of our humanity: there is no reason for them to produce better effects in future. And even when the commonality of origins & of language succeeds in mustering in our favor some of the elements of Slavism, it is improbable that it will succeed in mustering them all.

For a long time, Bulgaria has passed for an advance sentinel of Slavism in the Balkans. The Russians have cherished, pampered, preferred her to Serbia many times. [82] The statue of the Liberator Tsar still stands erect in Sofia. The Serbo-Bulgarian wars, even the last, that of 1913 -- the most hate-filled --, had not succeeded in killing the chimera of a Balkan Confederation, on which the West lingered. It needed in 1915 what people call the Bulgarian treachery -- as if the Allies had not been betrayed above all by their delusions -- for people to bethink themselves suddenly that the Bulgarians were not Slavs, but undeserving "Touranians", brothers of the Turks & of the Hungarians.

Nothing more vain than this mythology of races, as fickle, as deceptive as that of nationalities. Before being stigmatised as a "nation of prey", Hungary had for a long time passed as a victim nation. Only since 1913 have "Bulgarian atrocities" changed meaning & the former persecuted have appeared as persecutors.

Let us never more erect policy on these conceits.

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Very bold the man who would dare to declare the future of Slavism. The Bulgarians are expunged from it due to unworthiness. For their part, the Czechoslovaks, the Yugoslavs follow uncertain & mysterious courses: they are not inclined to make themselves the instruments of the too simple -- really naive -- system which the authors of the peace had imagined. These peoples are gathering their thoughts; they are examining the situation. They sense, they know that their states are fragile, that they are something amorphous -- perhaps even provisional -- & that they will be dashed to pieces at the first clash with a power stronger than themselves. With regard to Germany, they show great care to avoid a conflict, the same apprehension of crossing the other colossus, the Moscovite, without considering the sympathies of race, which -- if they have an effect -- will be favorable to Russian policy, whatever it may be, even Bolshevist, even & above all steered in the direction of an alliance with Germany: double reason then for these weaklings to mask fear with **affection** .

It is therefore very doubtful that if Slavism is capable of uniting itself, its unity may be desirable. But Slavism is not united: it is not in Bulgaria, it is in Poland that the fracture is most visible. There the schism is ancient, profound, the quarrel inexpiable, aggravated by the kinship itself. [83] If anyone had forgotten it, the crisis of 1920 came along to renew 300 years of history.

Poland recovered her independence at a moment when -- to speak the whole truth -- her cause did not much interest anyone. Upon its tomb there was first the stone of the Franco-Russian alliance & then, if the French had ceased to interest themselves in Poland, it was not only from policy & to please a major ally. After 1871, was not the suffering & hapless nation France? "**Let us be our Poles in ourselves**", said a Republican wittily after the Treaty of Frankfurt: Strasbourg had taken the place of Warsaw. The love of Poland -- so active in the 19th Century that it interfered in the revolutions of our internal politics -- had passed into the state of a literary memory & was no longer truly felt. Poland was no longer part of reality, which resulted in banishing it from people's minds at the same time as it left their hearts. Certain ideas, which were commonplaces at other times, were ignored & when the events of 1920 returned them to favor, they seemed like novelties or like paradoxes.

However, the people who had long ago reflected on the Polish problem, who had studied it from the political point of view & disentangled from sentimental dross, had not been slow to discover its character. The persecution of Poland was not that of a people by a tyrant, but of one nationality by another & it was as true of the Russian participant as of the Prussian.

"For Russia on its part", said Guizot, "retention of Poland is not only a question of government -- a sovereign's interest --, it is a national passion: the Russian people are still more ardent than the Emperor not to allow Poland to escape the Empire". We had seen earlier in 1863 with what enthusiastic frenzy the Russians had suppressed the Polish insurrection. "What people in Paris & in London sympathetically call Polish independence", wrote Émile de Girardin at that time, "is called patriotically in St Petersburg & in Moscow the dismembering of Russia" & the contemporary author of a treatise about European politics remarks once more "the bitter & wild tenacity which the Russian people displayed

during 3 centuries against the unfortunate Poland. The Tsar wanted to return to that country part of its liberties, which he could not do: [84] it was necessary, to please the majority of his subjects, that he reign on the Vistula by terror" (Debidour: *Diplomatic History of Europe*).

Between Poles & Russians the hostility has ancient & profound causes.

Made of historical grudges, it continually revives because the grievances are permanent & because the incompatibility is wedded to the nature of the 2 peoples. The Poles, latinised by Catholicism, seem to the Russians like dissentients from Slavism.

Whether the difference in religions is connected to pristine & original differences or rather to history, the effect is the same. These are 2 nations with indistinct frontiers, between which there has not been any accommodation since they have known one another. Peace for them is called domination & conquest, when the Poles are masters of Moscow or when the Russian "**mandate**" reigns in Warsaw: in between, wars mixed with truces.

When Poland had scarcely returned to independence, the war started again. Bolshevist Russia behaves like Russia under any description: the Tsar's generals placed themselves at the head of the Red Army. It was a war of principle & of propaganda, a political & national war: a Russo-Polish war of the old style, so inevitable, so spontaneous that it is not even possible to tell who was the aggressor. The Poles marched on Kiev & sought to reach their frontiers in 1772, as if nothing had happened since 1772. The Russians, having regained the offensive, marched on Warsaw as if a Romanoff, not Lenin, was in the Kremlin. Bolshevism in its turn followed the famous law of national continuity, the rule of revolutions.

History is possessed of a wearying monotony.

Poland was saved at the last minute. Left to herself, she was hastening towards political decomposition & we saw the moment approaching when the Polish army would succumb once again through the state's lack of government. Patriotism is not enough for peoples & if France had not lent her aid, her men & her military command, no-one knows where the failure of Poland would have come to a halt. [85]
The picture of a disaster was before our eyes: that's what is called the Crisis of 1920.

After the Treaty of Frankfurt, 4 years had gone by before the new danger of war, known as the Crisis of 1875. The crisis of August 1920 befell 14 months after the Treaty of Versailles: a brief delay, an accelerated course of events & consequences. And this crisis presented itself in conditions which ought to serve as a warning for the future. In 1875, there were still the elements of a European balance: the attitude of simple disapprobation taken by Russia & by England had sufficed to quieten Bismarck, to show him the imprudence of a policy which exposed Germany to the danger of a coalition. In 1920, it was around France that isolation was organised: England & Italy disapproved the French policy & dissuaded resistance. The Big Alliance was **denounced** & a "Little Alliance" or league of neutrals formed itself in Central Europe among the nationalities of the "barrier" to abandon Poland & the only power which might support Poland. Czechoslovaks & Yugoslavs, reconciling with Romania, invoked Slav brotherhood, but it was to favor Russia & with her Germany. Conscious of their fragility,

these states refused in advance to face the risks of a conflict with someone stronger than them. Finally, Germany was everywhere at work, stirring up troubles, making use of her relationships, be it with socialists, be it with malcontents of all kinds, Irishmen or Flemings. Belgium herself to her very government was shaken & divided. For her advantage, Germany held herself ready. A victory by the Russians would have been the signal for an insurrection on the model of 1813. Our guard detachments in Upper Silesia were attacked. On the left bank of the Rhine, strikes, a methodical stirring up of the people -- inspected at that very moment by a minister of the Empire -- : those were the signs of a plan intended to paralyse or obstruct the action of our troops. In Germany itself, new military organisations arose: the "Orgesch" -- after the citizen militia -- , the security police, the "Heimatdienst" etc, the German mind not growing tired of inventing new forms of militarism, new methods of preserving & disguising an army. And we also saw -- what had not already happened -- these militias extend themselves outside the frontiers of the Empire in the Austrian provinces -- Tyrol & Vorarlberg -- liable to be the first to separate themselves [86] from the wretched government in Vienna, which moreover was consenting, so that re-union -- the "Anschluss" -- might accomplish itself not in a lump & in a formal fashion, but by blows of successive forces, appearing spontaneous.

The rescue of Warsaw prevented the execution of this broad plan. We ought to say rather that it has suspended it. All the preparations are extant: they will be able to serve another time. We have been present at a general repetition of German revenge, interrupted by the desertion of one of the principal actors. We are informed. We are warned.

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The crisis of 1920 in fact allows several lessons to be drawn. It is the first palpable effect of the bad management of the peace. The theoretical & systematic reviews which from the beginning had been directed at the Treaty of Versailles find themselves verified by experience. That peace will not stand up by itself: it can be defended only at the cost of continually renewed military efforts & it remains at the mercy of every emergency -- alike military -- which might befall the most fragile points of its construction.

And to start with -- that which had to be the case -- the Treaty of Versailles has tied the knot in the alliance of Germany & Russia. We no longer have the right to deceive ourselves about that. From the moment we re-established a Poland between Germany & Russia -- at the expense of one & of the other -- , the community of interests & sentiments established itself. Germans & Russians do not love one another, but they are -- so to speak -- complementary: they have need of meeting, of exchanging products, ideas, men, & they can get together only over the body of the Polish state. Even so, they are accomplices less in guaranteeing one another their bits of Poland than in destroying her & parceling her out afresh. Germany, after her defeat, naturally had to want the alliance of Russia, but that would not have been a sufficient reason for her to be certain of obtaining it: Poland seems to have been invented to hasten the reconciliation. [87]

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The alliance of Germany & Russia on account of Poland was moreover a commonplace of our old policy, a principle which had no further need of being proved. It is alive: there have never been so many reasons to bear it in mind. The Treaty of Versailles has given Poland her independence as if Germany alone had to be affected & wounded by it, as if for her part Russia was resigned & acquiescent & had to rejoice at having made a sacrifice to justice. People fancied as well that frontiers which followed ethnographic boundaries as far as possible -- with mutual concessions & compensations in indivisible regions -- would have the result of ensuring a lasting peace between Poland & Russia. In allowing the possibility of an equitable division which would content both nations, it would be necessary also that Poland might cease to embarrass, to give umbrage, to irritate Russia by the simple fact that she exists. At the time when they fixed the frontiers of Poland in the East, while those in the West -- in Silesia -- are still undetermined, people thought to win Russian national opinion by moderation & kindness. One can have a go, but what if with the same stroke one dismantles Poland, if one takes away from her her bastions, if one stirs up among the Russians the temptation to invade her once more ? -- formidable perplexities. It's not as simple as people would like to believe.

