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The BRITISH EMPIRE Under Fire

James Frederick Green

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THE BRITISH EMPIRE UNDER FIRE

by
JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

MAPS AND CHARTS BY
BUNJI TAGAWA

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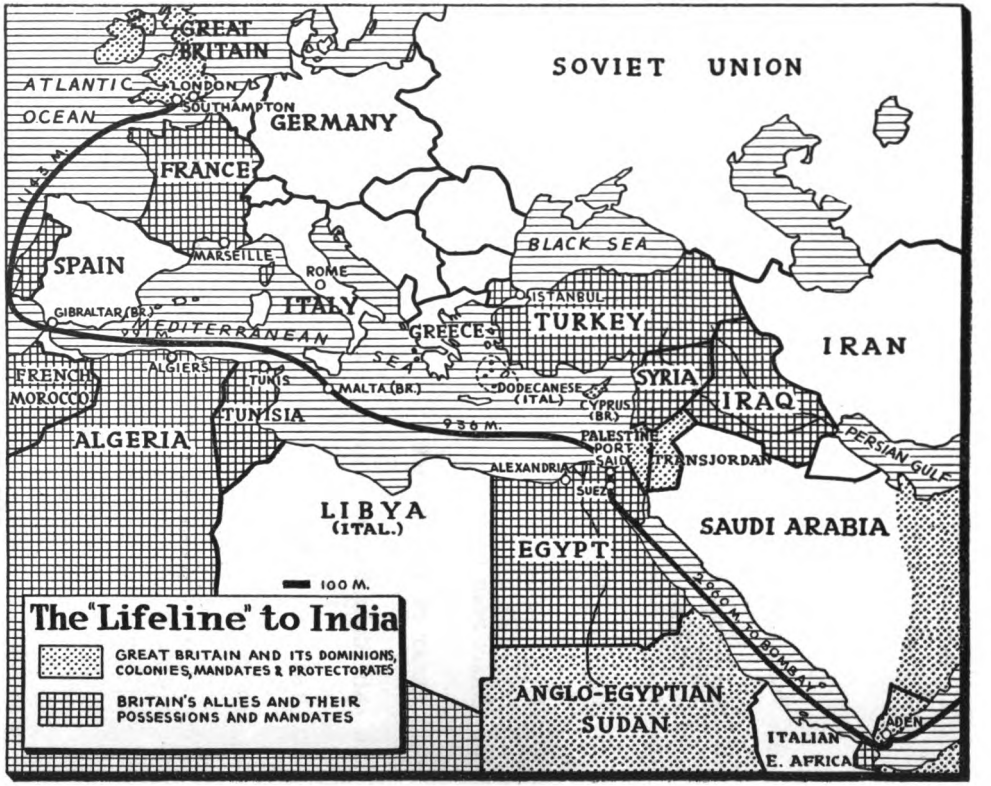

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I. "God Save Our Gracious King"

At about eleven o'clock on the morning of September 3, 1939, Mr. R. Dunbar left the Foreign Office in London in an official limousine. Mr. Dunbar was one of those typical civil servants, head of the Treaty Section in fact, whom few Londoners know or recognize on the street. Yet Mr. Dunbar was bearing a message which affected the lives of all Londoners, and the rest of the world too, more than any other single document in twenty years. Mr. Dunbar was journeying to the German Embassy. There, at about 11:20 o'clock, he handed his message to the Chargé d'Affaires, Dr. Theodore Kordt. The document contained a declaration of war.

Mr. Dunbar Starts Something

Mr. Dunbar's piece of paper was only one of the many documents which were necessary to put the British Empire at war with Germany. On Friday, September 1, the British Parliament had passed a large number of bills giving the government emergency powers of every description and granting the Viceroy of India similar wartime authority. On September 2, King George VI had signed orders which completed the mobilization of Britain's armed forces.

But even after Mr. Dunbar had fulfilled his unpleasant task, the British Empire was not entirely at war. Later in the day, the governments of Australia and New Zealand advised the King to declare war on their behalf. Two days afterward the South African government gave His Majesty similar advice. And on September 8 the Canadian government followed suit. Only Eire, which had announced its neutrality even before Great Britain went to war, remained aloof.

This large pile of documents, all properly signed by King George VI or by some of His Majesty's Ministers, is symbolical of the British Empire today. The procedure for arranging

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some of them had to be invented then and there, for the overseas Dominions had merely cabled their willingness to fight. No paper constitution existed, as in the United States, to state the source of authority or outline the division of powers. There was only a thousand years of customs and conventions, statutes and court rulings, orders-in-council and administrative regulations to guide His Majesty's Ministers in their task. While steel-helmeted Air Raid Precautions ("A.R.P.") workers were preparing bombproof shelters, filling sandbags and distributing gas masks, the King's heralds, garbed in scarlet medieval tunics and equipped with silver trumpets, formally read off the royal proclamations in the chief cities of the realm.

One-Fourth of the World

"George, R. I." By the time this austere signature had been affixed to the large pile of documents, one-fourth of the land area of the world was belligerent territory and one-fourth of the people of the world were at war with Germany. In addition, a considerable portion of the seven seas was, in fact but not in law, under British control. Thus while this conflict may look like just a *European* war, it is most certainly a *world* war. On every continent, British possessions are at war. On every sea lane, British bases and islands are at war. One out of every four human beings on this planet is at war against a common foe.

At no other time in history has a king or emperor had so many subjects supporting his cause as the British King-Emperor has today. Anglo-Saxons and Celts in the United Kingdom, Bantu in Africa, Hindus and Moslems in India, Maoris in Australia, Malayans at Singapore—500,000,000 people of all races and religions, of all colors and cultures.

But even the King-Emperor cannot by himself order all these millions of people to war. In the case of the United Kingdom, India and the colonies, he acts on the advice of his

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Ministers in the United Kingdom, who in turn are responsible to Parliament. In the case of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, he acts on the advice of other Ministers, who are likewise responsible to their respective Parliaments. As we shall soon see, this system is so complicated and so flexible that it almost defies description.

Winner Take All?

Since this is a world war, it is being fought for very large stakes. The British Empire is fighting for its life, just as it did in 1914-18. His Majesty's various governments are determined to preserve the Empire, its possessions and its political system, against any challenge. Their enemy, Germany, is equally determined to smash the Empire once and for all. As its Fuehrer declared on January 31, 1940, "This is a social war between nations, in which the have-nots are fighting the haves for a new division of the world."

Since to reduce anything so vast as the British Empire to the 96 pages of a Headline Book is obviously impossible, we shall try merely to pick out some of the main developments in the history of the Empire and to picture the Empire under fire on military, economic and political fronts.

Humpty Dumpty's Portmanteau

But, before proceeding, just a word about definitions. Each of the two words "Empire" and "Commonwealth" was properly described by Humpty Dumpty when he remarked to Alice: "You see it's like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word." The older word "Empire" originally referred to all of His Majesty's possessions, regardless of their political status. "Commonwealth," on the other hand, became popular during the World War as a name for the newer association of self-governing countries.

Today there is a tendency to make a distinction between

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the "British Empire," as indicating the United Kingdom and its non-self-governing possessions, and the "British Commonwealth," as suggesting the United Kingdom and the self-governing Dominions. But you will find the two expressions constantly interchanged in both official and unofficial writings.

All contemporary writers, including this one, follow Humpty Dumpty. "When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." In general, however, we shall use "Empire" when referring to the geographic or historical unity of Britain's possessions and "Commonwealth" when stressing present political developments.

II. Britannia Rules the Waves

The Oxford dictionary gives two definitions for the word *insular*. The first meaning is "of or pertaining to an island; inhabiting or situated on an island." The second meaning is "having the characteristic traits of islanders; *esp.* isolated; self-contained; narrow or prejudiced in feelings, ideas, or manners." We shall use both meanings, of course, in referring to Great Britain.

1. THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING INSULAR

In making any analysis, no matter how brief, of Britain's strength in past centuries and its conquest of a vast empire, you have to begin with the elementary facts of geography and stress the many advantages of being insular.

In the first place, the British have been remarkably safe from invasion. Perhaps more than any other people in the modern world except the Japanese (who are also insular in both senses of the word), the British have escaped the incessant boundary

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disputes, the constant fear of invasion and the occasional humiliation of being conquered that have been the normal experiences of many continental countries.

In their early history, of course, the inhabitants of the British Isles did often suffer these fates. But from 1066 to our own day the British, for the most part, have lived alone and liked it.

There are naturally many exceptions to this important generalization. The English King, for example, held territories in France until driven out by Joan of Arc. In the eighteenth century (until the accession of Queen Victoria, in fact) the British monarch was also King of Hanover, a German principality.

On one or two occasions, also, a foreign foe came within striking distance of the British Isles. But for more than eight hundred years the English could quite truthfully refer to their island as did Shakespeare:

> "This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of a wall
> Or as a moat defensive to a house,
> Against the envy of less happier lands...."

Now it is obvious that the insularity of contemporary England has been challenged by the airplane. The Channel can no longer serve as a very successful "moat defensive to a house" if it can be crossed in only a few minutes. True, the Germans in the World War were not able to do more than harass the British by their occasional Zeppelin and airplane raids, which resulted in relatively little damage to life and property. They were as powerless as the Spanish, Dutch and French before them to invade the British Isles. Thanks to progress in military aviation, however, mass air attacks across the Channel are now

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entirely feasible, although invasion by infantry troops is still exceedingly difficult. The bombing plane has made Great Britain once more a part of the Continent.

Britain the Balancer

Before the days of the airplane, however, insularity was the basic element in Britain's foreign policy. To derive the full benefit from their geographic position, the British developed a policy which they pursued with vigor and skill for centuries.

The principal objective of this policy was the security of the Lowlands (Belgium and the Netherlands); its method was the balance of power. After the fifteenth century, when the British were forced to withdraw from their possessions in France, they concentrated on keeping the Lowlands out of the hands of any Great Power ambitious to conquer Britain. The Channel ports, in other words, were the only springboard from which hostile ships could launch a surprise attack. So long as the Lowlands were weak and neutral, the Channel ports were safe.

The balance of power policy, which sounds mysterious and complicated, was simply the obvious method by which Britain kept the Lowlands out of enemy hands. Whenever one power on the Continent grew strong enough to threaten an invasion of the Lowlands, Britain threw its diplomatic weight on the side of the weaker powers. The balance of power between the strong power and the weaker powers was thus equalized, so that the former hesitated to start the invasion. Great Britain, you notice, was the balancer.

And so, being the balancer, Britain could choose its own time and methods for either diplomatic or military action. The balance of power as a diplomatic policy succeeded so long as the potential enemy did not dare to challenge it; it failed when he took the risk and resorted to war. But even in war Britain was free to fight on its own terms, which usually called for gold and ships. In other words, Great Britain was free to finance its

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allies on the Continent and to blockade its enemy until the balance was restored and the Lowlands released from the danger of invasion.

Thus Britain sought in peace and in war to keep the Lowlands out of the hands of its enemies—Spain, the Hapsburgs, Louis XIV, Napoleon, William II and Adolf Hitler.

Nothing Succeeds Like Success

Nothing succeeds like success. By keeping their islands secure from invasion, the British were able to devote their attention to other and more profitable matters. To begin with, they did not have to depend, like the Continental countries, upon a large standing army for their security. They thus avoided both the economic burden and the political dangers of militarism.

As a direct result of their security, the British were able to take control of the seas, to explore and conquer territories overseas and to add wealth to the homeland. From the days of the Queen Elizabeth of the sixteenth century to the days of the new Queen Elizabeth in the twentieth, the British have been free to go and come as they pleased. "With Freedom's lion-banner, Britannia rules the waves" is more than a bit of patriotic verse; it is one of the central facts of modern history.

The Characteristics of Islanders

One effect of Britain's insularity, in the Oxford dictionary's first sense of the word, has been its insularity in the second sense. In other words, because they have lived on an island the British have often been "narrow or prejudiced in feelings," etc. True, British statesmen have often been well-informed about Continental affairs, and well-to-do and educated Britishers have traveled and studied in Europe. The British, however, speak of "going abroad" when they cross the Channel. We sometimes forget, too, that "splendid isolation" is a British, not an American, phrase.

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Another direct and very significant result of island security was the opportunity it offered for political development. For one thing, the mere fact that they were situated on an island gave the British a sense of national unity which was only achieved much later in other countries. True, the English and Scots quarreled and fought for centuries, but eventually (1707) they were united. There was also civil strife in England, but only on relatively rare occasions after the Tudors had centralized authority in the monarchy.

With the exception of the mid-seventeenth century, with its interlude of the Cromwellian republic, Britain's political evolution has been achieved without violence. Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights of 1688, the electoral reforms of 1832 and afterwards, the restriction of the veto power of the House of Lords in 1911—all these represent bloodless revolutions in Great Britain's progress toward self-government.

One aspect of this development is particularly worth noting because of its relevance in the twentieth century. Being secure from invasion and enjoying an unusual degree of self-government (in comparison with many other European countries, at least), the British were able to develop an independent political philosophy. They were able, moreover, to receive new ideas from the Continent, to digest them slowly and to work them into their own traditions, without ever being swept to extremes.

This is partly the reason for Britain's reputation as a "conservative" country. Though the French Revolution was feared and abhorred by the ruling class in London, it had its effect upon British life nevertheless. Britain adapted the principles of individualism and political freedom to its own system, without suffering the violence of revolution and counterrevolution. Even the Communist philosophy, which Karl Marx developed during his seventeen years of study in the British Museum, was translated by the British Fabian Society into a typically English slogan, "The inevitability of gradualness," and by the

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Labor Party into a typically English program of compromise. It is highly significant that Liberalism originated, as both theory and practice, in Great Britain. Even to the present time, the British have avoided the worst extremes of either Right or Left.

2. ECONOMIC GOOD FORTUNE

If there are certain obvious advantages to inhabiting an island, there are even greater advantages to inhabiting one that is in the center of important sea routes and possesses valuable mineral resources. One glance at a map is enough to show the advantages. The British Isles, with their many fine harbors, touch the main route from the Europe that borders on the Baltic Sea and the North Sea to the Europe that borders on the Mediterranean. Equally important, they lie athwart the shortest route to North America.

It was therefore almost inevitable that Britain should get a lion's share of the commerce that developed in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As the Europeans increased their demand for non-European products—such as spices, saltpeter, sugar, indigo, certain drugs, furs, tobacco, dyestuffs and rum—the British took a lead both in occupying territory where these products existed and in buying and importing the products themselves. The economic history of the seventeenth century can be written around the English East India Company, a trading association which operated under royal charter and enjoyed a monopoly position in the exploitation of India and the Orient. And the more the British went overseas to establish new colonies and to open up new markets, the more demand there was for the products of British farms and factories.

Britain paid for its imports with exports not only of pottery, metalware, textiles and other manufactures, and gold and silver bullion, but also of wheat and other agricultural products. As

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the trade expanded, the shipping, banking and insurance expanded, always increasing London's position as a commercial and financial capital.

Revolution on Wheels

As if it were not enough to take the lead in the commercial revolution that accompanied the Renaissance, the British also had a headstart in the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Known for its tin mines even in the days of the Roman Empire, Britain was later able to capitalize on its other mineral resources—coal and iron ore.

The modern industrial age began with the invention of the steam engine in 1751—by a Scotsman, significantly enough. And steam engines required coal, with which Great Britain was more than adequately endowed. Thanks to the steam engine, the textile industry—cotton, wool, linen and silk—became more important than ever before. Even Britain's damp climate proved to be of value in the days before "air-conditioning," for the humid air diminished the amount of flying lint in the cotton factories. For at least 150 years, Great Britain led the world in textiles, importing the raw materials and exporting every conceivable kind of cloth to the far corners of the earth.

Even more important, however, Britain took the lead in the production of iron and steel—the real basis of the industrial revolution. It was blessed not only with coal but with large quantities of iron ore. In fact, during the late eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth century, "Great Britain" was almost synonymous with "industrial revolution." The British experienced all the benefits of industrialization and all of its cruel hardships and social demoralization. As leader of the industrial revolution, in other words, Britain was first in steel production and first in slum production, too.

The most significant result of this commercial and industrial

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supremacy, at least for our purposes in analyzing the Empire, was the development of Britain's capital resources. To promote their colonial enterprises, to finance the sale of their manufactures and to secure adequate sources of raw materials, the British granted credits in every direction. Railways in North America, sugar plantations in the West Indies, oil wells in Iran and Iraq, diamond mines in Africa, utilities in India, China and Egypt—all of these and thousands more were financed by the savings of Britishers, to bring in interest and dividends for generation after generation. The sun never sets on the pound sterling.

3. THE RESULTS OF INSULARITY AND WEALTH

All of these geographic, economic and political factors—and we have selected only the most striking ones—contributed to the prestige and power of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. In fact, the nineteenth century was truly a British century, the period of the *Pax Britannica*, or British peace. Just as all the western world had once been subdued under a *Pax Romana*, or Roman peace, so the entire world lived in respect or fear of British might. From 1815 to 1914 there was not a single world war. Local wars, revolutions, diplomatic crises—yes. But no conflict that could shatter the security of every continent and destroy ships on every sea. In retrospect, at least, the nineteenth century looks incredibly stable and prosperous.

There are two elements in this *Pax Britannica* worth underlining, if only because they are so conspicuous by their absence today. In the first place, the *Pax Britannica* rested upon the British navy. From 1815 to 1914, only one power—Germany—dared to challenge British seapower; and Germany began its competition only in the last two of these ten decades. Even the United States, which had fought two wars with Britain before 1815, was content until 1914 to leave control of the

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seven seas in British hands. The British, on the other hand, were wise enough never to challenge the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which they helped invent and which for them proved (and proves today) a useful guarantee of British possessions in the Western Hemisphere.

In the second place, the *Pax Britannica* rested upon the British economic system. The principles of free trade and *laissez-faire*, essentially English in theory and practice, benefited both the British Empire and the rest of the world. Whatever may have been the defects of nineteenth century capitalism and imperialism, they produced what was probably the greatest amount of economic progress in the shortest amount of time that the world has ever seen.

So long as there were continents to be opened up, new lands to be staked out, new markets to be filled, this economic expansion could continue. But in 1914 there were "No Trespassing" signs over all of the Near East, Africa and Asia, just as there had been since 1823 in the Western Hemisphere. Young and dynamic countries, anxious for a share in the imperialist game, were challenging British power. They realized that they could gain overseas colonies, naval bases, markets and raw materials only at the expense of Britain's empire, and that they could gain European hegemony—political dominance—only at the expense of Britain's balance of power.

Only Germany, in 1914 and again in 1939, has dared to risk a world war for the sake of smashing the *Pax Britannica.*

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III. The Sun Never Sets . . .

It would be a mistake to reduce the motives for Britain's expansion overseas to any one or two categories. Every emotion which moves the individual human being to action has moved the British to collect colonies. To name only a few—fear and arrogance, greed and altruism, the quest for adventure or religious freedom, love of power and desire for service, worship of pound sterling and worship of the Cross. At any given time, one or another of these motives may have been predominant, but all of them have played a part in the building of the Empire.

1. IMPERIALISM

Imperialism, we must remember, is one of mankind's oldest activities. It represents the outward thrust of a strong, united people against weaker and less advanced neighbors. It represents the desire of a ruler, or ruling class, or a whole people, to expand, to conquer, to make money, to gain power.

In other words, British imperialism in the past four or five centuries has originated out of the normal impulses of human beings and has resulted in all the good and all the evil that accompanies any large-scale human undertaking. For one reason or another, British imperialism has succeeded in defeating every rival—Spanish, Dutch, French, Russian and German—that has challenged its vital interests. It has its enemies and its friends, its victims and its beneficiaries. As one English publicist remarked: "Imperialism resembles opening a window. When you do it, it's fresh air. When the other fellow does it, it's a draught."

Historians like to divide the development of the British Empire into two or three parts. The so-called "First Empire," which included trading posts in the Near East, the Orient, Africa and some West Indian islands, as well as extensive colo-

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nies along the coast of North America, ended with the revolt of the Thirteen Colonies. During the "Second Empire" Britain consolidated and expanded its holdings in Canada, the West Indies, India and the South Pacific and acquired new bases and territories in the Far East and Africa. Many scholars and statesmen describe a "Third Empire," a Commonwealth of self-governing nations, as the outgrowth of the World War.

2. THE FIRST BRITISH EMPIRE

The First Empire was, of course, the direct result of the commercial expansion which we described in Chapter II. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries British merchants were competing with the Spanish, Dutch, Italians and Portuguese for a share of the lucrative trade in new products from overseas. Great Britain was already developing a middle-class businessman who supplanted the feudal baron, desired law and order, opposed a capricious monarchy and extravagant court and favored national unity, a large merchant marine and a strong navy.

The rise of the bourgeoisie in England was closely related to the rise of English outposts on the corner of every continent. The profits of investment and trade led the "capitalists" of the seventeenth century to Virginia and the West Indies, where they developed the production of tobacco, sugar, cotton and rum and later—to maintain their plantations—built up the equally profitable slave trade.

During this period other motives contributed to the building of a North American empire. The religious conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had resulted, in England and on the Continent, in widespread persecution—sometimes of Protestants, sometimes of Catholics—and in the formation of numerous dissenting sects. The Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth in 1620 are merely the most famous of the thousands of individuals who emigrated to the New World in order to

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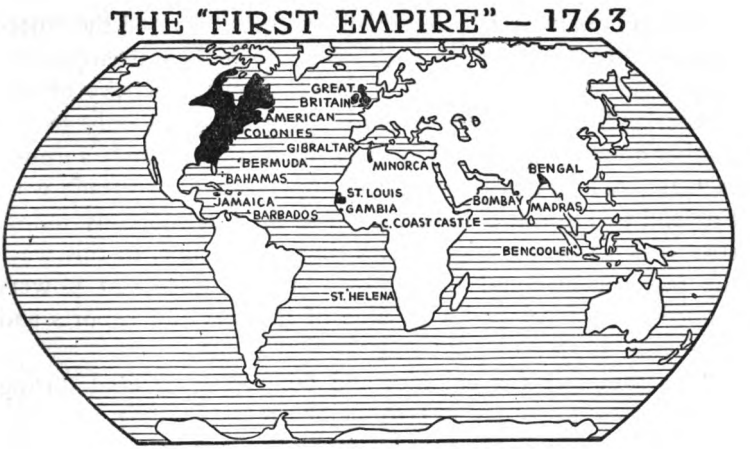

worship as they pleased. At the same time, British farmers, artisans and indentured servants went out to America in hope of finding the economic security that was lacking in the Old World.

These people were interested in more than just the quick profits of the trade in commodities or slaves. They were interested in founding homes and in finding freedom, even at the risk of great hardship. These were the real empire-builders, who established the permanent colonies from which British influence—economic, political, cultural—spread not only across North America but into Australia, New Zealand, Africa and the Far East.

The Mercantilist Theory

As more and more lands were opened up and exploited, the rivalry of the great imperialist powers increased. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were dominated by their struggles to gain hegemony in Europe and to acquire both com-

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merce and colonies. The imperialist powers operated the "mercantilist" theory of economy, under which they attempted to keep their colonies in a strait jacket for the benefit of the motherland. Each colony was to sell its products only to the mother country and purchase only the mother country's manufactures. A French colony, for example, was not to trade with England or English colonies, nor was it to develop any industries which might compete with those of France. In this way, the governments and businessmen of the European powers argued, you developed a balance of imports and exports and kept your supply of gold and silver at home.

This scramble for colonies and commerce resulted during the eighteenth century in two major events. In 1763, after the defeat of France in the Seven Years' War, the British acquired French Canada and eliminated one of their two rivals in North America. In 1775, however, came the blow that was to end the First British Empire—the Declaration of Independence. The withdrawal of the Thirteen Colonies, after six years of war, constituted the greatest loss that the British Empire has ever sustained.

3. THE SECOND BRITISH EMPIRE

The loss of the American colonies did not stop the British for long, however, as they soon became involved in a new struggle with France and eventually with Holland. After the almost continuous wars between 1793 and 1815, when Britain's conservatives opposed the French Revolution and then defended their possessions from the onslaught of Napoleon, Great Britain emerged even stronger than before. In 1815 the British added Malta, South Africa, Ceylon, Guiana and Trinidad to their overseas territories, and they soon surpassed both the French and the Dutch in world trade.

In the century that followed 1815, the British managed for the first time to combine economic and political liberalism in

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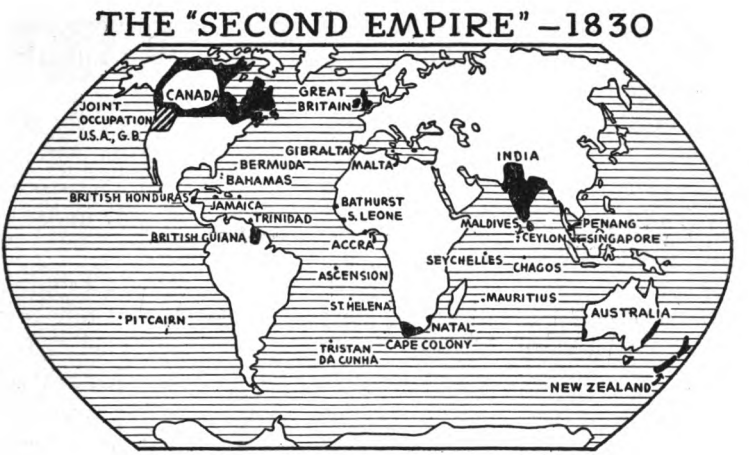

their imperialist policy. The age of mercantilism gave way to the age of free trade, with Britain leading the way. The period of centralization and inflexibility in colonial policy gave way to a period of gradual decentralization and the development of self-government.

Canada—or the settled parts of what are now Ontario and Quebec—achieved self-government in 1867, when the Imperial Parliament passed the British North America Act. This Act, which is still the Canadian Constitution, provided for a federal government with centralized authority but with numerous guarantees of the civil rights of the French Canadians in Quebec.

A federal system was also established, in 1900, for Australia, uniting the six self-governing colonies—New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, the last a separate island. The Australian constitution, unlike the Canadian, stressed states' rights.

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New Zealand, on the other hand, experimented unsuccessfully with federalism and then, in 1862, concentrated authority in a central government.

South Africa involved the most difficult problems, for the country combined both Dutch and English settlements. After a series of conflicts, culminating in the Boer War of 1899-1902, the South Africans likewise received self-government under a federal constitution.

The most spectacular developments of the Second Empire, however, took place in India, where the East India Company merchants enjoyed a profitable monopoly trade. Their arbitrary and irresponsible rule finally led to the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The British government then abolished the powers of the East India Company and established its own rule under a Viceroy. In 1876 it proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress of India.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, moreover, a new wave of active imperialism swept the British, owing in part to the rapid increase in industrial production. Britain needed markets for her industrial products and safe fields for the investment of her surplus capital. Englishmen went into Africa to explore, to convert the heathen, to get raw materials and—above all—to sell their goods. In the Near and Far East, Britain and the other Great Powers all sought to gain spheres of influence, naval bases and markets. A new age of discovery and exploration, of expansion and exploitation, had begun, this time dominated by the urge to keep the home factories running. The *Pax Britannica* was at its height.

4. THE THIRD BRITISH EMPIRE

Whatever else the World War may have done, it altered once more the general framework of the British Empire. All of the trends toward greater and greater autonomy and toward economic nationalism were accelerated in each of the self-govern-

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ing Dominions. The World War merely speeded up the developments of the nineteenth century. At the same time, the war also climaxed the struggle for new areas, particularly for strategic purposes. By the defeat of Germany, at a terrible cost, the British once more triumphed over their most formidable rival. With the addition—under the mandates system—of part of Germany's territories in Africa and the Pacific and part of Turkey's territory in Asia Minor, the British reached a peak hitherto unknown even in their remarkable record of empire-building.

There are several features of the present Commonwealth that we must keep in mind when analyzing its relations with the rest of the world. In the first place, it puts more emphasis than ever before upon self-government in its separate parts. The Dominions are to all intents and purposes independent, sovereign states within a Commonwealth of Nations.

This development, which was apparent before the war, was given formal recognition in the Imperial Conference of 1926 and later in the Statute of Westminster of 1931. In phrases that have since become famous, the Conference in 1926 defined the relations of the United Kingdom and the Dominions as follows:

> "They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations...Every self-governing member of the Empire is now the master of its destiny. In fact, if not always in form, it is subject to no compulsion whatever..."

In this paragraph are the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the British Commonwealth.

Empire Economics

After the World War, the Dominions were left with over-expanded agricultural and industrial plants and were hit by a severe depression. Like all countries, they turned to various

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forms of economic nationalism to protect the home front—tariffs, especially. Thus to the political forces which tended to keep the various nations of the Commonwealth apart powerful economic forces were added.

This growth of tariff walls within the Empire continued until 1931, when Great Britain likewise turned to protectionism. Then, under the stress of world-wide depression, Britain and the Dominions negotiated a network of trade agreements at Ottawa. These "Ottawa agreements," as they are called, gave the British special preference in the Dominion markets and the Dominions a favored position in the British market. A new Empire economy, sometimes called a new mercantilism, had come into existence.

IV. Keeping the Empire Together

Whenever a group of Americans is faced with a problem of government, they immediately draft a very detailed constitution and a complete set of by-laws. Whenever the British have to deal with a political problem, they appoint a committee and set it to work. While Americans depend upon invention and experiment in science and industry, they retain their old faith in rigid and formal legalisms in the field of politics. The British, however, have learned in their centuries of empire-building and empire-governing the value of improvising and experimenting.