The Russo-German alliance on account of Poland has roots so strong that there are very few chances that simple adjustments of the map might succeed in preventing it. A man who had a carnal feeling for history one day -- & what a day ! -- had this intuition in his bowels & in his nerves. There are in our political literature few books more unknown than 100 pages written by Michelet during the War of 1870. There are few of them which are more fevered & more dazzling. The well-known dupe in his pain, in his anger, in his deception -- for he had loved Germany -- had astonishingly accurate views about the future. It seems that the peoples whose history he had written may have walked before his eyes: he "saw" them like a medium. And like a sibyl, he also hesitated, he trembled, he corrected himself, till he might finally give birth to the prophecy.

Michelet's contradicts Renan's. Like the rationalist, the seer readily perceived in the future a wayward warlike Russia, carrying within herself heavens knows what monster inherited from Asia. And Michelet proclaimed in his turn that that immense Russia -- an unstable & vagrant people -- [88] would shift itself towards the West. Would this be to crush Germany, to avenge France ? Michelet did not make much of a distinction: that future was obscure; he spelled it breathlessly & suddenly the tripod shook itself, the veil ripped itself apart. The diviner called on unknown unnamed men -- those who edited the Peace of Versailles no doubt -- & addressed strange words to them: "How do you set to work to blind yourselves ? not to see what you see ? to ignore what you know ? ... How have you forgotten the deep dreadful marriage of Prussia with Russia ? It is so strong that between those two, treaties are useless ! " Marriage on account of Poland: "It is Prussia, a half-Slav state, which in the last century proposed the banquet at which Poland would be served, at which for desert one drank a glass of her blood". Will she break that sacrament ? But Prussia had need of Russia: "She will have need of her even more tomorrow, when Germany wakes up, emerges from the dream, from her current intoxication where the idea of being 'a self' has become forgotten. But to be one, it is necessary to exist. The day she will want to exist, her little tyrant Prussia will show her Russia". #

Put Michelet's prophecy down to what you may wish, even to epilepsy: it is there. It has the air of being made for our time. Between Germany & Russia treaties are superfluous: Poland reconciles them. We have seen the Germans count the days till the capture of Warsaw & hold themselves ready to profit from the squashing of Poland. No alliance is more natural: it will continually reform itself spontaneously & there are few experiences as decisive in the whole of political history. We would be unpardonable to forget that lesson. (*France before Europe*, Jules Michelet 1871, with this epigraph: "the judges will be judged")

Poland was saved at the 11th hour. The extreme danger which she ran shows that she is badly connected with the new Europe. It shows also that the internal solidity of the Polish state is one of the most dubious: her capacity to resist the two-sided pressure which will exercise itself on her again in future times will obviously be indifferent. [89] Poland seen as a protection against Germany -- as a plug-state between Russia & Germany -- has not the means which she would need to maintain that role: instead of serving us as a point of support, it will be necessary to help her defend herself. She will be a burden for us. It is a serious subject of concern for the future.

What is the biggest weakness of Poland? It is that she has no state. The question of her frontiers comes at the 2nd rank. In that whole part of Europe no country can have good frontiers. Natural frontiers -- subject to guarantee everywhere, even there where they seem at first sight inscribed on the ground -- are non-existent across the wide plains of Eastern Europe. Ethnographic frontiers are shifting & continually contested because of the mixture & conflict of races, languages & religions. As for strategic frontiers, they are illusory if there is not -- behind the bastions & the lines of defense -- an organised force. Since the modern epoch began, all the struggles engaged in among the peoples who are neighbours along these "marches" have come to a end in the same manner: those who possessed a vigorous central power ate up bit by bit the others & "gathered together the land". Thus & thanks to that superiority, the Prussian state & the Muscovite state had triumphed over a Poland which had never known how to establish a solid government in her state. Thus again the Habsburgs, comfortably seated in their hereditary provinces, had little by little stitched to their empire disparate non-Germanic pieces escaped from the impotence of the peoples who bordered it.

One of the most precious remarks of which history has made a gift to politics -- & present-day politics have totally neglected -- is certainly owed to Mr Ernest Lavisse. After having described the rise of the Hohenzollerns & of the Prussian state, Mr Lavisse notes in his *Studies on the History of Prussia*: "Only those states have been great in modern times which in the Middle Ages possessed consecrated dynasties: Bohemia, Poland & Hungary lost their independence for having trusted themselves to the risks of the election of a king". The essential cause of the weakness of the nationalities restored today to independence is to be found therefore in their very origins. The lack of equality to which Poland had succumbed in the 18th Century persists. It seems to many that Poland -- Lazarus of nationalities -- [90] is setting out again from the same point as Germany & Russia after their revolutions & that she may be taking part in a new equality: a grave error. #

Whatever ravages revolution may have been able to perform in those two empires, they retain no less the material inheritance & the traditions which the Kings of Prussia bequeathed to the one, the Tsars of Moscow to the other. The rulers of the USSR themselves, whatever may be the destructions which they may have begun to commit, have found themselves in a more favorable situation than the rulers of the Polish Republic. They had at least the vestiges of the organisation, of the bureaucracy, of the Tsarist police & army.

Poland faces the void: she has to create everything, even the basic organs of an administration. In the matter of experienced personnel, she scarcely possesses anything beyond the **Galicians** who took part in the government of Vienna. Moreover those bureaucrats have their own system to which those of the Polish populations who were recently part of Prussia & of Russia are not pliant: when they do not apply their experience as administrators simply for nought -- the skillful Bilinski tried his hand at finances, but without success -- , these functionaries run foul of the resistance of habits & manners; they are foreigners to the mass of the country & they have not even the support of the government, of which they are not a direct manifestation. The sole element which may be capable of organising Poland -- that which comes from Austria -- does not possess the conditions which would be necessary for it to render service & succeed. The sole element which may have a conception of the state & the direction of policy -- that which comes from **Posnan** -- is an unappreciated minority & you don't found a state solely with patriotism & good will.

To resuscitate a Poland, to connect her with Europe, to put her on a level of equality with Russia & with Germany, in a word to make her viable, there was without doubt only one solution: that was that Poland might inherit the organisation whose centre was in Vienna & that she might integrate herself in an Austrian Empire deliberately fetched back from the Balkans & the Adriatic towards Eastern Europe. That contrivance might have been consistent with the laws of political mechanics & consequently natural. The artificial thing is the decree which restores independence to a people without giving them the means of keeping it & which from the very first puts it in a state of inferiority with respect to its born enemies. [91]

Austria having been destroyed, that possibility slipped away. Poland has been restored at random. She is a minor child burdened with finding her way alone in life. No-one thought for a moment that a Poland which died of old from the poor quality of her institutions had not been given better institutions: a Republic of Poland succeeds a Republic of Poland. From any point of view, it was not reasonable to sow democracy among the liberated peoples of Central & Eastern Europe: the results can be rapidly fatal. As concerns Poland, France for her part found herself associated & involved with a country lacking structure & in a state of latent anarchy. On that account again, Poland, conceived as a helper, has already become again what the earlier Republic of Poland was for us: a daily worry.

A well-known instruction of Choiseul on the subject of Swedish affairs before the re-establishment of the authority of Gustav III with the agreement of France, spoke strongly: "The government of Sweden, such as it is established there, is a downright anarchy whose helm is sometimes

in the hands of one faction & sometimes in the hands of the opposite faction. The continual clash of passions & intrigues between two parties which continually seek to send one another flying & to mutually annihilate one another can only be fatal to this kingdom & makes its alliance useless or even dangerous to other powers".

There is a very serious risk that we may be led to say as much about the Polish alliance. Poland will organise her state & she will emerge from anarchy or we will really have to help her for the whole 18 months to win a battle of Warsaw & she will be a weight for us to drag.

May she at least not succumb as she had already succumbed long ago.

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APPENDIX to CHAPTER 7 -- Germany & Poland [92]

[Translator's note : the French of the anonymous writer reads very much like that of an Englishman: it's pedestrian -- only 1 subjunctive – in contrast to the educated Frenchman's transparent expression & elegantly articulated emphasis]

An anonymous writer, whom we believe to be recognisable as a well-known Polish historian, had published in the review *Poland* for July 1920 a study whose main passages deserve to be gathered together at this point in the role of documentation & conclusion :

The division of Poland is not a remote & vague end of German policy. It is well defined & seen as able to be realised in the very near term. By watching German policy & the events in Eastern Europe, one can get a precise idea of the German plan. According to this plan, German policy must proceed by 3 stages : (1) re-establishment of the old frontier in the East ; (2) establishment of a German hegemony in the East of Europe ; (3) revenge on the Western side & German hegemony over the European continent.

Execution of this program depends on re-establishment of Prussia inside its old frontiers, which implies a fresh division of Poland ...

The success of a division of Poland -- despite & contrary to the rights of nationalities to control their own affairs, the principle proclaimed so loudly at Versailles & accepted by the Germans, who very quickly understood what profits they could draw from it in Eastern Europe -- bases itself [93] upon the following 3 classes of facts : (1) re-establishment of a political situation which in the 18th Century ended in the divisions of Poland & kept Poland divided in the 19th Century ; (2) the internal situation of Poland & the trends of Polish policy ; (3) neutrality of the Western Powers as it existed during the partitions of the 18th Century & as it persisted in face of the partitions accomplished in the 19th Century.

The policy of Frederick the Great & of his successors was crowned by resounding success, because it succeeded in winning Russia & Austria & because it knew how to evade the ambitions of Catherine II, who was opposed to the partition of Poland because she wanted to annex the whole of it & to appease the scruples of Marie-Thérèse, who tearfully gave way on the violated rights & misfortunes

of the affronted Poland. The successors of the policy of the great king play the same game: they would like to re-establish a circle of lusts around the new Polish state, they would like to be once again a trio of executioners of Poland.

They have already won the Bolsheviks, who have become the champions of the idea of the re-union of "the Russian homeland", which was the big idea of Peter the Great & all his successors. They parade on their flags the same humanitarian principles as the armies of the tsars. Suvarov massacred the inhabitants of the suburb Prag of Warsaw to take the defense "of the Protestants oppressed" by Catholic Poland; the Red Armies of Braunstein-Trotsky massacre the Polish populations to deliver the proletariat from the oppression of the "reactionary & imperialist" Polish bourgeoisie. The words have changed, but not the essence.

Austria-Hungary does not exist, but German policy considers that the political, economic & geographical factors which created the Habsburgs' Empire have not disappeared & that there exists a uniformity of interests which under one form or another will revive the old empire. They bear in mind that there was a time when the emperors occupied the royal throne of Bohemia & they count on the possibility of the reconstruction of Austria by the Czechoslovaks. They hope that the alliance which in the 18th Century united the King of Prussia with the Emperors of All the Russias & with the Emperors of Vienna could well be reborn in the 20th Century among 3 republics, which -- people think in Berlin -- are subject to the same historical & geographical laws as the old monarchies.