If the British attempted to reduce their present-day Empire to a rigid, American-like formula with precise allotments of power and a mechanical arrangement of checks and balances, the Empire would probably fall to pieces immediately. Today, as always, the Empire is kept together by a combination of legal institutions, political conventions, emotional attachments and personal contacts. Furthermore, every institution we shall

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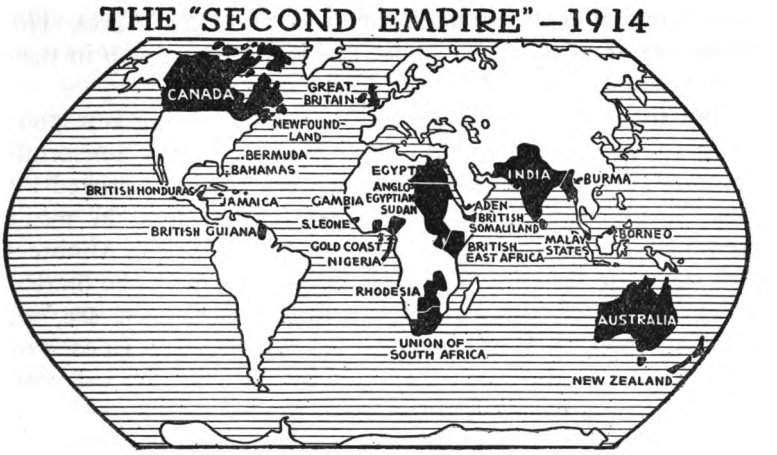

mention has changed considerably since the World War and is changing during this war. For every rule cited there is undoubtedly some exception—usually Irish.

1. THE CROWN

The central institution of the whole British Empire, without which it could not operate for five minutes, is the Crown. This intangible institution is the source of all authority—executive, legislative and judicial—in the Empire. It is personified by the King, in whose name most of this authority is exercised. His present title is: "George VI, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India." Laws are made by the King-in-Parliament; they are carried out by the King-in-Council; they are expounded in the King's courts. All of the administration of the Empire is carried out in the name of the King.

The King, of course, exercises very few of these powers personally, for he has been increasingly subjected to constitu-

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tional limitations ever since the days of Magna Carta. The King now acts upon the advice of his Ministers, who in turn are responsible to Parliament and the courts.

But the important thing to note is that the King is responsible to several different sets of Ministers. In the nineteenth century, the powers of the Crown were usually exercised by the British Parliament, which was (and still is, in many respects) an *Imperial* Parliament, and by the British Ministers for the entire Empire. Today, in accordance with the Statute of Westminster, the acts of the British Parliament are not binding upon the Dominions without their consent. In each of the Dominions, the laws are enacted by the King "by and with the advice and consent" of the Dominion Parliament. They are executed in the King's name by the Dominion governments.

The Crown as an institution and the King as a person are the most important remaining legal links between the United Kingdom and the Dominions. These legal links are about the only formal expression of unity left in the Commonwealth. Trade, defense, the sense of a common history and a common future and loyalty to common ideals—these give the substance to Commonwealth unity.

For most purposes, of course, these many powers of the Crown have to be exercised by the King's representatives throughout the Empire. The King is represented in the Dominions by Governors-General, in India by the Viceroy, and elsewhere by Governors, High Commissioners and other officials. The Governor-General in a Dominion occupies the same constitutional position and fulfills the same functions as the King himself.

The Abdication Crisis

When you remember that the Crown binds together one-fourth of the world's population, you can easily realize the significance of the abdication crisis of December 1936. At that

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time King Edward VIII, who had succeeded his father only eleven months before, renounced his throne in order to marry an American woman, Mrs. Wallis Warfield Simpson. The personal drama tended to overshadow the legal issues, so far as the newspapers were concerned, but the whole affair raised some vital political and constitutional questions.

The British monarchy, which had been seriously discredited in the early nineteenth century by the incompetent and profligate behavior of the Georges, had regained its prestige through the personalities of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V. In the autumn of 1936, however, King Edward VIII was under fire for many different and often contradictory reasons: for frivolous and irresponsible conduct, for impatience at court routine, for alleged pro-German sentiments and for commenting on unemployment and poverty without the advice of his Ministers.

The crisis arose over the King's desire to marry a divorced woman, although the Church of England, of which the King is head, does not permit the remarriage of divorced persons. When the Prime Minister, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, advised that such a marriage would not be acceptable to the government, the King chose to abdicate. Whatever the personal issues involved, the Prime Minister was chiefly concerned with maintaining the prestige of the Crown at a time when the Empire was being increasingly challenged by rival powers. To jeopardize the prestige of the Crown would have been to jeopardize the unity of the Empire.

The abdication itself revealed the present constitutional status of the Commonwealth, for separate acts confirming the succession of King George VI were passed by the Imperial Parliament at Westminster upon the request of the Dominions (except the Irish Free State) and by the Parliaments of Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State. Owing to different interpretations of the succession, the reign of King George VI was

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recognized in South Africa as beginning on December 10, 1936, in the Irish Free State on December 12 and elsewhere in the Empire on December 11.

2. THE LEGISLATIVE POWER

As we have already suggested, the Statute of Westminster (1931) acknowledged the procedure which had been developing in the twentieth century. It declared that no act of the Parliament at Westminster should extend to a Dominion as part of its law except with its consent. There are even exceptions to this general rule, as—under the British North America Act of 1867—the Parliament at Westminster alone has power to amend the Canadian Constitution. Since Australia and New Zealand, moreover, have not adopted the general provisions of the Statute of Westminster, the British Parliament still has the legal power to legislate for these Dominions without their request and consent. Of course, the Parliament at Westminster also retains its legislative powers over India and the colonial Empire.

3. THE JUDICIAL POWER

One of the most important functions of the Crown, from the earliest days of English history, has been the administration of justice. Even today, throughout the Empire (except in Eire) judgments are rendered or pardons granted in the name of the King. While the House of Lords remains the highest court of appeal in the United Kingdom, a special body—the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council—is the "supreme court" of the Empire. Technically, this body merely advises the King, who enforces its recommendation by an Order-in-Council; actually, its advice constitutes a judicial decision which the King never questions or rejects. Until recently, the Judicial Committee heard appeal cases from the entire Empire. Under the authority of the Statute of Westminster, however, the Irish Free State

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abolished all appeals to the Judicial Committee and Canada forbade appeals in criminal cases.

4. THE TREATY POWER

Perhaps the most striking indication of the transformation of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth has been in the sphere of treaty-making. As might be expected, during the nineteenth century Canada and the other self-governing colonies became increasingly dissatisfied at being automatically included in British treaties even though their own interests were not affected (and especially if they were adversely affected).

Up until about 1880, all of the treaties signed by Great Britain applied also to the colonies, but in the following decades greater freedom was granted. Colonial representatives were invited to participate in the negotiation of commercial treaties along with the British representative. Eventually, too, the self-governing colonies were given power to adhere to, or withdraw from, British commercial treaties. Political treaties, however, remained under the complete control of the British Foreign Office until the World War.

The break with this tradition came at the end of the World War, when the Dominions, led by Canada, insisted upon separate representation at the Peace Conference and individual membership in the League of Nations. Later treaties—such as the Locarno Pacts—specifically stated that they imposed no obligations upon the Dominions without their consent.

At the Imperial Conference of 1926 the Commonwealth countries agreed upon the practice which is in use today. Treaties of all kinds are now concluded by His Brittanic Majesty upon the advice of his Ministers in the United Kingdom or the Dominions. Each treaty indicates for which member of the Commonwealth the King is signing and ratifying. Each Dominion is now completely free to negotiate and sign

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a treaty in the name of the King, although each member of the Commonwealth is required to inform the others regarding its negotiations and not to involve them in any active obligations without their consent.

5. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Until after the World War, the Dominions were represented in foreign countries by the British diplomatic and consular services, and their citizens and interests depended upon the British Foreign Office for protection. In 1924, however, the Irish Free State appointed a Minister to Washington, and Canada opened a legation there in 1926. These two Dominions, and South Africa as well, have secured representation in other countries where they have special interests. Until recently, Australia and New Zealand have had no separate representation abroad. In December 1939, however, Australia announced that it would send a Minister to Washington. But with these exceptions, the Dominions are content to receive their information and to protect their interests through British agents everywhere.

6. CONSULTATION AND DEFENSE

The result of this remarkable decentralization of authority, in both theory and practice, has been a need for constant cooperation between the separate governments of the Commonwealth. Prior to the World War, the Governor-General was not only the King's personal representative, as we have seen, but also the representative of the United Kingdom government. He performed the ceremonial acts of the Crown and transmitted political information between London and the Dominion capital. For many years, however, this political function has been in the hands of the High Commissioners, who represent the British government (as distinct from the Crown) in the Dominions. The Dominions, likewise, have High Commissioners in London, who perform the same "diplomatic" work on behalf

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of their governments, and they are also beginning to exchange High Commissioners among themselves.

In 1925, moreover, the Dominions Office was separated from the Colonial Office in the British government. The Dominions Office has become something of a clearing house for the Commonwealth, as it transmits information and communications between the British Foreign Office and the Dominions. In emergencies, however, the British and Dominion governments deal directly with each other, without wasting time on go-betweens. In other words, the Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary in London often discusses a critical problem directly with the Dominion Prime Ministers.

The Imperial Conferences

Even more elaborate machinery exists in the form of Imperial Conferences, which meet every four or more years to discuss Commonwealth relations. The main provisions of the Statute of Westminster were drafted at the Imperial Conferences of 1926 and 1930. At the most recent assembly, in 1937, the Commonwealth governments were primarily concerned with problems of defense.

In time of war this type of collaboration is greatly expanded. In November 1939, for instance, officials of the British and Dominion governments consulted in London on war policy.

V. Unity in Diversity

In the British Empire, as in almost everything else, variety is the spice of life. Each of the great self-governing Dominions is entirely different from the others, and that future Dominion —India—is an empire in itself. The strength of this modern Commonwealth lies in the unity of so many different and

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diverse elements. Large, independent and often self-willed, these many elements give strength and character to the whole.

1. CANADA

Senior partner of the Commonwealth, Canada is larger than the United States in area and spreads from Atlantic to Pacific, from the Great Lakes to the Arctic Circle. Naturally enough, its chief geographical features are very much like those of its southern neighbor. The three Maritime Provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—lie north of our own New England and share its rocky, jagged coasts and pine forests. Then come Quebec and Ontario, the largest and most prosperous provinces. Canada also has its own Middle West, including three large provinces—Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, with the same wheat economy, drought and dust, debts and mortgages, as ours. Beyond the Rockies is British Columbia, the Pacific Coast province, with its mines, forests, salmon fishing, shipping and tourist trade.

To understand Canada's domestic and foreign affairs, you have to realize that its population is quite different from ours in both distribution and composition. Only about eleven million people—less than the population of New York State—live in this vast country, and they are concentrated in a narrow strip running east and west, about two hundred miles wide. Three-fifths of them live in Quebec and Ontario.

Although Canada is always called an English-speaking country, the portion of British stock is slightly under fifty per cent and is losing ground to the French and other nationalities. The French Canadians, descendants of a once great empire in North America, comprise about thirty per cent of the people and are growing rapidly (for example, the Dionnes!). Living chiefly in Quebec, they fight incessantly to preserve their language, their culture and their religion. They are as strongly in favor of "provincial rights" as our southerners are of "states' rights."

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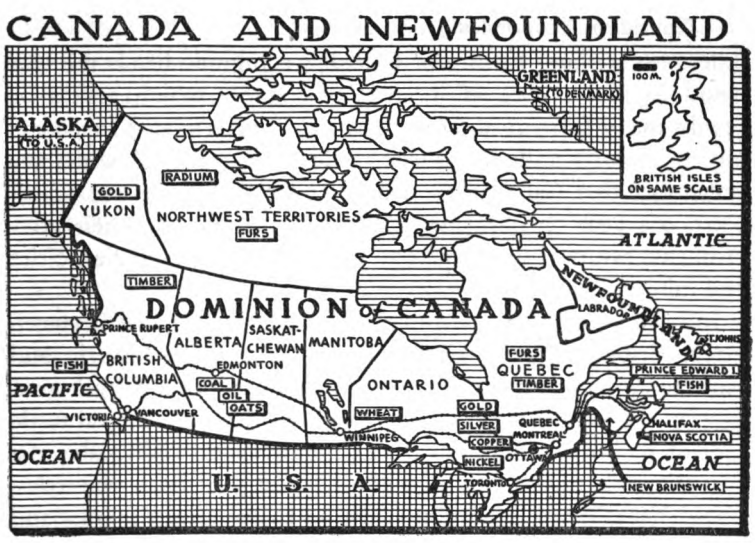

Constitutional Problems

Since the Canadians have a federal government, they have many of the same constitutional problems—division of power between the central and local governments, taxation and relief expenditures, supreme court decisions—as we in the United States.

The drafters of the Canadian constitution, working three years after our Civil War, thought they had avoided some of our difficulties over states' rights by giving specific powers to the provinces and general powers to the federal government at Ottawa. History reversed the arrangement, however, with the help of the final court of appeal—not the Canadian Supreme Court but a body in London called the Judicial Committee of His Majesty's Privy Council. When Prime Minister R. B. Bennett, of the Conservative Party, put a whole set of "New Deal" laws through the Canadian Parliament in 1935, the Judicial Committee invalidated most of them with all the gusto of our own pre-1937 Supreme Court.

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Canadian Economics

The most striking feature of Canada's economic life is the tremendous importance of international trade, which makes or breaks many farmers and businessmen. Canada's need for keeping up exports and the tourist trade becomes clear when we remember that Canada is a debtor country, paying out $200,000,000 a year on obligations which its people and their governments assumed in the past to build railways, factories, cities and mining plants.

In both economics and politics, Canada is balanced between Great Britain and the United States. The legal, historic and sentimental ties of Empire bind Canada to the motherland; geographic proximity binds it to its neighbor; investment and trade bind it to both Britain and the United States. Culturally, the Canadians share the language and literature of both countries, but—what is more important—they go to American movies and listen to American radio programs. In some ways, this dual allegiance is an advantage, for it gives Canada the protection of the world's two largest commercial and naval powers. In other ways, it presents many difficulties, for Britain and the United States sometimes pull Canada in different directions at the same time.

The War Question

The question of what Canada should do when war began in Europe was debated for several years. The French Canadians vigorously opposed conscription, which was imposed upon them (with unfortunate results) in the World War, and many English-speaking Canadians—especially in liberal and left-wing groups—favored keeping out. Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King, desiring above all else to avoid a controversy that would shake the country, refused to cross any bridges before he came to them. Instead he declared that Parliament would decide.

And Parliament did decide. On September 8, five days after

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Great Britain went to war, the Canadian Parliament followed suit—by an almost unanimous vote. Mr. Mackenzie King remained true to his promise to avoid conscription but moved in every other way to mobilize Canada's military and economic resources. To vindicate his policy, the Prime Minister in a surprise maneuver announced a general election for March 26, 1940. He won it by a landslide vote.

Canada's Role in the War

As an arsenal for the Empire, Canada is prepared to ship foodstuffs, raw materials and many manufactures to the United Kingdom. The Dominion is a leading producer of wheat and other cereals. Even more important are its minerals, for Canada ranks first in world production of nickel, third in gold and zinc and fourth in lead and copper. Its factories, moreover, are far more extensive than in 1914, and they are already building airplanes, guns and ammunition and many other complicated weapons of war. If this war should last a long time, one deciding factor in Britain's chance of victory would be the farms and factories of this North American Dominion.