From that general conception are to be deduced the 2 following practical conclusions :

(1) the necessity of a reconciliation with the Bolshevik government
& (2) an action tending to aggravate the Polish-Czech conflict on the subject of Teschen. [94]

As concerns the internal situation of Poland, the German plan is very simple. It is necessary to profit from all the difficulties which present themselves before the organisers of a new state, political, social & economic. It is necessary to inflame party strife, to promote inflation, to encourage the class struggle & to organise the conflict of nationalities against the Polish state. The Jews, Lithuanians, Ruthenians & Germans are plainly so many elements favorable for a campaign of German propaganda. Now that the mysteries of German propaganda have been revealed in France, it is easy to surmise what German agents can do in a country with an inexperienced administration & an extremely complicated economic situation. Poland swarms with German agents who have a real influence too little appreciated on the internal state of the country. Finally, it is really necessary to say that German policy hopes to be able to play on the traditional errors of Polish policy: she hopes to be able to engage Poland in Ukrainian & Russian affairs in such a way that she may have her hands tied in Western policy; she hopes finally that Polish romanticism will break the balance which in a rational policy must exist between the means one possesses & the ends one proposes.

German policy also anticipates the neutrality of the Allies resulting from divergences of view about the application of the Treaty of Versailles. To win a benevolent neutrality from the Allies, the Germans wave the spectre of Bolshevism & endeavour to get the victors to admit the principle of the economic solidarity of all European nations.

German policy does all it can to demonstrate that Germany alone is capable of saving Europe from Russian Bolshevism. They therefore secretly support the Moscow government & the Red Army against the Poles to prove by events that Poland is incapable of holding her head up to Trotsky's troops.

In another way, they show that it is necessary to give Germany the possibility of developing her industry & her agriculture to defeat the internal danger of Bolshevism. They therefore ask for the conditions necessary to rebuild their economic life & for the easing of the burdens imposed by reparations & for the coal from Upper Silesia. German propaganda is very skillful at launching into the World formulae which serve her interests. During the war it was "a peace without annexations or indemnities", now it is "a Germany bringing order to the East" & "economic collaboration by the winners & the losers". We know that an important group in England, whose spokesman is Mr Keynes, has already been completely won over by the German program: if those ideas were to be accepted by Allied diplomacy, Germany would be re-established in her pre-war situation ... [95]

The diplomats of the Wilhelmstrasse at present have a Polish policy which is clear & well-defined, just as they alone had a Polish policy during the war, because they considered the Polish problem as being the most important for the future of Germany, but to resolve it on the basis of the considerations set out below, it is necessary that Poland undergo a military disaster. That is what German policy has worked for for months.

Whoever has carefully watched the unfolding scene could confirm the following facts :

- (1) preparation of the Bolshevik armies' offensive against Poland ;
- (2) efforts to present the Poles as aggressors & imperialists before European opinion ;
- (3) attempts to prevent the Poles from obtaining the arms & munitions they needed ;
- (4) attempts in England & in America to buy railway material & other products necessary for conducting the war against Poland (the Krassine mission) ;
- (5) attempts, happily failed, to foment a revolutionary movement in Poland under the guise of economic strikes & to start a pacifist campaign.

One can easily see classic German operations: after having done everything to discredit the victim & after having pretended to be attacked, to unleash an offensive with a single well-defined goal.

The Germans will take care not to intervene militarily themselves, but for that campaign they have an element all prepared, the present government of Lithuania. ... It is enough to look at a map of Eastern Europe to see that strategically ethnic Lithuania plays the same role with respect to Poland as Ireland plays with respect to Great Britain & that thence -- at an opportune moment -- can arise a decisive blow against the lines of communication of the Polish army. Time-honored experience has taught the Poles that he who holds Lvov & Vilna owns the open road to the very centre of Poland.

Poland invaded by the Bolshevik hordes is Prussia restored, the position of Germany in the East reconquered, the first & most difficult stage along the road of revenge.

There you have a document to read & think about today.
It would be nice to be able to read it again after a century has passed.

CHAPTER 8 – The Adriatic Imbroglia [96]

We have said many times of intelligent Italians – nationalists for their country -- that they used to understand admirably that the old French policy, of which Thiers was the last representative, would be opposed to Italian unity: one must not work to establish great powers near to oneself. But in 1914 Italian unity was an accomplished fact & there was only one thing to attempt, that which Mr Delcassé had prepared since 1902, to obtain the neutrality of Italy in case of a Franco-German war. Neutrality being an unsettled state, it was even better that Italy might enter into the conflict from the same side as ourselves & that the break with her allies of yesteryear might be consummated. That is what came about, thanks to a happy co-incidence of circumstances & thanks to Italian patriotism, which had seen in joining the war the means to finish off its national program: one would have had to bear that in mind. The conditions which Italy had made for its new alliance -- conditions which are set down in the Treaty of London -- express it clearly enough: it was above all the Adriatic which she wanted: her direct adversary was not the German Empire, it was the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Therein is to be found the origin of future difficulties, [97] but the reality is that the Italian state, for as long as it has existed, has adapted itself painfully to a systematic European policy, whatever it may be. The peace has endangered that adaptation instead of making it easier.

In the 19th Century, Italian unity had advanced at the same pace as German unity: thence arose the idea among a majority of Italians that there exists a solidarity & a relation between their country & Germany. It was necessary therefore to foresee that Italy would be opposed to everything which would tend to alienate Germany -- we will return below to our book *The War & Italy* published in 1916 -- & that undoubtedly we would point out to her in vain that she would gain nothing if the Germanism with which she would be in contact & against which she would have to defend the Brenner, Trieste & the Adriatic took a Prussian instead of an Austrian form.

Italy did not have occasion to intercede for German unity, which not raised at the Conference of Paris, but there occurred something which defies all manner of reason: the peace has left only uneasiness & rancor at Italy, after the war had been dragged out for 2 years before we received word from Italy.

If the Italian statesmen, at the time when they took their precautions in writing before joining in, did not allow the idea of an estrangement from Germany, they were nonetheless thinking no more of the dismemberment of Austria. Perhaps the more prudent among them were not wedded to it, but in any case in April 1919, we found ourselves faced with the following situation: the war had been conducted as if the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire might have been the principal result which the coalition might have intended to bring about. All the diplomatic transactions suggested by the King of Spain or by the Viennese Court itself in order to break up the enemy coalition

had been rejected in 1917 under the excuse that a separate peace with Austria-Hungary had been made impossible by the undertakings of the Treaty of London.

Well, the Allies who had let drop the conversation offered by Prince Sixte while falling back upon the Treaty of London, those same Allies refused Italy the benefit of that treaty at the time when they were absolute masters of the situation. It was to get there that the opportune & legitimate Austrian manoeuvre -- the breaking-up of the enemy alliances, for which Alfonse XIII had proposed his good offices -- had been rejected ! A prodigious scandal for reason. [98]

It was dangerous to deceive a people who are as emotional & at the same time politically aware as the Italian people. The result was quick & profound: the deception had restored their spirits, it disturbed the whole of Italian life & it brought to power amid cheers the man who had been of the opinion that Italy was wrong to join in & that the war would not pay. What we must see in Mr Giolitti is not a neutralist, a Ghibelline: it is a realistic statesman who has appeared in his country like a saviour. Lacking sentiment & doctrine, he steers Italy in the direction of least risk & least harm. Thus joining in the war would have been only a parenthesis -- opened & closed -- to the golden wedding of Italian unity: everything would have to be begun again. It is necessary to know how & why.

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Austria, which was not a nation but a state, which one could prune, mould, move around according to the needs of the moment, that convenient Austria is no more. In her place some nations have arisen & when one cuts into the flesh of a nation, it cries out, it resists. Italy earlier had been set free & unified in the name of the principle of nationalities. Here is a new nationality come in sight -- Yugoslavia -- & it is upon her -- at her expense -- that Italy reclaims provinces & the Adriatic. What one could take painlessly from the Habsburg Empire, how can one take it from the Serb, Croat & Slovenian people ? Italy had been able to make merry at the fall of her old enemies the Habsburgs; she had been able to be indifferent to the element of balance which Europe had lost with them. Here she gained only a competitor of a new kind, much more dangerous: a young nationality such as she herself had been 60 years earlier while she was the favorite child of Napoleon III, who was the Wilson of his time.

A nationality to begin with, Italy has become in her turn a state. According to the Romanesque doctrine which the Conference constantly applied, a nationality has all the rights, a state has none. It is in that way that Italy has been mistreated & that the Yugoslav nationality -- because it is new -- has had preference. There was great turmoil, violent indignation in the minds of Italians who did not understand the reasoning [99] according to which the Croats, whom they had fought under the flag of the Habsburgs, had to be considered as allies after they had merged with the Serbs: merged upto a point, all things considered. Thence it has resulted -- the most natural thing in the World -- that the question of the Adriatic has become almost insoluble or that it will receive only incomplete, provisional solutions,

as little satisfying for one party as for the other; thence again a permanent hostility between the two residents on the shores of the Adriatic, the beginning of future difficulties & conflicts. The Italians have been slow to discover the cause of the harm: they will turn to it, perhaps a bit later. More than a year after Mr Orlando & Mr Sonnino had broken with the Supreme Council -- to resign afterwards & finally to fall from power -- , the Italian press ended by giving this picture -- very precise -- of the situation in which Italy has been placed by the disappearance of Austria (Luigi Salvatorelli, *Stampa* 21 July 1920):

As far we are concerned, Yugoslavia is purely & simply the heir of Austria with this aggravating circumstance, that Austria-Hungary -- a great dualist state with several nationalities & 4 frontiers -- necessarily followed a rather complicated policy in which opposition to Italy was only a single element & not the most important & which moreover found itself largely counterbalanced by others in our favor. It is precisely due to that that the Austrian state, despite pressures exercised on it by influential political groups & advice from military chiefs, refrained from mixing it up with us. But Yugoslavia on the contrary considers Italy as her principal enemy: on the Italian flank, she possesses her most extended & most important frontier, as well as her biggest points of friction, & it is against us that she concentrates the biggest sum of national passion, uniting via hostility towards Italy & the anti-Italian program the serious divergencies of the 3 peoples who make her up.