2. AUSTRALIA

Most Americans, if they think of the Commonwealth of Australia at all, think of it in terms of kangaroos and koala bears. It occupies a continent only slightly smaller than the United States and a position in the Southern Hemisphere which, in North American terms, would be equivalent to a range from Costa Rica to Detroit. The eastern and southern coasts provide forests and arable land, while the vast interior contains steppe land and deserts. The population, of only 7,000,000, is concentrated, therefore, in the eastern states of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria and in a small section of Western Australia. Over two-thirds of the Australians live in urban areas, chiefly Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

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Problems Economic and Political

From this you can easily guess what Australia's major problems have proved to be. Providing railways, office buildings, warehouses and all the other paraphernalia of modern life required considerable capital, which Australia lacked. So Australia borrowed. Thus it now has a huge external debt, totaling £185,300,000 in London and £16,000,000 in New York. The interest payments on this debt are one of the most important items in the Australian national economy.

To secure the money for its interest payments, Australia has to export as much of its domestic production as possible. Pastoral and agricultural products predominate, as you might expect. Australia is the world's largest wool producer, averaging about one billion pounds every year and exporting about 93 per cent of that. Wheat, meats, fruits, dairy produce and sugar are among its other most important products.

By keeping Canadian and American history in mind, you can almost guess some of Australia's constitutional problems. The original settlements remained isolated for so long that the sentiment of states' rights overshadowed every political development. The Australian Constitution of 1900 protected the powers of the states and restricted those of the Commonwealth. In the past two decades, when all countries depending on the export of staples have suffered especially severely, the Commonwealth government has had to combat depression by increasing its authority at the expense of the states.

Australia and the War

Since Australia depends in the last resort upon the British navy for its defense, it had no hesitation in entering the European war. Australia's only potential foe is not Germany, of course, but Japan. The Australians know very well that if Great Britain should be defeated in Europe or should lose a major portion of its battle fleet, then Australia would be

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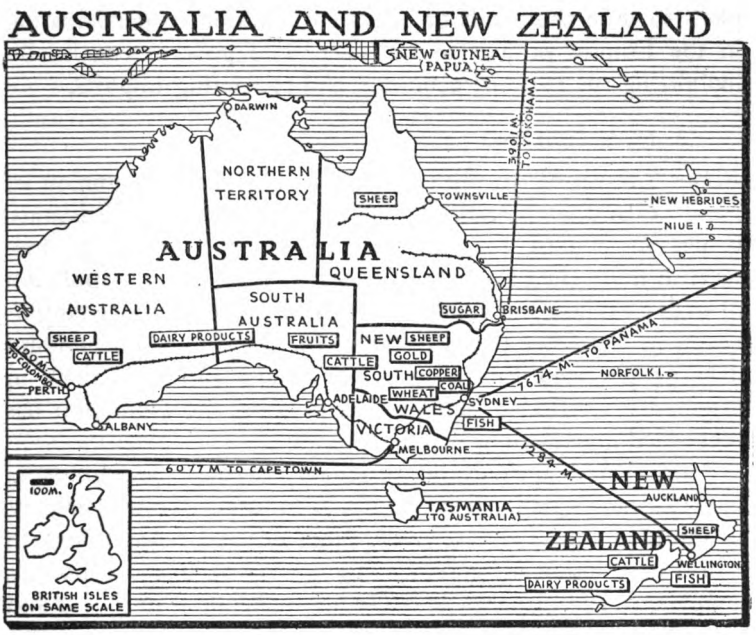

dangerously exposed—unless the United States, for reasons of its own, should come to the rescue.

Australia has more than just its territory and trade to safeguard; it is committed to a restrictive immigration policy. Its population, almost entirely Anglo-Saxon, is determined to maintain a "White Australia" policy at all costs, even though this must seem something of a dog-in-the-manger attitude to the Japanese. The Australians argue, however, that under present conditions their limited resources cannot support any great increase in population.

As its contribution to Empire defense, Australia imposed conscription and began training soldiers and enlarging its navy. As in the World War, Australian and New Zealand troops are being sent to the Near East. The Commonwealth

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plans to train thousands of pilots (in addition to participating in the Empire project in Canada). The government is also mobilizing the national economy and restricting imports.

3. NEW ZEALAND

About 1,200 miles to the east of Australia is the Dominion of New Zealand, composed of two large and many small islands. It has an area of 104,751 square miles, approximately one-seventh more than the area of Great Britain, and a population of over a million and a half. New Zealand is even more Anglo-Saxon in character than Australia, for its population contains over 94 per cent European stock, almost entirely British in origin. By restrictive immigration policies, the Dominion has succeeded in excluding Asiatics.

Pastoral and agricultural products are most important in New Zealand's national economy, accounting for 96 per cent of the Dominion's export trade. New Zealand ranks fourth in world production of wool, averaging over 300,000,000 pounds annually in recent years. It is also an outstanding producer and exporter of meats and dairy products. Like Australia, this Dominion is heavily indebted to Great Britain for its development in past generations: its obligations in London total £156,857,000. New Zealand is equally dependent upon foreign trade as a means of meeting its interest payments. The strain on its balance of payments caused New Zealand to let its currency depreciate in 1929, ahead of the other sterling countries, and to impose import quotas and licenses in 1931 and again in 1938.

With a tradition of social legislation and public enterprises, New Zealand has gone far in government control of the national economy. The government has established marketing and price-fixing schemes for the dairy industry and has assumed control of the Reserve Bank. For wartime purposes New Zealand has tightened up its import restrictions even further.

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New Zealand in the Commonwealth

In Commonwealth affairs, New Zealand has always been the most conservative of the Dominions. Its predominantly British population, its exposed position and its lack of industrial development have caused New Zealand to oppose any change in Commonwealth relations. It adhered to the Statute of Westminster very reluctantly, and it has not yet supplemented the Statute by its own legislation. Like Australia, New Zealand realizes that its safety depends in the long run upon British seapower. The government is hastening its defense preparations and is paying particular attention to the air force.

One interesting feature of the external relations of both Australia and New Zealand is the fact that they are both colonial and mandatory powers in their own right. Thus British imperialism is being supplemented by Dominion imperialism. Australia administers Norfolk Island, Papua and a territory in the Antarctic and holds the former German portion of New Guinea as a mandate. New Zealand's colonies include the Cook Islands, Niue, the Tokelau Islands and the Ross Dependency in Antarctica. New Zealand also holds a mandate for German Samoa and shares with Britain and Australia the mandate for Nauru.

4. THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Union of South Africa comprises 472,347 square miles—795,000 if you include its mandated territory, formerly German Southwest Africa. Its population of about nine and one-half million is divided as follows: 1,980,000 Europeans, 6,530,000 Bantu, 215,000 Asiatics and 755,000 "colored" or mixed. In those figures you have the essence of South Africa's social problem. If you remember that the European population is divided between the descendants of the English and Dutch who fought off and on throughout the nineteenth century, you have the essence of South Africa's political problem.

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Since the establishment of the Constitution of 1909, South Africa has frequently debated its relationship with the British Commonwealth. The Afrikanders (descendants of the Dutch) have in general opposed any automatic commitments to support the Empire overseas and have often advocated a republican form of government and independence from the Commonwealth. The British population, quite naturally, has remained staunchly loyal to the Empire tie.

The Union and the Nazis

This controversy became somewhat overshadowed in recent years by South Africa's alarm over the new German imperialism. Nazi organizations attempted to penetrate throughout the Union and its mandate and to promote disloyalty. The Hitler government, while not pressing its demands for return of Germany's pre-war colonies, indicated that some day that issue would be on its agenda.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 split South Africa's coalition Cabinet, headed by two Afrikander veterans of the Boer War, right down the middle. The Prime Minister, General J. B. M. Hertzog, and his followers favored continuing diplomatic relations with Germany; the Deputy Prime Minister, General Jan C. Smuts, and others wanted to declare war. After the House of Assembly voted, 80 to 67, in favor of war, General Hertzog resigned the Premiership. General Smuts then became Prime Minister and immediately began defense preparations, although promising that he would not impose conscription or organize an overseas expeditionary force.

The Union is organizing a mobile striking force, training air pilots and defending its coasts. On the economic side, the Union can furnish both gold and wool to Great Britain, as well as fruits, hides and skins and many minerals of military importance. South Africa's economy is still dominated by gold, which provided stability throughout the world-wide depres-

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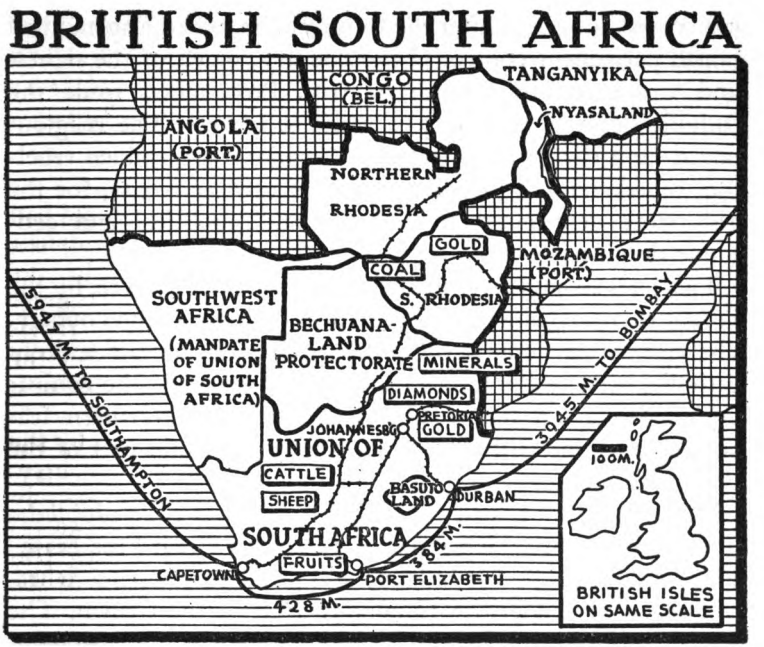

sion. The Union is endeavoring to foster agriculture and industry, however, to safeguard its future in the event the mines prove less profitable.

5. EIRE

Eire (pronounced *airr*-uh, and formerly called the Irish Free State) is the smallest of the Dominions but the oldest of the imperial headaches. The whole of Ireland has an area of more than 31,000 square miles—about the same as South Carolina—and a population of about 4,300,000, of which 2,968,000 are in the southern part, or Eire.

The bitter relations which existed between Ireland and England for many centuries had their roots in both religious

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and economic issues. After the Reformation, when England had gained permanent control of the country, much of the richest land was given to English or Irish Protestants, while the Catholic peasants were left to work as tenants. The religious hatreds and the struggle for land combined to produce rebellion, repression and violence as late as 1916 and 1921, for the Irish were determined to end England's political and economic domination.

This long struggle was finally compromised, however, by the Treaty of 1921, which provided for a division of the country. The twenty-six counties of southern Ireland, almost entirely Catholic, became the Irish Free State and received the equivalent of Dominion status. The six counties of Northern Ireland, about two-thirds Protestant, voted to remain part of the United Kingdom.

Even this did not satisfy the Irish, for in 1937 they adopted a new Constitution which replaced the name "Irish Free State" with "Eire" (Gaelic for Ireland) and made no reference whatever to either the British Commonwealth or the Crown. The new Constitution proclaimed Eire a "sovereign, independent, democratic State" and vested executive authority in a President, who appoints the Prime Minister and other members of the government. In practice, however, the King's position regarding external relations remains about the same.

Coming to Terms

In 1932 a tariff war seriously jeopardized relations between Ireland and Great Britain. This "war" followed the Free State's refusal to continue paying interest and instalments on the loans the British government had extended to Irish tenant farmers many years before to enable them to buy their holdings. But in 1938 Premier Eamon de Valera, who had led the 1916 rebellion against England, negotiated a settlement of most outstanding issues. This settlement provided that Britain should

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transfer to Eire its three naval bases at Berehaven, Cobh and Lough Swilly. This meant withdrawing the last British soldiers remaining in Eire. All of the financial claims were settled satisfactorily to both sides and the tariff war was ended by a commercial agreement. This agreement effected extensive tariff reductions and brought Eire within the framework of the Ottawa agreements.

But this general settlement failed to dispose of Eire's most important demand. Premier de Valera insists upon the union of Eire and the six counties of Northern Ireland. Although he adds that the "partition" of Ireland should be ended by peaceful means, extremists in Eire have turned to violence. They revived the Irish Republican Army and in 1939 began a series of bombings in British cities. After the British government had combated these outbreaks with arrests and deportations, the I.R.A. started action in Eire itself.

Eire proclaimed its neutrality on September 1, 1939 and continued diplomatic relations with Germany. It has expanded its armed forces and increased taxation to cover its increased defense expenditures.

Eire's economy is based almost entirely upon agriculture and exports to Great Britain. To supplement its own domestic agriculture, Great Britain will probably continue in wartime its large purchases of Irish livestock and dairy products.

VI. More Pink Spots on the Map

So far, we have discussed only those parts of the Empire where people of Anglo-Saxon stock have transplanted the parliamentary system of Great Britain and have attained self-government. But beyond these Dominions lies the vast collection of dependent possessions inhabited largely by non-British peoples and governed to a greater or lesser extent from London.

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It is in these colonial dependencies that you find the great variety of race, religion, culture and government so characteristic of the British Empire. It is there that you find the really difficult problems of administration, the struggles for independence and the constant need for conciliation and compromise.

1. 57 VARIETIES

Almost every known form of government is represented in this conglomeration of territories. As you might expect, the constitutional structure of the British Empire is so flexible that you cannot classify these colonial territories in any really satisfactory manner. The Empire's success, we have already seen, rests largely on the flexibility of its institutions.

The Crown Colonies

First, there are the Crown Colonies—numerous territories which the Crown has acquired through conquest, occupation, cession or treaty. They vary greatly in the degree to which authority is exercised from the Colonial Office in London. In many Crown Colonies—such as Ceylon, Hongkong and the West Indies islands—executive authority is vested in a representative of the Crown and legislative authority in a council or assembly, more or less controlled by the executive. Others are governed directly by a High Commissioner or similar agent of the Crown without representation of the people. Southern Rhodesia is a Crown Colony that is halfway toward Dominion status. It has a Legislative Council that possesses full authority over most matters except external relations and native affairs, which are still governed from London. Newfoundland, on the other hand, was a Dominion until 1934, when persistent economic depression caused it to give up self-government and become a Crown Colony, under a special "Commission of Government."

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Protectorates

There is another class of dependency, called "protectorates." A protectorate resembles a colony in practice but is technically different. In the case of protectorates, the Crown does not actually acquire the territory but exercises full authority, usually in cooperation with the native rulers. Egypt was a British protectorate from 1914 to 1922, when it became an independent country closely allied to Britain. The Malay States, Tonga Island in the Pacific and Uganda in Africa are examples of British protectorates.

Mandates

The Versailles Treaty created a new type of colonial government, known as a "mandate." Turkish territory in the Near East and German possessions in Africa and Asia were to be administered by the victorious Allies, under conditions set forth in the Covenant of the League of Nations. "A" mandates, formed from Turkish territory, were to be regarded as virtually independent nations being prepared by the mandatory power for self-government. The "B" mandates, in Central Africa, were to have some degree of self-government; while the "C" mandates, in southwest Africa and the southern Pacific, were to be administered as an integral part of the mandatory power. Great Britain obtained an "A" mandate over Iraq and Palestine. Britain also received "B" mandates in Africa—Tanganyika, Cameroons and Togoland. South Africa received a "C" mandate over German Southwest Africa, while Australia and New Zealand got "C" mandates in nearby islands.