Is that all ? It would be too simple; it would be too good. What is the Yugoslav nationality ? For the Italians, it is the heir of the hated Austria. For the other allies, it is the heir of heroic Serbia, their girlfriend from the start, so much more beloved for having cost more sacrifices. The Italians see their natural enemy pampered: they have no further understanding. Then the idea of a monstrous conspiracy haunts their minds (quoted from the same article): [100]

Yugoslavia figures in the councils of the Alliance not as a loser, but as an ally on the same footing as Italy, which has even to be preferred to Italy because of the good or bad claims of Serbia, & in the play of international forces, Yugoslavia replaces Austria with this difference, that the Habsburg Empire formed part of a closed political constellation -- even opposed to that of France & England -- , while Yugoslavia today finds herself in the same group as the latter. The result: Italy has -- on 2 frontiers & in 2 seas -- not only enemies belonging to opposite groups & consequently mutually neutralising one another, but enemies who are allied among themselves.

Enemies, everywhere enemies. Such is the state of mind which the peace has created among the Italians. And these quotations could be multiplied: 4 days after the article in *La Stampa* , the well-known commentator who signs himself 'Rastignac' -- always so close to Mr Giolitti & his thoughts -- analysed in the *Tribuna* a note of complaints & objections addressed on 7 July 1919 to the Supreme Council, where Mr Tittoni grumbled that "the Italian representative might have been treated as could have been that of a defeated & enemy state summoned to answer for criminal acts". The well-known journalist developed & amplified these bitter & weighty words of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs & he arrived at this extreme conclusion: "It is perhaps not illogical to deduce that the Allies desired that 2 powers, Germany & Italy, might emerge defeated & humbled from the war". Such is the state of mind of the Italians. It is not only for them that the Adriatic will still be "very bitter". #

To be acquainted with & to understand the Italian point of view, it is not fruitless also to quote this passage from the same document: "As concerns the Treaty of London of 1915, it is a matter of a treaty in right & proper form. No hope of justification could legitimise the claim that that treaty is in parts lapsed or about to be. If the actual conditions existing in 1915 have undergone changes, it is easy to take them into account, but it is far from that to want to pervert the spirit of the treaty to the point of depriving one alone of the parties of the fruits of a victory won in common". In other words, Italy reckons that she has been betrayed & robbed.

We used to speak of "the Adriatic balance". All the balances have been repudiated by the peace – that one like the others – [101] & we have an Adriatic imbroglio which would not have existed if Austria had survived, which it would have been possible to foresee -- once Austria had been dismembered -- only if the Yugoslavs had been openly sacrificed to the Italians, but which has unfolded & been aggravated by the fact that all the interested parties judge themselves injured & remain discontented. We haven't even chosen it !

There was a time when the French minister who had prepared the Franco-Italian agreement was accused of having seduced Italy & thereby furnished a complaint for William II. This time we haven't seduced Italy. Why ? For nothing. From the time that the undertakings of 1915 had been torn to pieces, it was possibly worth getting angry with Italy, if she disregarded the conditions for a balance in Europe; it was possibly worth ignoring her protestations, if it was to create a continental order which might have permitted us to do without her & to render her hostility impotent. We do not say that it would have been pretty, that it would have been noble: it would not have been more immoral than the disowning of explicit signatures & at the least it would have been rational. Moreover, in the event of an Austro-Hungarian Empire surviving, it would have been possible to find contrivances which would have procured for Italy even more than she received. With her plasticity, an Austria redirected towards the northeast -- towards Poland, towards Danzig & the Baltic -- would have painlessly surrendered Trieste & Fiume, as she had in former times surrendered Venice: that solution -- so natural -- had been sketched during the secret negotiations of 1917. But Italian friendship was endangered without compensation & for nothing.

Today, the nerves of the Italian people are sick: they have not withstood the efforts of the war followed by the disillusionments of the peace. It would be a mistake to believe that they are permanently broken: Italy will undoubtedly recover herself from the major moral, social & political disorder from which she suffers at the moment. Then she will notice that she counts 40 M inhabitants & that the Allies were wrong to render her stronger, since it led to not giving her all she asked for, to favor her direct competitors -- Greece, Yugoslavia -- & finally to put her in a situation such that she will be led to rediscover the elements of her own policy in conformity with her aspirations & her interests & without regard for temporary friendships. And she will continue to say that it was not her who began the infidelities. [102]

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Italy has entered into a period of contemplation, of retreat upon herself, where she will not undertake any major external action, where she will work hard to remain in contact with her wartime allies. However, she will set up her accounts & she will measure her risks; it will be necessary to preserve her conquests, which she found inferior to her hopes. She will seek pledges. To protect the Brenner & Trieste against the unending threat of an incursion by the Germans, she will think of the method by which she used to protect Venice in earlier times: in order not to have war with Austria, she had allied with Austria. A similar situation -- only more complex -- already suggests to her the idea of maintaining good relations with the German people who have become her quasi-neighbour.

And Yugoslavia ? -- one can imagine that a reconciliation of Italy & Germany would intimidate & neutralise that heir of the former Austria -- only weaker than Austria was -- , for whom an identical situation would inspire the same sentiments & suggest the same ideas. To secure herself, knowing she was established at the expense of both the Italian people & the Germanic race, would she not be led to enter their system by means of the mutual guarantee of frontiers ? She would even render them her services, become their outpost towards the East.

One reconciliation determines others & we know with what ease "compulsory tours" mark themselves out. Thus -- due to the same causes -- the old Triple Alliance would rebuild itself: in the absence of a general balance, each country seeks whatever balance it can & "constellations of powers" as before 1914 will re-establish themselves from similar needs. What we are saying about it is so far from being a simple mental picture: in the momentous period which preceded the rescue of Warsaw in August 1920, Mr Tusar -- the leader of the Czechoslovak government, who was organising a League of Neutrals against Poland & consequently in favor of Germany -- offered to Count Sforza his mediation to reconcile Italy & the Yugoslavs. At first, the idea of that reconciliation offended Italian patriotism as much as had the reconciliation with Austria 40 years earlier. Italy will be able to accustom herself to the one as she had accustomed herself to the other. It is necessary to know how to distinguish between sentimental alliances & political alliances.

As for us, the moment seems to have passed when we had the means to attach Italy to ourselves by partnering with her so that she might receive [103] what she wanted, what she had been promised in the Adriatic. Irrecoverable time has gone by. The Italian alliance is cracked: had it been satisfied, it is from our side that Italy would have sought the safeguard of her possessions; the pact concluded for the victory would have had a reason to survive after the victory. We allied for the booty -- for the pickings -- & perhaps that is what was most judicious & prudent in the agreements of 1915 & 1916.

Today, Italy is escaping from us: she seeks her way with indifference, she returns to the policy of "carefully considered versatility", which since her Dukes of Savoy has inclined her by turns towards Central Europe & towards Western Europe. The war was able to give her the quality of a fixed element: look at her once more uprooted & we must expect her oscillations. No improvement of pre-war Europe has been affected any more on that point than others:

there is no progress. Italy is not more adapted than before to a conservative European system & her uncertainty will lead to our own; her difficulties will give rise to our difficulties: Franco-Italian relations will become again the most difficult part of our diplomatic job. Whether the Italians enter into conflict with the Yugoslavs or whether they ally themselves with them through the intermediary of Germany -- for it can be, as with Austria, only one or the other, alliance or conflict -- , our difficulty will be equal, we shall undergo the consequences in the same manner.

That Adriatic, the only sea perhaps where we may have nothing to do, where we may have no interests: its bitterness remains for Italy & its storms for ourselves.

CHAPTER 9 -- Hypotheses & Probabilities [104]

There was a moment during the months which followed the Armistice, when the disorder was such that people could believe that the whole of Europe was going to founder. Famine & revolution were increasing on all sides. For the head of the American Food Administration, Mr Hoover, there were 100 M too many human beings on our old continent & America, anxious for her own subsistence, ended by resigning herself to let them die. Fatal forebodings beset people's minds. The historian Ferrero conjured up the end of the Ancient World. Never in the darkest days of the war had there been this desolation. The stock exchanges in London & in Paris were falling, while Spartacus was triumphing in Germany. One evening in a journal which is a Parisian meeting-place, someone read a dispatch: the royal palace in Berlin had just been captured, the Red Flag had been hoisted there. One heard a lamentation: it was a diplomatic friend of France who had not been able to withstand that blow.

After the war of nations -- terrible but organised -- it seemed that another, more dreadful war had followed to finish the destruction [105] of what remained of the old society: social war, war for bread. There had not been fear during the actual war: there was terror in the several months which followed it & that terror gave bad counsels. It created a desire that Germany might pull herself together to resist the contagion of Bolshevism. Germany resisted, she pulled herself together & it is then that her resistance began: we do not find ourselves the better for it.

The German revolution was of a type unknown before that time & it did not resemble what it had to be according to the prophecy of Heinrich Heine. The monarchical system having been overthrown in the circumstances which we have seen -- not by conviction, but by opportunity --, that abrupt deflation joined to the demoralising effect of the defeat had ended by stirring up an actual revolution & a real beginning of anarchy. We had to ask ourselves whether the Germans, in the habit of being governed, were capable of governing themselves. Re-establishing order was a difficult task. The means by which Germany succeeded in doing so avouched a method, a policy. Regular legal repression of the disturbance in the streets was accompanied by an extraordinary terrorist repression, which took aim at the heads & suppressed the leaders: one by one, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxembourg, Eisner, Haase were assassinated; here & there, other men of action of the extreme Left disappeared: Erzberger, considered a solvent element, took a bullet himself, which warned & discouraged his imitators.

Thus Germany reacted slowly but surely. The coup d'état by Kapp & Lüttwitz in March 1920 was clumsy & untimely. The repulse did not prevent the parties of the Right from leading an effective campaign & 3 months later, after the elections of 6 June, from entering the government.

The Hohenzollern monarchy left Germany defeated, but it also left a state, an administration, civil & military services, intellectual & industrial elites, political traditions, a whole capital thanks to which to begin with Germany has overcome her internal anarchy. If relapses remain

possible, the method which succeeded in re-establishing order is always ready: to apply it, the government disposes of more powerful means than earlier. Above all, the public mind has regained possession of itself: Germany did not despair for long & the suicide of a Ballin after the disaster [106] -- faced with the port of Hamburg emptied of her ships – was only one case of isolated pessimism. It matters relatively little in this respect whether the German Empire may return to monarchy or whether it may become -- as President Ebert called it -- "the biggest republic in the World after the USA", if it has to take the form of a vast enterprise conducted -- in the spirit of the Hohenzollerns – by captains of industry whose model is made manifest by Hugo Stinnes.

In any case, Germany did not even wait for her internal re-organisation to be finished before passing on to external action & to the offensive against the Treaty of Versailles. Repression of anarchy -- re-establishment of basic order – was only the first step, but it is necessary not to forget that in parallel circumstances the first is the most difficult. It is also the most important.

In 1871 during the Commune, many Frenchmen nearly despaired. "FINIS FRANCIAE", murmured Renan, "an abyss below the abyss" & he added with an exaggeration which revealed his perplexity, because there did not lack in the course of centuries dates when the future of France seemed much more seriously endangered: "18 March 1871 was the moment during the past 1000 years when French morale was at its lowest point. We doubted for a moment whether it would put itself back together".

France overcame the Commune much more quickly than Germany overcame Spartacus & a Communism which had 100 heads. There is, however, no sign that Germany may have renounced the future in those minds where she is conceived of as a major national force. What is perhaps the most astonishing in her vitality is that the idea of huge errors of estimation & calculation -- military & political, before the war & during the war -- have not led her to doubt herself, her capacities, her aptitudes, a doubt which would not have failed to overwhelm a people endowed with a critical mind. France took a long time to recover from the blow which the defeat of 1870 had delivered to her morale & to her confidence: an extended timidity had followed the disaster. Nothing similar is to be seen among the Germans: the experience has scarcely educated them & one senses them ready to resume their mistakes -- even their military mistakes – in the conviction that it is not their intelligence which let them down, but events, & that in other circumstances what miscarried only by chance will succeed.

[107] After a shaking as profound, the relatively rapid consolidation of Germany is a fact which calls for the most sustained attention. Germany seemed many times to founder helplessly in the chaos. The unity which by a miracle had survived the defeat seemed to be destined to shatter in the civil war. The ominous predictions which Bismarck & Bülow had scattered abroad in the event of the fall of the federalising monarchy of the Hohenzollerns seemed on the verge of coming true. We are still not saying that Bismarck & Bülow may not

have been correct: from the standpoint of his time, the 1st Chancellor of the Empire assessed that German unity could not dispense with the dynastic tie; the 4th Chancellor, whose observations are more recent, declared a political particularism which repeated the old territorial particularism & which would precede its return.

"The quibbling & the insignificance, the rancor & the animosity which previously existed in the quarrels of German peoples & states have transmitted themselves in our lives into parties", wrote Prince von Bülow in his *Deutsche Politik*. He noted further a tendency belonging to the German mind, which consists of "internationalising party ideas", ie of extending these ideas beyond the frontier, as German Catholics -- to take only one example -- would be genuine "Ultramontanists".

These remarks of Prince von Bülow must certainly not be neglected. In the event that Germany goes through new internal crises where she would show herself decidedly impotent -- after a lull & a semblance of better things -- to re-establish at home a durable order & to replace the old authority with a new authority, it is clear that party conflicts will be aggravated in considerable ratios. Secessions such as the two chancellors forecast would be possible: we have an example of it in the violent revulsion which Bavaria showed with respect to the socialism which was reputedly a product of Berlin.

Thus in Germany, the clash of ideas & manners -- by the force of things -- takes a territorial character. It would take even more readily an international character in the sense understood by Prince von Bülow, for a Bavarian Conservative is conscious of more affinities with a French Conservative than with a Prussian Socialist. Particularism -- maintained in former times by the quarrels of religion -- would still be maintained, at least after the judgement Prince von Bülow expressed about Germans in a tranquil time, by "the struggle of social states & of classes". [108]

In other words, German unity would be connected to the identity of sentiments & of political ideas among the principal groups of populations which compose the Empire. In a regulated Germany, the Bavarian Conservatives are satisfied, loyal, as nationalist & pan-Germanist as the old Prussians beyond the Elbe. In an anarchist or socialist Germany, conservative Bavaria would become a foreign body which would quickly obey its separatist tendencies. To that extent, the pessimistic observations of the 2 chancellors keep their value.

But if Germany continues to pull herself together, it will still be through the Berlin government & she will bit-by-bit find herself again in a state palpably similar to that where she was in 1914. Of the 2 pictures which she has before her eyes -- that of the powerful & prosperous Empire & that of the chaos which followed the revolution -- you can bet a lot that the former will be the stronger. To bring it about, the Prussian administration & tradition will also be the best to nominate.

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That is why it is very little likely that Bavaria -- as some people are led to think -- might one day be able take the lead in a re-organisation of Germany: she has none of the means which would be necessary for such an unwieldy task. It is equally improbable that she could attain merely the leadership of a separate federation of the states of the South. It is not that she may have lacked the ambition in the course of her history to take the first place among the German countries, but she has never succeeded in it. The character of her inhabitants, her geographical situation, the absence of civil & military institutions original & vigorous enough for such a major role leave her deprived of the capacities necessary for the exercise of a hegemony. Germany improved by the moderating influence of the Bavarian element is a myth. The Bavarian element can be benevolent only if it works in a particularist direction & we have seen under what conditions particularism could develop itself.

Moreover -- & it is an absolute principle, whether she has her capital in the South or in the North -- a big Germany is not better for us. The Austrian house, against which France struggled through 2 centuries, had its principal seat in Vienna. If it was possible that München might succeed Vienna or Berlin, what would we gain thereby ?

Only an autonomous Bavaria, rebellious towards Prussia, would be worthy of attention & interest.

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[109] However, the Germanic countries & their border-lands, while aspiring to order, have not restored an incontestable stability. Crises still await them & perhaps crises of a new kind. We have seen the effects which a prolonged or aggravated revolutionary state of affairs would be capable of producing in Germany: according to all appearances, that incurable state of revolution would favor separatism. From the territorial point of view, from that of groups of countries & states, what would a counter-revolution produce ?

It would scarcely be conceivable that the counter-revolution, if it was decisively successful in Berlin, might be limited to Germany; it would not be any more conceivable that it might be limited to the social order. Despite the disturbances which re-appear & will still re-appear at various points of the Old World, despite the survival of Russian Bolshevism, revolution is well on the way to losing the game & it had never had it so good. The old society, which people had believed destroyed, has shown a power of resistance which is almost astonishing. In many places -- above all in France -- , it has scarcely been shaken, if at all. We have just witnessed a stirring struggle. The final victory is scarcely in doubt. The counter-revolution, which allowed a preview of itself at the dawn of the war period in 1912-3, initially underwent an eclipse through the triumph of the liberal forces, through the collapse of 3 great monarchies & through the principle of universal democracy which dominated the peace treaties. Chaos rapidly ensued & the old civilised world found itself close to ruin. Well, the counter-revolution has begun & if we leave it to precedents, it is scarcely possible that it will not affect one day or another the very map of Europe.

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The conservative instinct having been the strongest, it will exercise itself also in the general political domain. The peoples & governments, after having restored internal order, will be impelled to seek external stability & the confusion which results from an arbitrary distribution of states in Central Europe will be felt as an international anarchy as injurious as the other & well-fitted to give rise to the other. The wholehearted application of the principle of nationalities is an experiment which has not given favorable results: in multiplying weak rival states, [110] it has also multiplied civil & foreign warfare. To put an end to these 2 scourges, a re-organisation obtrudes itself. After having restored a social order much more like that of earlier times than one would have believed, Europe will further tend to revisit the creation of states which are not viable or which would be the cause of unceasing disturbances through their inability to defend themselves & to govern themselves.

This diplomatic counter-revolution will be the necessary consequence of the other. It will happen through the same means, ie not without lacerations & pains, & it is in the most transformed & least stable parts of Europe that it will first appear. A well-known historian was able to declare 30 years in advance that the Austrian question would pose itself following the question of the East. To destroy the Austro-Hungarian Empire it needed an unparalleled crisis, battles in which the majority of peoples were engaged. The reconstruction of a political edifice of whatever kind in the place of the ruins which the old one has left will probably be one of the tasks of the near future. There are very few chances that it will come about otherwise than through the effect of another crisis & through another recourse to force.

Many combinations different from those which the treaties have established can be conceived in Central & Eastern Europe. There are only 2 cases of lesser likelihood.

First, that in which what has been done would last much longer than the conditions in which the new states were created & their frontiers laid out. As soon as the Allies no longer have the will or the capacity to stand up against changes, as soon as they no longer agree in exercising their supervision & their protectorate over the excessively diverse peoples, it will not be necessary to grant a long time before these peoples may receive a new decree.

The other case, as little likely, is that in which these peoples of their own impulse -- in their full freedom, with the agreement of all -- establish something which would resemble the old Austria. If several million Germans & even the Slovaks had not been introduced by writ into the Czech state, they would not have come there of their own will. If they have to exit from it, they will exit also only by the play of an external force.

Conversely, that is why the heirs of the Austrian Empire -- whatever could be their interest in living together -- will not re-unite from a common accord. People have long believed in a Balkan federation which has never come about. [111] A Danube federation which came together all on its own -- simply because it would be the most reasonable solution -- shares in the same idle fancy.

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If you say "federation", you thereby say "federator". Upto now, the Danube has known only one: that was the House of Habsburg. After the Emperor had been expelled from Vienna in 1848, the Empire would already have broken itself up, if there had not been the army, Windischgrätz & Radetzki, **in whose camp -- according to the famous verse -- was Austria**. Another Habsburg fell in 1918 : that one kept neither army nor generals. One must not seriously entertain the hypothesis under which Charles I -- nor any other member of his family -- , suddenly recalled to the throne, would re-establish Austria through the sole leverage of the principle of legitimacy. That principle on its own is as impotent to re-instate an empire as would be the ideal of republican federalism. Whatever would be the advantage they would have in being brought together again, the populations of the old Empire will live in a state of hostility -- at least, of mistrust -- , forming among themselves shifting coalitions, till the day when the genuine federator presents & imposes himself, who will be the sturdiest element & the most capable of re-uniting the others by towering over them.

France has been accused many times since the Armistice of seeking to set up a Danube confederation -- it is her right & her need: the balance & peace of Europe need it -- , but it is extremely unbelievable that France could succeed in it by diplomatic persuasion: no more than breaking up Germany, one will not bring Austria together by command. The opportunity will be furnished by events & by the play of natural forces. It will be a matter of understanding these forces, distinguishing between them & steering them in the best direction, for it is in no way given that the great Danube power which would come to reconstitute itself would necessarily be in our interests. It would still be necessary to take guard that its birth would not be suited for alarming peoples capable of opposing it & opposing it in an effective manner.