2. INDIA

India belongs in a class by itself. Here you have a sub-continent with an area (excluding Burma, which is now a separate colony) of over 1,800,000 square miles—about three-fifths the size of the United States. In 1931, India had a population of

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THE BRITISH COMM

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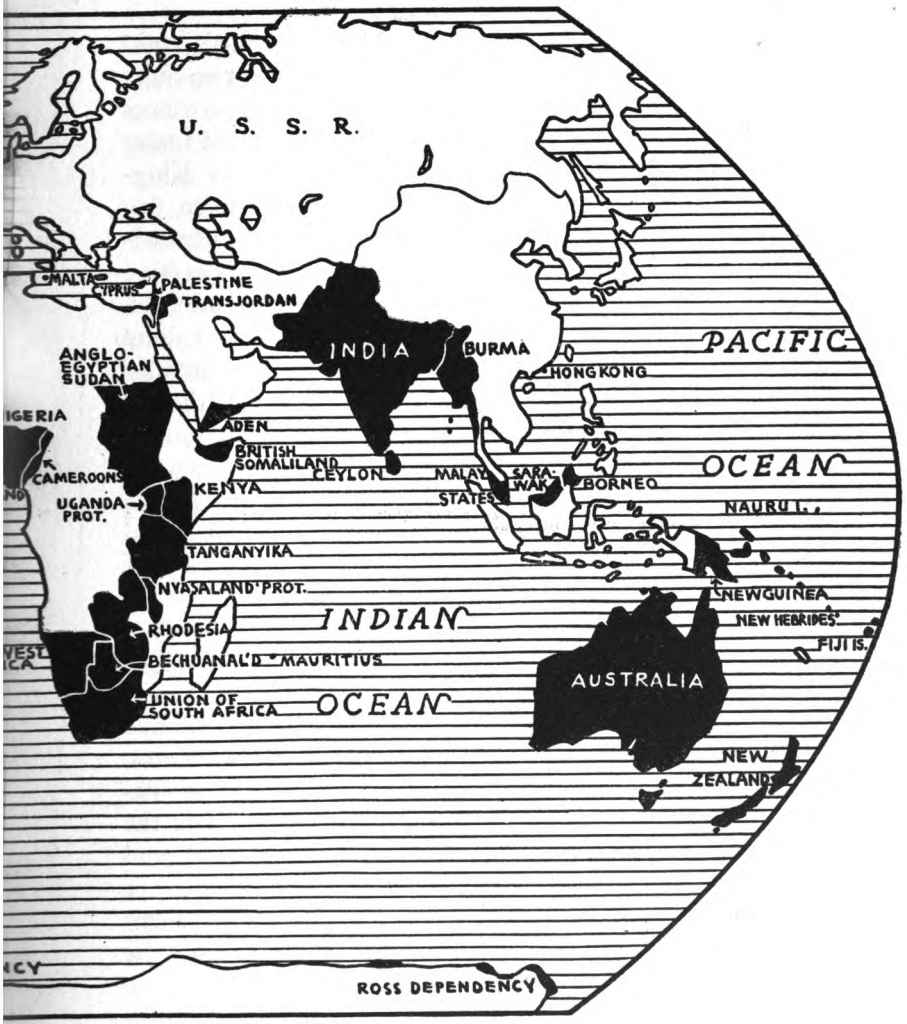
MPIRE"—1940



EALTH OF NATIONS

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352,838,000, or nearly three times our population at that time. The range of Indian territory is equivalent to that extending from Washington, D. C. to the Gulf of Panama.

These bare figures give hardly an inkling of India's complexity. In the first place, the country is divided into two quite different sections. "British India," consisting of eleven provinces and a few minor units, is the portion which was placed under the Crown in 1858 and made directly subject to the King-Emperor and his Viceroy. "The Native States," some 600 separate principalities, are ruled by native Princes who acknowledge the Crown as "the paramount power." The Princes have treaties with the Imperial government, accept British advisers, cooperate with the Viceroy and in some cases contribute money to the government. These Native States are virtually independent in everything but their external relations (though Britain reserves the right to intervene in their internal affairs when misgovernment threatens order and stability). Since the Princes rule in a thoroughly autocratic manner, the Native States vary greatly in governmental efficiency and social progress. The Native States account for about 27 per cent of India's area and 17 per cent of its total population. They are scattered throughout the entire country.

A House Divided

Even more important are India's religious, social and economic divisions. About two-thirds of the total population are Hindus, rigidly divided into castes and sub-castes. Of the Hindu population, some 60,000,000 belong to the depressed class called the "untouchables." They perform the most menial tasks and enjoy no political or social rights at all. Another one-quarter of the people are Mohammedans, located largely in the northwestern section of the country, especially Bombay and the Punjab, and in Bengal.

The conflict between the two chief religions, which differ

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sharply on many essentials, creates some of the most difficult problems in British India. The Moslems, being in a minority, feel that the Hindus discriminate against them and crowd them out of the best business and political positions. The Moslems, moreover, have often played ball with the British rulers in order to safeguard their own interests. Many of them have been suspicious of the Hindu movements for independence and self-government and have opposed the present plan for a federation of India on the ground that it would merely increase the Hindu control of the government.

Another outstanding feature of the Indian landscape is the agrarian character of the economy. Over 90 per cent of the Indian people dwell in small villages and live off the land. Most of them are "ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished," burdened with debt and living on or below the starvation line. Both reduction of the danger of famine by modern irrigation and railways and progress in medicine and sanitation have proved unavailing, as the population—owing to an extraordinarily high birth rate—continues to exceed the available resources. Moreover, textile and other industries have developed in recent decades, especially in the two largest cities—Bombay and Calcutta—and have added slums and industrial exploitation to India's older problems.

India's Struggle for Independence

The history of India during the twentieth century has involved an unceasing struggle for independence. The movement against British control has been led by the Indian Nationalist Congress, or "Congress Party," composed of many different elements in the country and headed by one of the most remarkable men of modern times—Mohandas K. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi, who is known as the "Mahatma," or "Great Soul," introduced a novel type of revolution—civil disobedience, or "non-violent non-cooperation."

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In India's history the whole period of the 1920's was one of civil disobedience and incipient revolution, kept within bounds by British severity on one side and Mahatma Gandhi's insistence upon non-violence on the other. After prolonged negotiations, however, a new Constitution was finally enacted in 1935, providing for provincial self-government in British India, to be composed of eleven provinces under Governors and five controlled directly by the central government. The Governors, representing the King, had specified powers over public order and the rights of minorities and emergency powers over all affairs. Control over other matters rested in the provincial legislature and its ministry. The voters were divided into religious and other communities and were limited by property and other qualifications, although the franchise was considerably extended. In 1937, the Congress Party succeeded in filling eight of the eleven ministries.

The Constitution also provided, in a section which has not yet been put into effect, for a federal legislature, to represent both British India and the Native States and to be elected in a complicated and indirect manner. The Congress Party has opposed this federation scheme on the ground that it recognizes and preserves the autocratic powers of the Princes and that its checks and balances prevent the Indians from gaining real power in the central government. The Constitution was likewise rejected by the Princes and the Moslem League, both hostile to Congress rule.

The Constitution of 1935, therefore, went into effect only partially, but it gave the Congress leaders political experience in British India and real responsibility in eight provinces.

India and the War

This experiment in self-government came to an end in September 1939, when the European war caused the British to declare India a belligerent, to suspend the Constitution and to govern

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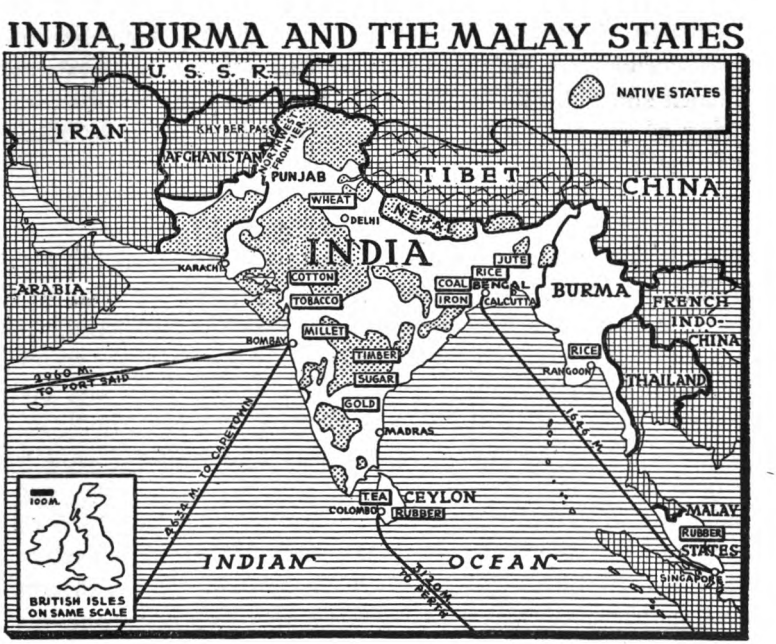

under emergency powers. The Congress Party protested vigorously against this action, demanding an immediate constitutional convention for settlement of India's political future, and its ministries resigned in the eight Provinces under Congress control. The British government declined to consider any change in the government of India until after the war is over but promised that Dominion status would be granted as soon as possible. Since the Congress leaders believe that Britain, as in the World War, will merely delay negotiation and refuse any genuine self-government, they are determined to force the issue at this opportune time. But the position of the Congress leaders, especially of Gandhi himself, is difficult because they dislike German, Russian and Japanese imperialism even more

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than they dislike British rule and because they fear the outbreak of violence in India. Many of them—especially Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, who head the Socialist left wing of the party—are determined, however, to resist British rule until self-government is attained.

The White Man's Burden

India is thus a perfect example of western imperialism. Both the ruling country and the subject country have strong arguments in their favor. The British argue that, whatever the methods by which they conquered India, they are doing their best to lead the Indians to Dominion status. They believe that the civil warfare, particularly the violent conflict between Hindu and Moslem which has for centuries torn the country asunder, would reappear if Britain's control were removed. They consider that they have introduced social reforms, remedied the worst of the religious and social abuses and promoted education, sanitation and transportation. The British believe that the Indians lack sufficient experience to rule themselves and that only through gradual modification of British control can Indians be brought into responsible positions. They claim, furthermore, that the Congress Party represents only a minority, small but vocal, of the country as a whole.

The Brown Man's Reply

The Indian case is that Britain rules merely for its own profit and power. The Indians point out that British bondholders, British exporters, British shippers and British civil servants all enjoy great benefits from their stake in India. In short, India is still Britain's most valuable single possession.

The Indians argue further that they will never get the necessary experience in self-government until they enjoy self-government—that with power will come a sense of responsibility and leadership. They insist that the religious and social divisions

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will tend to disappear within an independent India. They point out that Britain traditionally has held power on the principle of "divide and rule" and declare that the British deliberately exaggerate the Hindu-Moslem clash in order to justify their own rule. They claim that Britain takes far too much of India's income for defense and administrative purposes and that it promotes social degradation by deriving so large a part of its revenue from taxes on alcoholic beverages. The Indians conclude that, regardless of the advantages of British rule, it can never satisfy a people determined to rule themselves.

3. LIFELINES OF THE EMPIRE

If India is still "the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown," the routes to India are among the major considerations of the British navy. Look at the center map and you will see how successfully the British have guarded the gateways to India.

Round the Cape

From England to India, there are three possible routes. The first, developed after the explorations of the fifteenth century, runs south around Africa at the Cape of Good Hope and then north through the Indian Ocean. South of Portugal, allied to Britain since the fourteenth century, you find this sea lane passing many British islands as well as many British possessions on both coasts of Africa. Warships, the British realize, are as dependent upon fuelling stations and bases as automobiles are upon gasoline stations and garages.

The Mediterranean Route

The Mediterranean route to India (page 6) is even more vital to Britain than the Cape route, as it is obviously a more direct route. Even before completion of the Suez Canal, the British maintained communications with India and the Orient along this historic route, using camel caravans between Port Said and Suez. Today, Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Suez, British

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Somaliland and Aden all guard this imperial lifeline. With Egypt an ally and Palestine a mandate, Britain tries to safeguard the Canal; with guarantees to Turkey and Greece, it tries to safeguard the approaches to the Canal. In both war and peace, moreover, Britain has sought to win the friendship of Moslem peoples in Arabia and the Near East.

The Overland Route

The third route to India, really an alternative to the second, runs across Syria, down the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, to the Persian Gulf. Iraq (which changed from a British mandate to a British ally in 1932) not only possesses valuable petroleum, which is piped across to the Mediterranean, but is also on the direct air line to the East. Britain has for several centuries vied with Russia for dominance in Iran (formerly Persia). It has protected the northwestern approaches to India by maintaining a sphere of influence in southern Iran, where it has important oil interests, and in keeping Afghanistan as a buffer state and the Northwest Frontier a British outpost.

The Eastern Gateways

The eastern gateways into the Indian Ocean are equally well guarded. At the "crossroads of the East," Singapore, the British have built a tremendous naval base, capable of sheltering and repairing their largest battleships. The Malay States surrounding Singapore, moreover, are the world's largest producers of rubber and tin, giving Britain control of two raw materials essential in both war and peace.

Beyond Singapore lie Britain's bases elsewhere in the Pacific. Hongkong, on the China coast, provides a first line of defense for British interests in the area now occupied by Japan. A long chain of islands running across the South Pacific gives additional protection to Australia and New Zealand and to British sea and air routes below the Equator.

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We should not forget, too, that Great Britain is concerned with its western as well as its eastern lines of communication. Across the North Atlantic, the largest channel of world trade, Britain can rely upon Canada and Newfoundland for assistance and use Halifax as a base for convoys and naval squadrons. Further south, Britain has Bermuda, the Bahamas, a long chain of islands encircling the Caribbean, British Guiana and the Falkland Islands.

4. THE COLONIAL PROBLEM

No mere catalogue of colonies and bases gives a true impression of the power and prestige of the British Empire. You have to add to these tangible items, which can be underlined on maps or in tables of statistics, the "imponderables" of diplomacy. In the first place, it is the variety and scope of these possessions which count. No single island or group of bases is vital, for Britain always has another line of defense somewhere else. No one Great Power could strike a death blow by capturing part of this Empire; victory, as Germany realizes, must come from a decision at the heart of the Empire. Only a coalition of foes could effectively strike at all the vital areas at once.

The economic value of these colonies is a second and equally significant consideration. Here you have a vast empire, tied together by the Ottawa agreements, with special privileges for the British. The Ottawa tariff arrangements give Britain and the Dominions a headstart in this intra-Empire trade. Within this great trading area, also, the British have maintained a stable currency—a "sterling bloc" covering one-fourth of the world's surface. India and the colonies provide more than just markets and raw materials; they offer a field for investment, for exploitation and for administration.

You can therefore easily see how all this adds up to political power and prestige. The map *is* painted pink and marked "British" at almost every vital corner. Even more important,

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at every corner there is a British civil servant, a British banker or a British businessman, promoting the interests of the homeland. The administrative ability of the British, unsurpassed in the modern world, accounts for much of their reputation for invincibility. The *Pax Britannica* rests in large part upon the intangible but easily recognizable element of British skill in diplomacy, imperial administration and business.

The British Argument

Now Britain's right to rule has been constantly challenged both by the people ruled and by competitors who would like to share that rule. The British justify their imperial policy as a contribution both towards self-government in undeveloped areas and toward international peace. They maintain that the "white man's burden" is a genuine responsibility and that they are helping to educate and train "peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world." They argue that British capital has spread modern civilization throughout the world and started a thousand different communities toward modern progress. They maintain, furthermore, that the British Empire offers stability and peace to a large section of the world and that it must continue to do so until some better system is ready to take its place.

The Other Side of the Story

Quite naturally, these arguments are bitterly disputed by many colonial subjects of His Majesty, who declare that the British have and hold their empire merely for the profit and power it offers. They argue that "the white man's burden" is a hypocritical cover for British imperialism.

To the Germans, Italians and Japanese, the British case is even more distasteful. These countries see no reason why they should be deprived of a share in the world's goods merely because they achieved national unity and industrial strength

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later than the British. The Germans particularly resent, rightfully perhaps, the Versailles clauses which deprived them of their colonies on the ground that they were unfit to govern other peoples. They refuse to accept the usual British argument that colonies are really an economic loss, that the mandate system has put many colonies under international control and that anybody—including Germany—has an equal right to invest and trade in overseas areas. The Germans merely point out that Britain, France and the other colonial powers seem to enjoy their colonial burden, that they rule the mandates as though they were their own colonies and that they shut out trade and investment competition within their possessions.

The colonial problem remains one of the most complex and difficult in international affairs. One can agree that the *Pax Britannica* has benefited many people beside the British, and perhaps laid a foundation for some larger world organization, and yet acknowledge the claims of other powers to equal rights in the colonial sphere. Still, merely redistributing colonial territories among the Great Powers would not end the wars that result from imperialism, or benefit the subject peoples. And international administration of all colonies under an expanded mandates system, perhaps the best solution of the colonial problem, is hardly feasible until the Great Powers settle larger questions of war and peace.

VII. Heart of the Empire

All of these Dominions, colonies and mandates are important in both peace and war, but the center of the Empire is still Great Britain. It is there that the war will be won or lost.

1. SOME GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

From the days of the Roman Empire right down to the World War, the center of world civilization and world power had

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been somewhere in Europe. Rome had transmitted its heritage of Greek culture to the rest of Europe, spread its system of law and radiated—century after century—the great religious and cultural ideas of modern history. Paris, too, had dominated the cultural development of the West, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it heralded the revolutionary movements which largely created our modern political structure. Vienna had been the center of Western music, Berlin the center of Western science and philosophy. London, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, had been *the* world capital, spreading British finance, British trade, British parliamentary institutions, British power, British culture into every continent. For two thousand years, Europeans had made history and had created civilization. For two thousand years, the rest of the world had revolved around Europe.

"Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way"

What happened during and after the World War was really this: the center of world power moved out of Europe, perhaps into the North Atlantic. This shift reminds one of the census maps which show our own "center of population" moving gradually westward, from a village in Indiana to a farmyard in Illinois. The center of world power has moved too, but to an inexact and undiscoverable spot. Washington, from the administration of Woodrow Wilson onward, became a new center of diplomatic and naval power. New York shared, but did not fully replace, London's supremacy in economic affairs. Detroit, Pittsburgh and Hollywood had greater effect on modern life than half the capitals of Europe. Tokyo, also, suddenly appeared as a regional capital of great power. And Moscow, in the twenty years after the World War, became a center of new and incalculable influence.

The result of this shift in power was the political and economic chaos of the post-war decades. Great Britain *couldn't*

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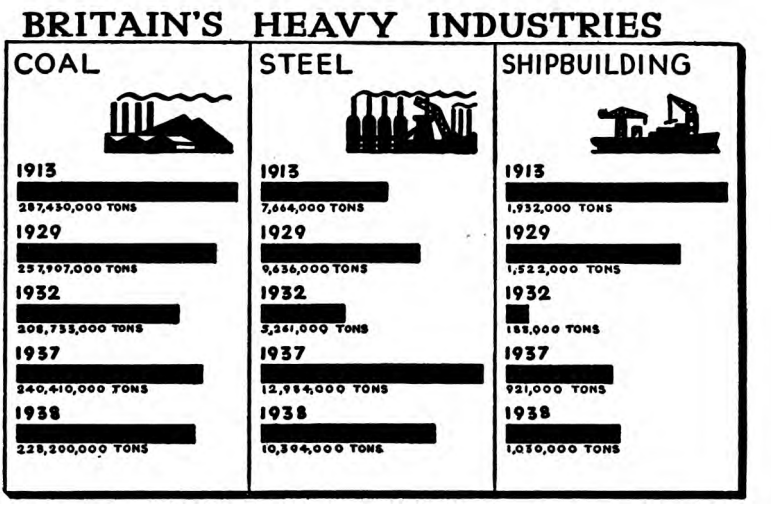

rule the world, and the United States *wouldn't*. From 1920 onward, both America and Britain were half in and half out of Europe. The British were either unwilling or unable, or both, to create a real system of collective security, and they refused until April 1939 (when it was too late) to accept any alliances or guarantees in Central Europe or the Balkans. The result was that the government of Europe in particular and the world in general went by default.

2. GREAT BRITAIN'S CHANGING ECONOMY

One of the Headline Books published in 1939, *Battles Without Bullets*, told the story of economic warfare, by which fifty or sixty governments have fought—using tariffs, quotas, currency depreciation and other weapons—to maintain and raise the standard of living of their people. From 1920 to 1939 the British participated in this battle without bullets. They suffered many heavy losses and won some astonishing victories.

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Both their defeats and their victories affected the Commonwealth's internal development and its relations with the rest of the world.

The first British victims of this battle without bullets were precisely those elements of the national economy which were so outstanding in the nineteenth century. As the chart on page 61 shows, three vital industries—steel, coal and shipbuilding—declined sharply during the 1932 depression, but recovered considerably in the following years.

And Some of the Results

Now many of these changes were to be expected, for Britain's mature economy was being challenged by younger and more aggressive rivals. But the effects of these changes were serious, almost disastrous, in some spheres.

An immediate result, and the most important from a social standpoint, was the rapid spread of unemployment. Long before the United States suffered from breadlines and relief projects, Great Britain experienced the effects of both technological improvement in industry and declining exports. The British unemployed in the post-war years averaged over 1,000,000; in the third quarter of 1932 they reached a record high of 2,843,000, or 23 per cent of the total registered workers. Unemployment insurance, assistance schemes and rising taxation were used to meet this blight of the twentieth century. Whole sections of the British Isles became "special areas," where almost the entire population became destitute and was supported by the government.

Another, long-term result, less obvious to the casual observer, was the strain which these economic setbacks placed on Britain's balance of international payments. In the first place, as we have just seen, Britain was losing her export markets. At the same time, other countries were taking advantage of Britain's free trade market and were dumping all the imports

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they could into Britain. In the second place, Britain's income on other items, which normally helped to balance her outgo on merchandise trade, was falling rapidly. Interest and dividends from overseas investments, income from shipping and insurance, commissions and other services—all these showed the same downward trend. Like any individual who sees his income on all current items dropping rapidly and who is forced to draw on his capital, the British became increasingly alarmed.

The climax came in 1931, after the central bank of Austria, the *Creditanstalt* in Vienna, closed its doors and a financial crisis swept across Central Europe. English bankers, whose credits were frozen in Austria and Germany, feared a flight of gold and capital from London. They insisted that the national credit be maintained by balancing the budget, while manufacturers demanded tariff protection for their declining industries. By September 1931 the panic had become acute. Great Britain then did what almost every country in similar circumstances has done. It changed its government, left the gold standard, raised tariffs, promoted exports, reduced government expenditures and reorganized the national economy.

In many ways, therefore, the year 1931 was a turning point in British history. Because of the change in government, the Labor Party was overwhelmingly defeated and the Conservative Party was given at least nine or more years of power. Britain's foreign policy, too, became cautious and hesitant during and even after the economic emergency.

The End of Free Trade

The most significant part of the Conservative Party's recovery program was the introduction of tariff duties and imperial preferences. Although predominantly a free trade country, Britain had previously imposed tariff duties on certain luxury and industrial products. The tariff act of 1932, however, placed duties of 10 per cent and higher on all luxury goods and on

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articles produced or likely to be produced in the United Kingdom. While this barrier was not as high as those surrounding the United States and many other countries, it was sudden and drastic enough to have far reaching effects. Economic nationalism had finally arrived in the British Isles.

This British tariff program became an Empire tariff program through the Ottawa agreements. These agreements were negotiated in 1932 and renewed in 1937. In this series of agreements with the Dominions, India, Southern Rhodesia and later Eire, the United Kingdom promised to continue exempting Empire goods from its new tariffs. It also agreed to favor Dominion products by keeping or raising its duties on certain imports from non-British countries. In return, the Dominions extended their preferences on British goods, chiefly by raising rates against non-British articles.

Imperial preference, moreover, was extended to the Colonies, thus ending the traditional "open door." Quite naturally, this Ottawa network—plus other important factors—tended to increase Britain's share in Empire markets and the Empire's share in British markets. Great Britain, furthermore, promoted its exports outside the Empire by negotiating commercial and financial agreements with numerous countries and by guaranteeing commercial credits through the Export Credits Guarantee Department in the Board of Trade. As a result of these various efforts, as well as of general world recovery, Britain's total exports greatly increased, as the chart on page 65 indicates.

Other Remedies

At the same time, the National government sought to revive the ailing national economy by other means. It reduced its total expenditures by cutting both defense and social services, as shown in the chart on page 67. Even more important, the government gave special attention—and financial assistance—

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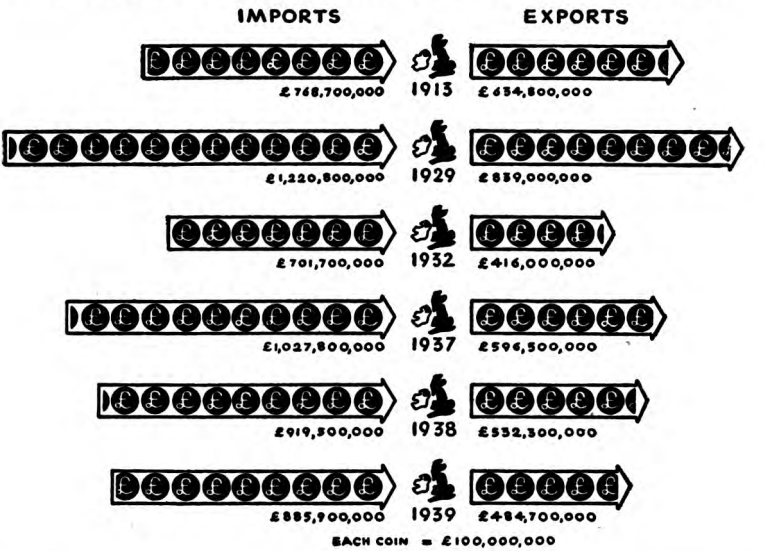
THE UNITED KINGDOM'S FOREIGN TRADE



to both industry and agriculture. It assisted the reorganization of the steel, textile and coal industries to promote greater efficiency. From 1935 onward even greater aid was given to the shipping industry. The government, for example, awarded tramp shipping an annual subsidy, offered additional advances for scrapping and building vessels, and helped the Cunard White Star Line complete the *Queen Mary* and the *Queen Elizabeth*.

In much the same way, Britain has assisted its agriculture, partly to protect the farmers and partly to bulwark national defense. To meet the agricultural depression of 1931, the government launched a vast AAA-like program, consisting of marketing schemes, subsidies, price-fixing, crop-restriction and limitation of imports through quotas and licenses. Later on, it turned to measures for increasing production for war needs.

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The result of all this government intervention—plus the advantages of great capital resources, skilled labor and management and, later, the rearmament program—was a striking recovery. By 1937, even the 1929 peak had been surpassed in many industries. Unemployment was cut to 1,376,000, or 10 per cent of the total workers, in the third quarter of 1937, but increased late in 1938 and again at the outbreak of war. Despite a lag in exports, new incentive was given to production for the home market. Britain's most striking accomplishment, moreover, was in a field which has remained weakest in America—domestic housing. Private and public enterprise managed to increase the construction of houses right through the depression and to replace some—but by no means all—of Britain's slums. (Britain's public housing accomplishments are described in the Headline Book called *New Homes for Old.*)

3. THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

To the average American, one of the most striking features of British life is the rigidity of its class system. Almost everyone seems to look up to someone higher in the social scale and down on someone lower in rank. In recent decades, owing to the World War and the rapid changes in economic life, this class system has grown less rigid. But the stratification is there. It is based upon wealth—inherited or otherwise acquired. It combines the landowning aristocracy of feudalism and the coupon-cutting aristocracy of industrialism, both merged into a hierarchy of social prestige and political power.

This hierarchy descends from the King, through the peerage, the baronets and the knights, to the upper middle class. While many members of the peerage bear the oldest and most famous names in British history—Cecil, Norfolk, Derby, Northumberland, for example—much of the great wealth of the landed aristocracy has been taxed out of existence. The majority of the present peerages were created in the nineteenth and

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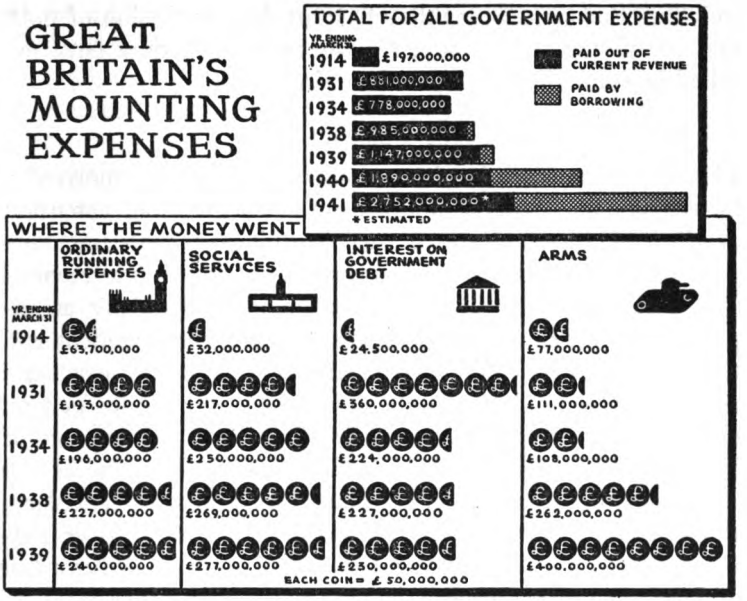

twentieth centuries (307 between 1906 and 1933, to be exact) and represent every sphere of modern industrial life.

With position and privilege goes power. Britain's ruling class has accumulated and perpetuated its power with remarkable efficiency and has proved the validity of the parable that "for whosoever hath, to him shall be given." The family trees in the House of Lords have their branches intertwined throughout the Conservative majority of the House of Commons, the Ministry, the top ranks of the civil service and the Conservative Party machine.