Starting from these principles, one is led to conclude that if there must be a federation, the federating element will be nationality, not inevitably the most numerous, but the most hardy & the most endowed with military spirit. Only two -- Yugoslavia & Hungary -- are in this category & it seems that the latter, despite its disaster, brings together the conditions which the former lacks. [112]

The Hungarians have a vigorous national consciousness, a rugged will. Over their neighbours who have grown at their expense, they offer the advantage -- less paradoxical than appears -- of not having had to assimilate new populations: their unity is undiluted. They are capable of worrying the varied states -- small or medium -- which surround them, but no great power has a direct & personal reason to stand in the way of their revival & their progress. On the contrary, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats & Slovenes, even if it were a steel well-tempered enough to conduct foreign schemes of a certain breadth, would immediately be exposed to the hostility of Italy, which would make haste to set up against it all possible coalitions.

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Further, insofar as one can estimate such uncertain possibilities, Hungary has to its credit that it entered among the first into the tide of that European counter-revolution which, if it must decidedly win, will not win without several fresh conflicts.

Whether the counter-revolutionary tide may swell or whether the revolution may have offensive resurgences -- whether a White Europe collides with a Red Europe -- , Hungary as she is oriented seems in good shape to crystallise the conservative elements in her neighbourhood, even the Germanic elements. Thus one could conceive an outline of a federation which would radiate as far as Bavaria.

And of course, it is not completely certain that even if things have to occur in a manner roughly similar to what one sometimes imagines, they would have all by themselves & inevitably to turn in the direction of our interests. Instead of detaching & re-assembling territories for its own account, Hungary could well re-assemble them for the German account, be sucked in itself & undergo the attraction of a re-organised & vigorous Germany.

In this regard & from the point of view where we have placed ourselves at this moment, everything will undoubtedly depend upon the speed of the movement for political restoration in the countries capable of exercising an influence & taking the initiative.

A Germany quickly restored to order in all her parts would also have the benefit externally: not only would that Germany keep -- instead of losing -- her conservative elements in the South, but also she would attract & absorb the heterogeneous elements equally keen on order, on conservatism -- & on revenge. As it was 50 years ago, Berlin would be the **compulsory tour** for the Hungarians. Austria-Hungary would then re-establish itself in whole or in part, but for the profit of the German Empire & as a dependency of that Empire, [113] without taking into account -- it fits our analysis -- that the day the re-union of the Austrian Republic was a done deal -- the day the Germany of Berlin would be installed in Vienna -- , she would be on the verge of being installed in Budapest & she would have finally established the well-known Mitteleuropa. Everything depends on the point whence the movement will have started.

The future of Central Europe remains at the mercy of a new battle of Sadowa or the political & moral equivalent of another Sadowa. That part of the continent is too pulverised, too badly arranged for it not to re-congregate one day: all the more reason for France to watch closely the points from which the future conglomerations will be able to begin, all the more reason for her not to be absent anywhere. The role which Hungary can fill -- diminished on all sides as she is & exactly because she is diminished & also because she occupies a central position on the Danube of exceptional value -- tells us not to neglect her, whether she turns out bad or good, for she seems called upon to be of account in the future.

In the matter of forecast & political action, it is necessary to abide by the precept left by a man of the 18th Century, who used to pass wrongly as a lightweight: "Calculate everything & don't fear everything". It is also necessary with Frederick II to remind one another that "there is a type of fatality -- or lacking fatality secondary causes -- which often slew events in a manner which one can neither conceive nor foresee", to which Frederick added:

"After favorable circumstances present themselves, a kind of sudden opening in the clouds happens from which the debt profit". It is from these favorable circumstances that it is important to put oneself in a position to profit.

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People repeated for more than 30 years that the Eastern Question would give rise to a general war. All the prophets had spoken in unison, but that warning was of no use. A well-known **image** still went on **saying**: "The Balkans & **the arrow of Strasbourg** overshadow European politics". From now on, its shape must be changed: we could say that today the cupola of St Sophia & the Silesian blast-furnaces rule European politics. We could make use of other metaphors. [114] At the same time that the usual assumptions of politics have been modified, their area has been extended considerably towards the East. On all sides gaping holes yawn & the more one advances towards the East, the deeper they are: to look at them, one must not fear vertigo.

The European system which lasted for better & for worse from 1871 till the war rested on hexarchy, the board of 6 great powers -- France, England, Italy, Germany, Austria, Russia --, whose preliminary "concert" was required to manage the difficulties of the East. If these powers had not managed to agree among themselves, any chance affair in Macedonia would have been unsolvable or rather it would have taken on the most serious proportions & the "hexarchs" would be in collision with one another. European consensus was an insurance against these risks.

At the same time, it was a vague survival of the old Christendom, a kind of syndicate of European civilisation in face of Islam, to which was added a principle which had earlier been a dogma, that of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Whatever might be the decrepitude of that empire, people always came back to the necessity of meddling with it as little as possible, first to avoid entering the era of spoils, ie rivalries, & then due to the feeling that the old Turkey represented the most moderate & most European form of Islam. We would have gained nothing when the old Turkish diplomats -- cautious & crafty viziers, with whom we had the habit of chatting -- would be replaced by fanatics. The Young Turk revolution had given a foretaste of what the awakening of nationalism by liberalism would produce in the East. And above all Constantinople -- "that **deadly** Constantinople" -- is a city which excites many types of eager desire, of which the best was that she might remain Turkish so that no-one else could get hold of her.

It is true that after the agreements concluded among the principal Allies during the war, Constantinople was due to return to Russia. What would have happened if Russia had remained loyal to the Alliance till the end & if -- a victor like ourselves -- she had claimed her prize? Undoubtedly, she would not have had it any more than we have had ours on the Rhine & we would have escaped by resorting to the usual ploy & by upholding the integrity of Turkey due to European reasons of state: the Turks have perhaps lost more than they think from the collapse of the Russian Empire. [115] In the East also there was a classic balance, which neutralised desires & which nothing has so far replaced. #

After long hesitations, extending her hand only to withdraw it again, England did not dare to grab hold of Constantinople: she merely put it within reach of the Greeks, her straw men. The city remains with the Sultan or rather the Sultan remains in the city, but what is his authority? Where are the Turks who obey him? The Greeks surround him even inside the suburbs of his capital. An international commission -- the Commission of the Straits -- is more sovereign than him. Occupation forces with a joint Allied command remain permanently on the Bosphorus.

Theoretically, Constantinople need not belong to anyone. It will certainly be necessary that one day it will belong to someone. The system which consists of internationalising the sensitive points on the map replaces a natural balance which has disappeared with an artificial balance. It is a temporary solution; it is a transition. All the Allies have been able to do at Constantinople is to adjourn a dangerous trial.

At one of the most important places in the World, there is a void, a huge space for the unknown. Concerning the future of Constantinople & of Asia Minor, it is impossible to bring forward the smallest prognosis. Only one thing is certain: for Greece to be in a position to retain the widespread territories which she receives & whose defense will be arduous, she will have to become much stronger than she is, so strong that it would not be more difficult for her to take Constantinople than to retain Smyrna. Greece will be the Byzantine Empire or she will certainly again lose Thrace & Ionia.

In sum, Asia Minor has been broken up & parcelled out like Central & Eastern Europe. The resemblance is so strange that Armenia holds the same place in it as Poland, squeezed like her between two enemies who have only to re-unite to crush her.

But if the future is already obscure in Central & Eastern Europe, in Asia Minor one searches in vain for landmarks. The chaos is worse since the nationalities there find themselves entangled with the mandates of the European powers -- the Crusades of the League of Nations, the remnants of the Christian protectorate of France --, with the oil trade & with the protection of the routes to India, all that in contact with a force -- that of Islam --, [116] whose direction & development escape all calculations, & with the threat which Russia, dropping by to reclaim her share, will continue to represent.

At these frontiers of two worlds & two civilisations, peace arrives at a complete melt-down, so complete that no-one has wanted to serve as protector of the orphaned Armenia: distrust, abstention which resolve nothing. One cause of uncertainty is added to other causes: in the event of a fresh European incident, there is in Asia Minor the material for a huge conflagration. 'HINC MOVET EVPHRATES, ILLINC GERMANIA BELLVM': true in the time of Vergil, true in 1914, that connection could be true again. From the Euphrates to the Rhine, the relationship is almost continuous & France finds herself heavily involved in Asia Minor in order to keep a piece of her old inheritance at least in Syria, while it remains for her over a long period to settle her accounts with Germany. #

A bit like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Turkish Empire had lasted above all through the difficulty which Europe found in doing without it & in replacing it: these old structures offered the advantage of being known & moreover they neutralised the conflicts of races & of religions. The services which they had rendered in the old days will be missed. If Turkey, like Austria, had become malevolent, the origin of this evil was in a big Germany & as the origin of the evil persists, it will be necessary to see again what the influence of a powerful Germanic state will produce in places where these political edifices used to rise in earlier times.

What is certain is that for France – who everywhere had a position which was acquired over time & which was forced as a result of her interests to become conservative, & who has always lost in upheavals since her national fortune began -- for an old country like ours, demolitions are of no help: with each one, we lose something of our capital. With a striking regularity since the middle of the last century, each time an aspect of the old Europe has changed -- & it was always because we wanted or allowed it -- , France has been the first to suffer.

In the Orient above all, where we used to occupy a privileged place without cost, it was wise not to meddle in anything or to limit the damage to the smallest possible area. The Turks will possess only a few provinces in Asia Minor. Our influence there will not extend further than a weak zone; we will have little profit [117] & many charges.

What will the World gain there ? At this dangerous point of contact of Europe with Asia, the void will perhaps call in other conquerors. Well, people will miss those whom the centuries had tamed.

CHAPTER 10 -- Position of France [118]

After having had nearly 25 allies & partners during the war, France found only Belgium to go with her to Frankfurt in April 1920 & she found no-one to support or even to approve her action in Poland 4 months later: if a catastrophe had come about in Warsaw, our isolation would have been complete. A sudden change of the wind in our favor came about only after the rescue of Poland.

That experience must serve to guide our foreign policy.

Just as we have still to maintain an army & to dedicate immense sums to our national defense, we must seek guarantees & political securities externally. Victors over Germany -- with the advantages & superiorities which the victory supplies -- , we are in a situation which nonetheless does not differ essentially from that in which we found ourselves after 1871. Well, 21 years elapsed before we might have a military agreement with Russia which was even so rather incomplete, rather vague. It had needed 12 years more before we reconciled with England [119] & the reconciliation was not finished in 1914, since there was no Franco-British alliance in proper order. In the new Europe -- a shattered Europe -- , the search for alliances will not be less arduous: perhaps it will be rather more so.