Whatever the disadvantages of government by the Old School Tie, there are certain advantages which many critics overlook. These great ruling families have paid for their privileges by assuming the responsibility for governing wisely

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and well. For generations they have made a profession of politics and public service and, for the most part, they have excelled in domestic and imperial administration.

The Influence of Public Opinion

This social structure has been constantly modified, moreover, by the impact of party politics, reform legislation, extension of the franchise and the normal workings of parliamentary government. Whatever the government in office, it is influenced to a remarkable degree by public opinion, especially as expressed in Parliament and the press. Unlike our President and Congress, who are elected for fixed terms, the British executive and legislature hold office only so long as they have the general confidence of the public. In theory, the Ministry—composed of Members of Parliament—holds office at the will of the House of Commons; in practice, however, the Ministry, particularly the Prime Minister, has gained considerable power over Parliament since the World War. Control of both the government and the party machines has tended to become centralized.

In the long run, nevertheless, the government's policy in both foreign and domestic affairs is ultimately shaped in accordance with public opinion. In December 1935, for example, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, was forced to resign amidst the Italo-Ethiopian war because he had drafted peace terms unfavorable to Ethiopia. In recent years, moreover, many American critics, in condemning Mr. Chamberlain's foreign policy, have overlooked the fact that it was really the British public's foreign policy. Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and their colleagues can be blamed for failing to lead British opinion during the past decade, but not for failing to follow it.

An essential part of the British political system is "His Majesty's Loyal Opposition," and the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons is paid an extra salary. The function of the Opposition is to criticize and improve legislation, to be

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prepared to replace the government and—above all else—to ask questions. The constant barrage of questions in the House of Commons shows up the strength and the weakness of the government's personnel and policy.

Political Parties

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were dominated by the Liberal Party, which ruled almost continuously from 1832 to 1922. It began as a "liberal" party by the nineteenth century definition, favoring *laissez-faire* and free trade. Popular in northern England, Scotland and Wales, it comprised the rising industrialist and merchant class and the nonconformist churches.

The Conservative Party represented the landed classes, the Church of England and the farmers and had its stronghold in the south and east of England. The split on economic lines became sharper in the twentieth century, when the Liberal Party combined free trade with social legislation—restriction of the power of the House of Lords, land reforms, trade union protection and graduated income taxes. The Conservative Party won the industrial and business interests by reviving its tariff platform and opposing the Liberal Party's "radicalism."

After the World War, the political division was greatly changed by the emergence of the Labor Party, which combined the trade unions and the Socialists. In 1922, Lloyd George's wartime coalition government cracked up, and the Liberals were caught between two parties more dynamic and better organized than their own. From that time onward the electorate tended more and more to divide between Left and Right, with the Liberals squeezed out entirely. The split was never as great as in many other countries, however, for the trade unions in the Labor Party were often conservative in policy and many of the younger Conservatives were progressive. Britain's governments alternated as follows: 1922-24, Con-

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servatives, under Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin; 1924, Labor, under Ramsay MacDonald; 1924-29, Conservatives, under Baldwin; 1929-31, Labor, under MacDonald; 1931-40, National Government, under MacDonald, Baldwin and Chamberlain.

Two events consolidated the power of the Conservative Party: the general strike of 1926 and the crisis of 1931. During a long and bitter strike in the coal mining industry, in 1926, the Trades Union Congress called a general strike—including railway and transport workers, printers and the workers in the iron and steel and building trades. The upper and middle classes regarded this strike almost as the equivalent of revolution and staunchly supported the government, thus forcing the trade unions to capitulate.

The 1931 crisis finished the job. As we have seen, the MacDonald government was caught in the financial hurricane which swept across Europe. Mr. MacDonald offered the resignation of his Cabinet and immediately formed a coalition government, with Stanley Baldwin second in command.

After launching the economic reforms which were mentioned earlier, the MacDonald-Baldwin "National government" won an overwhelming majority in the general election of October 1931. This electoral landslide set the pattern of British politics for the next nine years. The "National Labor" and "National Liberal" supporters of the government became virtually indistinguishable from the Conservatives.

Mr. Stanley Micawber

The supremacy of the Conservatives and their allies was reaffirmed in the election of 1935, which—unlike 1931—was fought on questions of foreign policy. In the spring of 1935 the international situation was steadily growing worse. Prime Minister Baldwin, who had replaced MacDonald in 1934, was dodging as many issues as he could and was hoping—like Mr. Micawber—that something would turn up.

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And something quite unexpected did turn up—a gigantic peace ballot. The League of Nations Union began testing public opinion by a mass ballot, something on the scale of the old *Literary Digest* polls. By June 1935 some 11,500,000 people —over one-third of the voting population of Great Britain— had answered the Union's questions. They expressed an overwhelming approval of the League of Nations and (by ten million votes) of economic sanctions against aggression. They approved military sanctions, but by a significantly smaller majority (6.7 million votes).

Prime Minister Baldwin and his colleagues—like all good politicians—had their ears to the ground and promptly began advocating collective security. That was quite a change in outlook for most of the Cabinet, but it worked. The election of November 1935 gave 432 seats out of a total of 615 to the National government (Conservative, National Liberal, etc.).

Throughout the Ethiopian conflict, which began shortly before this election, the government put the Peace Ballot into practice—adhering to the principle of collective security, applying economic sanctions and avoiding military sanctions.

4. PARTY POLITICS TODAY

The Labor Party has never fully recovered from its defeats in 1931 and 1935. To begin with, its two outstanding leaders— Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden—shattered the morale of the party by their rapid-change act in 1931. While in office they succeeded merely in consolidating their opponents, who feared that they might promote socialism, and discouraging their followers, who realized that they would not promote it. The Conservatives, moreover, managed to adopt and administer the milder portions of the Labor program and to get the credit for their humanitarian sympathies.

But it was foreign policy, ironically enough, which proved the final stumbling block of the Labor Party. While in office,

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the party had made its best record in foreign affairs. But the series of diplomatic crises and wars that followed 1931 revealed an intellectual and emotional conflict among the Laborites—in fact, among most Britishers and Frenchmen, and many Americans too. The Labor Party advocated collective security and allegiance to the League Covenant. It also favored peace and disarmament, and many of its members were pacifists.

For fifteen years this incompatibility had been purely theoretical. But the Ethiopian affair made it a practical issue: applying sanctions meant risking war with Italy. More recently, the Nazi regime has similarly divided the party: some wanted peace at any price, others wanted the overthrow of fascism at any price. With Labor thus divided, the Chamberlain government took credit for following *both* policies—peace in 1938 and anti-Hitlerism in 1939.

VIII. Mr. Chamberlain Changes His Mind

On the afternoon of September 30, 1938 the Prime Minister of Great Britain stepped out of an airplane at Heston Field, near London. Mr. Chamberlain drove in triumph to Buckingham Palace, where he was received by the King. Later in the evening he shouted to a cheering throng in front of his official residence at 10 Downing Street, "I believe it is peace for our time!" He had been to Munich, settled the Czechoslovakian dispute and signed an agreement of peace and friendship with Adolf Hitler.

On the morning of September 3, 1939 the same Prime Minister addressed a world-wide audience by radio. In a tired, sad voice Mr. Chamberlain declared that Hitler had not consented to withdraw from Poland and "that consequently this country is at war with Germany....It is the evil things that we shall be fighting against—brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution."

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Why did Mr. Chamberlain change his mind so completely between these two Septembers? And why did the British people, by and large, agree with him in both 1938 and 1939? To answer these questions, you have to penetrate one of the mysteries of the modern world—British foreign policy.

1. DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY

A recent Headline Book told the story of *The Peace That Failed;* this one will merely underline the British contributions to that failure. The basic difficulty was a disagreement between Britain and France as to the *method* for preserving peace. France had very definite ideas for achieving security from another German invasion: permanent disarmament of Germany; demilitarization of Germany's territory in the Rhineland; construction of frontier fortresses, now known as the Maginot Line; and establishment of a vast collective security system, through alliances with Germany's neighbors in eastern Europe and through the League of Nations.

The British flatly refused to accept all of this elaborate scheme. They agreed to the disarmament of Germany, but only as the first step toward general disarmament by the Great Powers. They accepted the demilitarized Rhineland, and in 1925 they guaranteed the project in the Locarno treaties. They welcomed the construction of the Maginot Line, which they later viewed as their own first line of defense. But the British would not accept any "entangling alliances" east of the Rhine and would not make any specific pledge of assistance.

Some Reasons for Britain's Attitude

Great Britain's unwillingness to cooperate in France's encirclement of Germany resulted partly from American policy. In refusing to ratify the Versailles Treaty, guarantee France and join the League, the United States had pulled out a large section of the foundation underlying the new European peace

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structure. The British had then promptly pulled out their section of the foundation, too, as they had no intention of becoming the League's policeman without the cooperation of the United States.

The British, moreover, were sympathetic to the German underdog and resentful of France's post-war attitude toward Germany. The Conservatives desired to keep Germany prosperous in order to discredit Communism both inside and outside the country. The Labor Party was anxious to preserve democracy in the German Republic, established in 1919, and to uphold the German Social Democratic Party.

The British, furthermore, desired to return to their historic concept of balance of power, which—as Chapter II suggested—required that they keep free of specific commitments in order to throw their weight on the side of the weaker power. They were willing to consider security arrangements for France in *Western* Europe, where they were concerned about the Lowlands anyway, but not for France's satellites in *Eastern* Europe.

Britain and France continued year after year to seek a formula which would combine disarmament and security. Britain refused to give any guarantees; France refused to accept Germany's demands for equality in armaments. Their quest came to an abrupt end in October 1933, when Germany left the League of Nations and the World Disarmament Conference.

2. FAR EASTERN INTERLUDE

The first real test of the League system, and of British policy, came not in Europe but in the Far East. In September 1931 Japan began its invasion of Manchuria and its defiance of the League Council. Great Britain, and France too for that matter, refused to consider any action—economic or military sanctions—that might lead to war with Japan.

In terms of the basic factors outlined in Chapter VII, this negative attitude of Britain is understandable. In the first place,

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Britain could stop Japan only by using, or threatening to use, the whole of its naval strength. And the British were naturally reluctant even to contemplate such action unless they had American support. President Hoover and Secretary Stimson went to unprecedented lengths to indicate that American support would be forthcoming, but the British were not impressed. Rightly or wrongly, they believed that the United States would, as usual, end up with an offer of mere "moral" support, not backed up by any promise of force.

Britain's Attitude Toward Japan

What is even more important, the British government did not really *want* to stop Japan. Great Britain in 1931-32 was wholly preoccupied, as we have seen, with economic troubles at home; it desired above all else to avoid adventures abroad. More than that, Britain wanted to keep and increase its trade with Japan and to safeguard its investments in China. The British were constantly harassed by disorder in China and believed that Japan would bring law and order to Manchuria and North China and leave the British spheres of influence alone. Finally, the Dominions put in a word or two against British intervention. Canada favored peace, as its western coasts might be endangered by a war between Japan and either Britain or America. While Australia and New Zealand feared Japan, they preferred to see its forces move *westward* into China than *southward* in the Pacific.

In 1937, Japan once again invaded the mainland, hoping this time to conquer the whole of China and establish a "new order" in Asia. In this conflict the Japanese appeared to be deliberately intimidating the British and testing their resistance to a rival imperialism. The Chamberlain government did not pick up the gauntlet, however, and in July 1939 it formally agreed not to interfere in the regions under Japanese control. The Far East was still a sideshow; Europe was still the main tent.

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3. THE SHOWDOWN

After Hitler's rise to power, in 1933, Germany became even more than ever before the central problem of European politics and the main issue in British foreign policy. The showdown came early in 1936, while the Italo-Ethiopian conflict was still going on. On March 7, 1936, Hitler commenced the first of his weekend coups. With breathtaking suddenness he dispatched German troops to the Rhine bridgeheads.

The whole structure of European peace was now at stake. Britain and France, however, failed to act. The British were at loggerheads with Italy over League sanctions in defense of Ethiopia, and they felt that Germany was only occupying and fortifying her own territory anyway. But, by constructing his Siegfried Line along the Rhineland frontier, Hitler could now make the French army a prisoner behind the Maginot Line and so isolate France's allies in eastern Europe. Thus in a single weekend Hitler had encircled his encirclers.

Although they required consummate timing and bluff on Hitler's part, as well as the willing cooperation of Italy, the events of the next three years were the logical consequence of the Rhineland coup. After all, if Britain and France failed to defend the heart of the Versailles and Locarno treaties, why should they defend anything else? So argued Hitler and Mussolini. Until September 3, 1939 they were perfectly right.

4. "PEACE WITH HONOR"

The agenda of the Fascist powers, at least as it was ultimately carried out, ran as follows: the Saar, 1935 (returned to Germany by plebiscite); Ethiopia, 1935-36; the Rhineland, 1936; Spain, 1936-38; Austria, Sudetenland, 1938; Czechoslovakia, Memel, Albania, Danzig and Poland, 1939. At no time did Germany and Italy seriously threaten British or French territories. They merely nibbled away at areas which, in the final analysis, were vital to British and French safety.

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Spain

The Spanish civil war, which began in July 1936, proved a golden opportunity for Germany and Italy. By intervening on behalf of General Franco they could overthrow one of the most radical governments in Europe, curb any attempt of the Soviet Union to establish a Communist ally in Spain, offer a potential challenge in France's backyard, menace British and French sea communications and get some valuable experience in modern warfare.

For a variety of reasons, the British government stood idly by throughout the Spanish war. Britain's policy of "non-intervention" was based partly upon reluctance to interfere in the internal affairs of another country and partly upon unwillingness to involve Britain in an "ideological" struggle that might easily have become a general European war. It resulted also from the Conservatives' unwillingness to support a radical regime which was being aided by the Soviet Union, their belief that Britain's investments in Spain would be safer under a conservative government and their desire to keep Italy's goodwill.

The British succeeded in confining hostilities to Spain; but the Germans and Italians scored a major diplomatic victory.

Austria

By March 1938, Austria in turn had become a pushover for Herr Hitler. Nazi propaganda and penetration had increased the disunity of the country, while the Schuschnigg government, like the Dollfuss government before it, had lost the support of the working classes. After he had had a conference with Hitler on February 12, 1938, and had learned the fate that was in store for his country, Chancellor Schuschnigg asked for Anglo-French assistance. But the British Cabinet was divided about its policy toward both Austria and Italy. Prime Minister Chamberlain desired an immediate agreement with Italy, while Foreign Secretary Eden insisted that Italy should withdraw its

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troops from Spain first as evidence of good faith. The result was the resignation of Mr. Eden, on February 20, 1938. Three weeks later, the British deplored but did not challenge Germany's invasion of Austria.

Czechoslovakia

After the Rhineland and Austria, a Czechoslovakian crisis was inevitable. Hitler was determined, after the Austrian *Anschluss*, to finish his announced task of incorporating all Germans into the Third Reich. By April 1938 he began his drive against Czechoslovakia. He perfected his technique for fomenting rebellion among the Sudeten Germans, intimidating the Czech government and warning the Western Powers to keep hands off the dispute. Thanks to the refusal of Britain and France to furnish them military support, in September 1938 the Czechs had to give up not merely the Sudeten area but also their chief fortifications and many of their industrial centers.