Our policy remains overshadowed & our route remains laid out by the German question. If we except Belgium, the German question does not pose itself for anyone else as it does for us. In 1871, the creation of the German Empire had not disturbed, let alone shocked, any of the European powers. England, through a tragic mistake, had seen in it a pledge of continental balance & reasons to rejoice: how does anyone wish that she may take alarm today, when Germany is defeated & when all precautions have been taken so that she may not again be able to become at rival at sea for a long time ? We shall have as allies only peoples who will sense like us the need to protect themselves against a possible re-awakening of the German Empire & who feel strong enough to expose themselves to a conflict with it.

That is not all. We shall have to insure ourselves against a Russo-German coalition -- uncertain no doubt, but which it will be wiser to treat as probable -- , adding a heap of difficulties in finding partners who may consent to running this double risk. The example of August 1920 shows us that Poland, attacked by Russia with a hostile Germany at her back, found no co-operation among her neighbours. We had to come to her aid: it is the very model of an alliance which it is necessary to keep at arm's length. It would be exactly the same as that, if Poland was one day attacked by the Germans, with Russia being ready to take advantage of her disaster & to stab her in the back.

The course of Germany is fully indicated: it is in the East that she will begin her liberation & her revenge. If we do not step in deliberately the day when she tries to reconstruct her eastern frontier, if we repeat the baneful abstention of Sadowa, then 1 year, 10 years or 20 years later, the danger will be at our door. But in the event of a second Sadowa,

above all if the occasion chosen by Germany is favorable & if the diplomatic preparation of the move has been skillful, we will have to resign ourselves to acting alone -- or almost alone -- & even perhaps to being blamed.

That isolation & that blame are pointed out by the guarantee agreement which was added to the Treaty of Versailles & which moreover has not been ratified either by the USA or by England. [120] That guarantee is promised to us in the event of an "unprovoked attack" & not in any another, ie it assumes a direct attack, launched particularly against France. Even then -- at least if the evidence might not be as shocking as in 1914 -- , our guarantors would first want an inquiry -- debates in their legislatures -- before coming to our rescue. That is to say that a well-contrived attack through an Ems telegram would not open for us any right to that very conditional guarantee. As for an indirect attack, that whose victim would be a country friendly & treaty-bound to us -- let us think always of Poland, so unprotected, so exposed -- , as for an annexation, even without violence -- like that of Austria -- , which would dangerously increase the territory & the forces of Germany: all those cases, whose repercussions we would have to put up with if we remained inactive, would be contained in the category of those where by our intervention we would be considered as the aggressors. It would remain for us only to resign ourselves fearlessly to the inevitable by explaining to the World that to spare it a 1914, it is necessary not to repeat the mistake of 1866.

The future difficulties, such as they take form already, will have a double nature. First, they will increase in seriousness. At the start, the danger will be seen only by very experienced eyes & by very insightful people: the masses will remain unconscious of them & governments will be tempted to deny them. Second, these difficulties will be above all on land & on the continent. There is no longer any serious maritime competition for the British Empire in European waters & England will therefore be inclined to lose interest in conflicts which may arise, insofar as no accident occurs which affects the straits & Constantinople.

We still live with the idea that the war-time alliances will carry on. That would be desirable, but extremely unnatural. A coalition -- & above all so widespread a coalition -- cannot survive the conditions which created it: so many peoples cannot retain the same point of view, have only a sole interest. That of France is to be paid by Germany & to be secure with respect to Germany. Alliances with countries which do not have the same reasons as us for considering the German problem as the principal problem, alliances which would lead us to renounce part of our rights would be very cumbersome: they would constitute for us a servitude [121] or rather they would function only with continual frictions.

That is not all. We need allies who see German affairs with the same eyes as us, but we also have to manage it so that our alliances may not be such that they furnish Germany herself with allies. We have already shown -- not to worry about repetitions or over-emphasis -- that our Polish option increases the danger of a Russo-German connection: that risk can **only** be multiplied elsewhere.

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What may arise one day is a gang of losers & malcontents, much more active, much easier to put together than one of winners & profit-makers. It is important to bear in mind that if the war of 1914 was so prolonged -- if the victory was so difficult, so costly, so slow -- it was because the policy of the Alliance was impotent to break up the enemy bloc otherwise than by warfare. The first thing to avoid therefore is reconstitution of that bloc, while on the other hand it is important not to alienate from us the states which played on the same stage as us & which had fewer bills to collect from Germany than from the Hungarians or the Bulgarians: a tough task.

That we might be able to have all states with us, that is definitely a phantasy; it is still more phantastic that we will reconcile them all with their old adversaries & that France will exercise a paternal protection over the family of medium & small states. Our expedient will be to try sets of reconciliations, the essential being to forestall a Central European bloc, whose leadership would still belong to Germany, & to cut the Berlin-Vienna-Budapest-Sofia line. There is no doubt that if during the war Bulgaria could have been detached from the opposing coalition, that defection would have been more useful to us than the Romanian alliance & it would have been profitable for Romania herself. In parallel cases, it is necessary to know how to choose. It is thus that a neutral Czechoslovakia -- even hostile, if that was possible -- would still be preferable to a German-Hungarian organisation of Central Europe.

These choices will be delicate: they will not have to be made carelessly. It will be better to take the initiative than to let them happen. We shall not get Hungary -- to take another example -- to be reconciled equally with the 3 countries to which she had to cede territories: her own interest advises her not to unite for ever these 3 neighbours in the same distrust & in the same hostility & to reconcile herself with one group or with another. Whatever may be the sympathies & whatever may be the resentments which one could have, it is clear to cold reason that an alliance of the Hungarians, the Romanians [122] & the Bulgarians, if it could be formed under our auspices, would constitute a real barrier, superior -- because it would be better grouped & better placed -- to that which seems to have been constructed by the treaties & whose least defect is to be based on scattered points without advantages against an opposing bloc having at its command, as in 1914, the well-known "internal lines".

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We have cast only some glimpses over the question of alliances: it is necessary to take matters up again from the beginning.

Germany first. We must take account of her persistent ill-will, probably magnified insofar as she will retrieve her losses & will grow stronger. We will have to keep an eye on her, remain on guard against her dodges & her offensive tricks, be ready at the very least to compel her to fulfil her essential undertakings. This task will require sustained attention & lengthy efforts. In sum, our foreign policy will remain overshadowed by the German problem.

It had to turn out so from the moment we were left neighbours of a united Germany, on which we exert no influence, on which we have leverage only on one side & through a temporary occupation, a Germany finally -- it is the refrain of this book -- which counts 20 M more inhabitants than us.

The surveillance of Germany, the partial -- not even complete -- execution of the Treaty of Versailles will absorb nearly all our activity & our forces during the years to come. With a united Germany -- with a big Germany --, not only is a genuine reconciliation excluded, but even a relaxation of tension, at least while we may not renounce our elementary claims, including that of our security. It is useless to dwell upon that hypothesis: it is even dangerous to think about it.

The French negotiators of the Treaty of Versailles were consistent with themselves when after having preserved German unity, they sought a guarantee against the danger which persisted & anticipated the event of a new attack. That guarantee, as we have just pointed out, Mr Clemenceau believed he had found in the USA & in England. To obtain it, he had made important concessions to the American & English points of view. [123] In any case, we could count -- with more or fewer difficulties & delays -- on the help of the Anglo-Saxon powers, if we were attacked in the same way & in the same conditions as in 1914 & under the assumption that history might always be similar to itself. All the same, there is some distance between this "CASVS FOEDERIS", foreseen as a sudden & extremely urgent peril, & a close & permanent alliance which would have worked in everyday life for the complete application of the treaty. Such an alliance assumes that the USA & Great Britain would continue to have the same ideas as us about Germany, to regard the German problem as the essential problem & not to have interests & worries different from those of France, which is above all a continental & European power.

Little time was needed for America to come back to that purely American policy from which a threat which had ended by **getting close enough to smell** was alone capable of tearing her away. In the most favorable outcome, the USA, having done with Wilsonism, will leave us free in our movements & will give us their moral approval each time we practise a policy of conservatism & order. If they break with the ideas of President Wilson, it is because the League of Nations has made them afraid of being caught up despite themselves in the complications of Europe. It would therefore be unwise to count on active help on their part.

As for England, her policy is that of the British Empire. The very opportunities which she encountered in the peace to enlarge her imperial program inordinately have inclined her to consider European affairs only in relation to the entire World. We, for our part, are obliged to subordinate everything to the accounts we have to settle with Germany. For England, those accounts are settled: her preoccupations go elsewhere. We would deceive ourselves if we asked her to rank the questions in the same order of importance as we do.

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There is no Franco-British alliance. There has no longer been one since the undertakings of the Pact of London -- that of September 1914 -- were fulfilled by the jointly-won victory & since the Treaty of Versailles was signed. At most, there exists the joint liability which the treaty created among the signatories, who are bound to respect it, which does not mean that they may always interpret it in the same way. [124]

The attempts which have been made to involve Great Britain in a positive & definite agreement have failed up to the present. The British government has politely declined the proposal to enter an alliance with France & Belgium & it has been praised by a considerable part of the English press for having refused "very properly". All it has been able to do is offer a guarantee for 5 years to Belgium, ie a kind of return to the system of Belgian neutrality for an extremely short time.

How would we be surprised at this? At the very moment before 1914, an explicit alliance was repugnant to England: we have never succeeded in going beyond a "cordial understanding". Germany having been defeated, England again aims at disengaging herself from the affairs of the Continent, at watching & superintending them from above without getting deeply mixed up with them. One is perhaps wrong to speak of a return to splendid isolation: it is not the principle itself of alliances which England rejects; it is land alliances, if we can so name them. All her preoccupations lead to the sea. The statutes of the League of Nations can be a good pretext for her to hide herself away from entreaties, but despite the Pact, she does not hesitate to contract particular undertakings when it is a matter of maritime or colonial interests: with Portugal & with Japan, she has already renewed agreements which have become traditional; Greece is the pawn which she pushes in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It is through colonial & maritime interests that we have the most chances of coming to terms with the English: on one condition, all the same, that we might keep our place & our part in the East, that we may be strong there, that we do not appear there as poor relations. It will be necessary not to allow ourselves to be evicted or led into costly barter & it will no more be necessary -- when everything tells us to concentrate ourselves -- that as journeyman to England we might spread ourselves & might be sent to mount guard & make war in distant places where before the great demolitions a French soldier had never appeared & had no need to appear.

France must maintain a powerful army at great expense, because with regard to Germany she does not have the necessary safeguards. She is alone among the countries of the Alliance in possessing a serious military organisation which it will never be permissible to consider as a luxury. For those who are eager to hand over to us the burden of conscription, the temptation is great to draw on that supply, to load us with the most thankless fatigues, to confer on us the mandate of receiving blows & of reaping grudges for causes which have only a distant relationship with our own. [125] Policemen for the benefit of others, we have next to defend ourselves against accusations of imperialism & militarism from intolerable hypocrites. That cannot last. Our army is a national resource which we must not fritter away & if we lend it out we must lend it only to major interests, ie only for our own interests. #

England has numerous worries & numerous tasks at home & she has no army. She has put an end to conscription, a measure required by circumstances & adopted late in the war, which is repugnant to her customs. With respect to the Germans & the Russians, she sets aside, rejects or puts off for later forceful solutions. In Asia Minor, she gladly takes France -- or in her absence, Greece -- as her soldier. The fact is that England does not have too many of her forces for herself, for Egypt, for India, for Mesopotamia, for Ireland: when the British government recommends or imposes cautious steps & conciliation with Germany or with the USSR, there you see again is what she is thinking of.

At the end of July 1920, a report was distributed in the British parliament from Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson, whose conclusion is enlightening :

There is one hard lesson to draw from the story of our campaign in Northern Russia. It begins with the landing of 150 marines at Murmansk in April 1918 : they were followed by 368 soldiers at the end of May & in their turn on 23 June by 600 foot-soldiers & machine-gunners. Starting from that date, requests for re-inforcements were continuous & our obligations grew progressively without being able to put an end to it. I believe the British contingent reached 18 400 in number. The Mesopotamian campaign began in the same way with the dispatch of 2 brigades & ended by absorbing nearly 900 K men. The 6 divisions with which we entered the war in France & Belgium reached 63 before we had victory. The conclusion is easy to draw: people say that when a military contingent finds itself engaged in operations, it is almost impossible for it to limit the extent of its obligations. *In the chaotic state in which the World finds itself today, it would not be wise to lose sight of that principle, as we can expect to receive requests for troops -- if only 2 or 3 companies -- [126] in all corners of the continent & it will be difficult sometimes not to give in.* Let us today refuse insistently to accede to any request of that kind which does not come from part of the British Empire without first examining carefully the obligations which would eventually be implied by such a request.

In that way, the highest military authority of the United Kingdom gives a clear idea of the chaos in Europe & the embarrassments of the British Empire. The forces of the British Empire are absorbed by too widespread & too urgent troubles & nothing remains for it to play a role on the continent. Again, it could only play a role & not have an effect: Field Marshall Wilson knows well that it would be harmful to send "1 or 2 companies" into many places at the same time. He knows well that he has asked us to replace English soldiers with our own soldiers in the countries subject to plebiscite. He fears expeditions which begin with several small parties & which end with army regiments. He establishes at bottom -- & it is what is to be read throughout the lines of his report -- that England, if she had no other reasons to buy out her interest there, would be excluded from continental affairs by the excess of her own burdens. The British Empire has real embarrassments which are the pay-back for her intemperate acquisitions. It suffers also for its own part -- & perhaps without taking it into account -- from having spared what should have been destroyed & destroyed what would have been better kept. England's embarrassments oddly stultify her policy: they are like a mortgage for her. To a certain extent, they lessen the value of her alliance. If England has some squadrons which we don't have, we have an army which she has no more. That comparison re-establishes equality: thereby also it makes us free. #

A soldier like Field Marshall Wilson does not close his eyes to this evidence: Europe is in "chaos" & chaos is instability & instability is also movement. There are growing chances that the face which the Treaty of Versailles had believed it gave to Europe may be temporary. It is events themselves which will undoubtedly oblige us to take up again an imperfect & unbalanced piece of work. Well, ought France, which has the means to be effective on the continent, to subordinate her foreign policy to that of England, which by her own admission does not have those means & behaves accordingly each time she ends up in inaction ? [127]

France not only retains the means to be effective -- for how much longer ? -- she has the experience of European affairs & she possesses ideas & effectual solutions. Why would she not be listened to before others ? Why would not the points of view which prevail be her own ? And why would she not act independently when it is so needed ?

With an appropriate instinct, Field Marshall Wilson foresaw that the disturbance which has already been signaled in Poland would have successors. Many things will need to be taken up again, if one doesn't want them to set in again all by themselves. Since the Treaty of Versailles finished nothing, "You have to finish what you began", as that Empress used to say in the olden days. Well, it will be necessary to have what the authors of the peace lacked: methods, guiding ideas. The coming tumults will take it upon themselves to show that nothing will be done as long as Germany keeps that political power which gives rise to all other power & which despite prohibitions will return her military power to her sooner or later.

But in the midst of these European storms, Germany herself would undoubtedly not escape shocks & crises. It is there that French policy will have to be able to assist & guide events without shackles. Her doctrine based on experience -- & without a doctrine one has no policy -- is that there is neither rest nor security in Europe if Germany remains strong & nothing will prevent her returning to strength as long as she remains united & centralised. That is what the greatest journal of financiers, liberals & Germany centralisers, the *Frankfurt Gazette*, acknowledges, when it writes of the federal projects of Dr Heim, the leader of the Bavarian Popular Party: "A federal Germany following the recipe of Heim would certainly be a success in France, because it would be an impotent Germany". It is admirably stated. We have only to avoid deviating from there & we have what it needs -- means & ideas -- to recall allies & enemies to that essential point of view throughout the coming events. [128]

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Who will those allies be ? How will we find them ? It is not a matter of begging for alliances. One gets them through the force & the prestige which one possesses, through the services which one can render. One also gets them through agreement of interests & the most ambitious systems are not the most solid. "PEDETEMPTIM" is the motto of the strong & of the wise: rod by rod we will put together the FASCIS. #

Since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles -- one can even say since the Armistice -- the wartime union has reformed itself -- then only for a few hours -- only through the provocations & blunders of Germany. How can one be astonished at that, when one is acquainted with the history of the Supreme Command, when one knows what peril was needed on 23 March 1918 for that Command to be given to Field Marshall Foch? The union today is no more than a union of circumstance: it is of short duration. Once the incident which made it revive has passed, each returns to his own affairs & to his own ideas; the memories of the war slip away, they enter historical museums.

Only Belgium & France remain permanently mustered facing the Rhine due to the same worry about security, due to the same instinct for self-preservation. The Franco-Belgian alliance is the starting-point, the solid base around which other alliances will be able to crystallise themselves. To tie the knot, it will still need long months & passage through the stage of a military agreement. It will not be done all alone & it needed men on both sides to take the initiative in it. It flagged for a moment because of the question of Luxembourg, as if that question had to be resolved by the alliance, whereas the alliance depended on it. Time was lost in seeking a combination of England, France & Belgium which England did not want & as if the best way of interesting the British government was not to present her with the matter all done. Finally in Belgium itself, there were resisting forces, partisan oppositions. All of it will be able to show itself again elsewhere. All of it demonstrates that in the simplest clearest cases between two peoples who have undergone the same invasion & while their memories are fresh, agreement & collaboration still meet obstacles.

Above all, countries find alliances against someone or against something. That with Belgium grounds itself upon an identity of interests & of views in face of the German danger. Other shared dangers will bring us other associates. [129] Those dangers are not only political & military: there are also those which society runs.

Well, without even thinking as much France has set herself up in Europe at the head of the resistance: she has become the pre-eminent country of order, the very opposite of Bolshevism & of anarchy. For a long time, but above all since Warsaw, we have ceased to keep a revolution shop. We no longer beguile men of the Left, while Conservatives all over the World turn their eyes towards us. What is our revolution of 1789 when set against that of Moscow? Today, progressive ideas are those socialist ideas which France does not want at any price, which she is even unable to want: everything forbids it to her, her character, her history, her habits, her social structure.

In that case, it remains to us only to advance along the path where the force of events has sent us, where without their knowledge she has sent men who would not suspect that they were born for a counter-revolution. Since old monarchical governments have fallen to give place to disorder, to chaos, to a dark denial, since that turning backwards without precedent in its violence & speed, the intellectual, moral & political position of the French people has changed in every way. Through the sole fact that she remained such as she was & that she continued to live

in the same conditions, France has become reactionary & she has naturally gone in the direction where she had been carried. She does not always have clear idea of it & one of the most beautiful lines in our language has put it: "Rarely does a soul dare to be what it is".

Will we dare to be what we are ? Since France has instinctively shown her repulsion from the revolutionary spirit as it has appeared in the 20th Century under blatantly Asiatic forms, for the whole World -- whatever you do, whatever you say -- , France is the country of the counter-revolution. It is in that way evident & certain that the reactionary label has been applied to us everywhere. In the present state of the World, we have only to keep it & it will be worth numerous sympathies for us, as no-one bears it with that renown, with that prestige. Our moral face is renewed by it.

And then, there is a growing need for order which no other country is capable of satisfying. We have a role to take up: it is even the sole role which is left for us to take up. If we were to fall back into the radicalism of old, steeped in concessions to revolutionary ideas, we would lose all reason for existing. We would be laid open to sitting down between counter-revolution & revolution without glory & without profit. As for counter-revolution, we would leave its benefit to others; as for revolution, [130] from now on it is not from France that devotees will be tempted to take their model: it is at the school of Moscow.

Very slowly, at the end of a half-century, the 3rd Republic has undergone the evolution which the 2nd had run through in several months: nothing resembled the Republic of 1848 as little as that of 1849. The same difference is to be found between the Republic as we see it in 1920 & that which we knew in 1914 & even during the war. To a very large extent, today as 72 years ago, it is the contrast between the close & natural stability of the French nation & the anarchic convulsions of other parts of Europe, which has pushed the country & the system of government in a conservative direction, which has oriented them towards a conservative policy at home, as it has abroad. Add to the lessons of the war, to the disastrous experience of Russia, that revolutionary ideas have grown old, that they have lost the attractiveness & the power which they still had in 1849.

With more good fortune, surrounded by an atmosphere infinitely more favorable, Mr Millerand looks a bit like **the Bastide** of that republican period, the wise Bastide whom his enemies called the "extinguisher" because he stopped the fire of revolutions in Europe. The circumstances are more favorable than then for a policy of great breadth -- a policy national & counter-revolutionary at the same time -- in the service of which France will put her recovered strength & enlarged prestige.

There is no other way out of the innumerable difficulties which the peace has bequeathed us. We wish only for the 3rd Republic, in the new path to which events have introduced it, not to end up with its opposite, as the 2nd had ended.

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