Why Britain Knuckled Under

Many publicists have made the mistake of trying to explain Britain's policy throughout this affair in terms of one or two statesmen, or one or two logical deductions. On the contrary, Mr. Chamberlain's surrender at Munich (and it was a surrender) was the result of all the many different post-war trends in British life which we have been analyzing.

In the first place, neither the British government nor the British public clearly saw the relation between the Czech crisis and Britain's long-term strategic aims. The public, still insular in outlook, continued to regard Eastern Europe as outside Britain's sphere of influence. They would defend France and the Lowlands when the time came; but they failed to realize that it would be exceedingly difficult to do so after Germany had disposed of her opponents in the East. Throughout the dispute the Chamberlain Cabinet maintained Britain's traditional policy of avoiding commitments.

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In the second place, the Chamberlain Cabinet, despite the warnings of both Laborites and Conservatives, constantly hoped that Hitler would settle down and come to terms. Mr. Chamberlain, an old-fashioned business man, was accustomed to negotiating contracts with other reliable and reasonable businessmen; he was most definitely *not* accustomed to dealing with fanatical nationalists. It is entirely probable that the Prime Minister honestly believed Hitler's repeated declarations that he had no further territorial ambitions in Europe.

The Attitude of the Conservatives

Apparently Mr. Chamberlain had shared the view of many outstanding Conservative leaders that Hitler was both a reasonable man and a conservative force in Europe. Far too much was made of the "Cliveden Set," which newspapermen decided was a specific group of powerful individuals who were wholly "Fascist" in their approach to British domestic and foreign policy. But among the Conservative leaders there were many who regarded the U.S.S.R. as Public Enemy No. 1 because Communism represented an undeniable threat to Britain's domestic and imperial economy. Many of these Conservatives regarded Nazi Germany as a dike against revolution from the East. (Hitler and Mussolini both proclaimed themselves the enemies of Communism, and Communists the world over regarded them as such.)

There is perhaps a fourth and subtler factor in the Conservatives' normal approach to European politics. Some of the men who govern Great Britain think and live in terms of power. They recall with pleasure the nineteenth century, in which the so-called Concert of Europe used small countries and colonies as chessmen in the game of power politics. They dislike any encroachment upon the privileges of Britain in general and themselves in particular. They detest the League of Nations system, by which minor powers can talk and vote in the

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Assembly and occasionally in the Council. The Sudetenland dispute involved a major power, Germany, and a minor power, Czechoslovakia. According to the traditions of Conservative diplomacy, Britain should in agreement with the major power dispose of the minor power according to its deserts.

Pacifism and Unpreparedness

A fifth explanation for Britain's policy in the Czech crisis is to be found in the desire for peace which permeated the population. Men of all parties realized the cost of war and were willing to try almost anything before risking hostilities. It was this sentiment which underlay Mr. Chamberlain's appeasement policy. The British realized in 1938, as they had in every year since the World War, that Germany's claims for equality and revision of the Versailles Treaty would have to be met. Unfortunately, the British began pushing conciliation and appeasement just ten or fifteen years too late. They succeeded merely in enhancing their reputation for weakness.

Finally, Great Britain simply was not ready to fight, even if —despite all the above objections—it had wanted to. British rearmament did not begin until 1937 and was not properly under way until 1939. Mr. Baldwin had postponed it in 1935 because of the impending election, and Mr. Chamberlain had not actively pushed it because of his desire not to interfere with business. Despite increasing expenditures in 1937 and 1938, therefore, Britain's defense forces were unprepared at the height of the Czech crisis. Anti-aircraft defenses were lacking for the expected *Blitzkrieg*, or "lightning war," and airplane production was inadequate for counterattack. As Britain had just begun conscription, she was not ready to send a large expeditionary force to France. Only the navy was ready for immediate war.

Whether this unpreparedness was a valid reason for capitulating at Munich, or just an alibi to cover some of the motives

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already mentioned, it is difficult to say. We must remember, too, that, to save the Czechs, Britain and France would have had to launch the Second World War. They were far better prepared to launch it in 1939 on behalf of Poland.

5. MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S CHANGE OF HEART

After the immediate relief at the avoidance of war had worn off, the British began to grow more and more alarmed. Herr Hitler continued to insult the British government; he unleashed a new attack upon the Jews; and he indicated that his "push to the East" was by no means ended.

The turning point came on March 15, 1939, when Hitler occupied Prague and most of what was left of Czechoslovakia after Munich. From that moment onward, war was almost inevitable. All of the many reasons which had caused Britain to hesitate and eventually to back down in 1938 became invalid in 1939.

The Ides of March, 1939 ended British insularity once and for all. Alike in the Cabinet and in the lowliest pub it was finally realized that the European balance of power had once again become unbalanced. By dominating Central and Eastern Europe, Hitler would soon be free to move westward. He would not only have hamstrung all of his potential enemies in the East—except the Soviet Union—but he would also have gained control of economic resources to help him withstand a British blockade. Danzig and the Polish Corridor, which textbooks in the 1920's always listed as "danger spot No. 1," thus came into their own. They became Britain's sticking-point in the final struggle for European hegemony.

The Final Disillusionment

The occupation of Prague constituted an insult and a humiliation to the British people in general and Mr. Chamberlain in particular. The Prime Minister had signed a contract which

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the other partner had publicly and dishonorably broken. So Mr. Chamberlain began to turn upon his erstwhile partner with all the fury of a businessman who has been betrayed and an individual who has been publicly humiliated.

More than that, even the Conservative leaders began to have qualms about the essential "conservatism" of the Nazi regime, for that regime began to look more and more like a "Brown Bolshevism," and "Brown Bolshevism" might be just as unpleasant for property owners as the "Red" variety. The Conservatives' final disillusionment was postponed, however, until August 23, 1939, when the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact was signed. Whatever complex motives may have led each party to sign this agreement, it was clear now that Hitler's Third Reich was not exactly a dike against Communism.

In other ways, too, March 15, 1939 may be counted a turning point. We suggested that the British Conservatives were willing to share the control of Europe with other Great Powers, including Germany. But that is not to imply that they would welcome Germany and Italy as superior, and Britain and France as inferior, powers. They would certainly not welcome a German-Italian-Russian coalition dictating to a British-French minority. This, in other words, was peace at too great a price.

As for the British people as a whole, they were completely fed up with Hitlerian diplomacy. The unending series of diplomatic crises, demands and counterdemands, mobilizations and propaganda campaigns had become intolerable. Conservative, Liberal and Laborite agreed that even war was better than this kind of peace. They agreed that the most important things in British life—parliamentary government, civil liberty, religious tolerance, simple honesty and decency—were at stake.

The Munich armistice, moreover, had given Britain a year of grace for rearmament. In 1939 she was strong enough in air, sea and land forces to meet Hitler on his own terms of threat

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and bluff. In other words, if Hitler and his Foreign Minister, Von Ribbentrop, had really understood the British character and British public opinion, they would never have gambled on keeping Britain out of the Polish conflict. They would have realized that for Great Britain, the Ides of March, 1939 ended the "post-war period" once and for all.

IX. The Empire Under Fire

Today the British Empire is under fire on several fronts: military, economic and political. To win this war on the military front, the Allies must do three things: meet any German air attack by adequate defenses and launch an effective counter-attack; retain control of the seas and weaken Germany by blockade; and defeat the German army in the field. It is possible, of course, that the Allies could defeat Hitler by something less than this threefold program—by a military stalemate and negotiated settlement, for example, or by tightening the blockade until revolution begins in Germany. But the Allies have to plan and prepare for a victory as decisive as that of 1918.

1. THE MILITARY FRONT

Having learned their lesson in the Czechoslovakian crisis, the Allies immediately put air defense at the top of their agenda. Throughout 1939 both Britain and France rushed their anti-aircraft defenses and air-raid precautions and greatly increased their production of military planes. Both the Allies, moreover, placed increasingly large orders in the United States. By the end of 1939 the Allied orders and contracts pending called for over 3000 planes.

As the initial stalemate on the Western Front eliminated the need for large expeditionary forces in the opening months of the war, the Dominions, like Great Britain, concentrated on

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air defense. Canada became the center of an Empire air training scheme, which will turn out many thousands of pilots and technicians. The total cost for three years is estimated at $600,000,000, to be divided among Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain in proportion to the number of pupils trained from each. In addition to this cooperative venture, each of the Dominions is speeding its own aerial defenses.

It's Up To The Navy

But the air weapon alone will not win the war. Experience in China, Ethiopia, Spain, Poland and Finland shows that airplanes can cripple but not conquer the enemy. Although endeavoring to keep their air force equal or superior to Germany's, the Allies are relying even more upon seapower. Great Britain, which from the days of Queen Elizabeth has been accustomed to naval warfare, is again fighting with the weapon it knows and likes best. The task of the British navy—now as always—is manifold: to defeat or checkmate the enemy's battle fleet, to drive his commerce from the seas, to protect the British Isles against raids or invasion, and to defend Britain's commerce and the communication lines of its armies abroad.

In the World War, the British navy managed to accomplish all of these objectives. Britain's supremacy in battleships was so great that the German fleet did not dare to venture out—except for the Battle of Jutland in May, 1916. Historians are still arguing about that battle, but at least it forced the Germans back into their harbors, where they stayed until the Armistice. The British commander, Admiral Jellicoe, moved cautiously through the Battle of Jutland, for, as Winston Churchill rightly said, Jellicoe was the only person in the world who could lose the war in a single afternoon.

For almost twenty years after Jutland the British navy did not have quite the prestige of previous centuries. At the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22, Britain accepted battle-

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ship equality with the United States and—in effect, at least—gave Japan supremacy in Far Eastern waters. Moreover, in the post-war years the British battle fleet was badly coordinated, for its fifteen ships varied in speed, tonnage and gun power.

Under the 1937 rearmament program, however, Great Britain set out to remedy the defects resulting from naval limitation treaties and budget economies. It acquired forty-three new warships in 1938-39 and expected to add another sixty ships (over one a week), totaling 120,000 tons, in 1939-40. By March 1939 Britain had over 600,000 tons under construction, including a virtually new battle fleet of seven capital ships (two others planned), as well as six aircraft carriers, forty-three cruisers, forty-three destroyers and nineteen submarines.

Although seriously hampered by Germany's air power, the British navy is still equaling its World War achievements.

The Task of the Army

But even supremacy at sea is valuable in only a negative sense; that is, so long as Britain has control of the sea Germany cannot win. But neither can the Allies win, in all probability, without more positive action—a complete defeat of the German army. This means, of course, going far beyond the strategy of defense which both France and Britain had developed after the World War. As we emphasized earlier, France had depended for its security upon its Maginot Line, its alliances, the demilitarized Rhineland and the disarmament of Germany. By 1939 all of these had gone except the Maginot Line.

Great Britain, meanwhile, had adopted the same type of strategic thinking, publicized in the writings of Captain Liddell Hart, until recently the influential military correspondent of *The Times* of London. Great Britain, this theory runs, should concentrate its efforts on building a compact, mobile, highly mechanized force and avoid at all cost the mass armies and mass attacks of the World War. For over the War Office



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hangs the shadow of Passchendaele, the village in Flanders where, in the late summer of 1917, the British lost 300,000 lives to no avail. Neither Britain nor France will want to risk an offensive against the Westwall unless certain of breaking through. But to win the war, the Allies have to break through somewhere—perhaps in Scandinavia or the Balkans, or both.

2. THE ECONOMIC FRONT

Modern wars are won by men in factories as well as by men in trenches, by dollars as well as by bullets, by wheat, ships, iron ore, oil and gold. Scientific development of modern weapons has vastly increased the cost of war. Victory tends to go, therefore, to the country which can feed and supply its troops most efficiently.

As in the World War, Great Britain entered this conflict with many important advantages in war potential. British heavy industry can certainly equal its World War output. Britain's financial resources—gold, foreign exchange, negotiable foreign securities—are incomparably greater than Germany's. Britain, furthermore, has more employable labor at its command than in 1914.

But machines, money and men are of little use unless organized for wartime production. The British government—dominated by men from the business world—was very slow in interfering with the normal processes of trade for purposes of war. It was only in 1939 that the government launched the economic mobilization which Germany had started in 1933. Turning a peacetime economy into a war machine takes time, and Britain has not finished the job even yet.

Britain's Weakness—Food

Great Britain's weakness, now as in 1914, is in agriculture, for the country must normally import almost three-fourths of its food. British production of many foodstuffs has greatly in-

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creased since 1914, but then its population is 4,700,000 larger than at that time, too. The government has attacked the problem on several fronts: by storing reserves for war emergency, by promoting greater production, by purchasing supplies from the Dominions, by defending its communications and by rationing such foodstuffs as butter, bacon and sugar.

Obviously, one vital element in this question of food supply is the merchant marine. Between 1913 and 1938 Britain's merchant marine had declined from 4,304 vessels to 2,608 (excluding oil tankers and ships under 1,000 tons), or over 39 per cent; and from 16,419,000 tons to 13,443,000, or 18 per cent. But this deficiency was somewhat balanced by the greater size and speed of many vessels, by the additional shipping owned by the Dominions and by Britain's own gigantic building program.

The Blockade

Then, too, there is the other side of the picture—Britain's blockade of Germany. We have mentioned the part which the British navy is playing in cutting off Germany's supplies from overseas and in stopping Germany's exports. It is naturally difficult to estimate the effect of these measures upon the Nazi economy, but it can be assumed that the strain has been felt. It is the purpose of Britain to tighten the economic screws until victory is possible or revolution overthrows Hitler.

But a long war is dangerous not only for Germany but for Britain and the Dominions as well. The very outbreak of war was a defeat for the British Empire, since the Empire is so peculiarly dependent upon normal, peacetime trade and investment. Every day of war adds to the public debt of each belligerent, distorts its foreign trade and further dislocates international finance. Every day of war piles up burdens and troubles for some future day of reckoning. To meet interest charges on public debts, to amortize those debts, to restore normal trade, to rebuild what was left of the international

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capitalist economy in 1939—all this will strain governments everywhere, but especially the governments of the British Commonwealth, whatever the outcome of the war itself.

3. THE POLITICAL FRONT

One glance at the newspapers these days is enough to show that this war is being fought not only on military and economic grounds but on political grounds as well. As the founder and prophet of National Socialism, Adolf Hitler has led a revolution against all existing economic, political and religious institutions.

For Great Britain, the revolutionary concepts of Nazi Germany present an obvious and terrible challenge. In the first place, Britain is still a stronghold of capitalism and lives on the normal activities of a free-working economy—interest on investments, foreign trade, banking, etc. Any threat to conservative capitalism—whether from Moscow or Berlin—is a threat to Britain. The propertied classes are naturally more alarmed about social change than the underprivileged portions of the population, but even the latter are largely opposed to Communism or Fascism.

In the second place, Great Britain is still a stronghold of parliamentary government and clings to its traditions of political freedom. The British people—Conservative, Liberal or Labor—regard the Nazi system as a direct menace to their institutions. Europe, they feel, is not large enough to hold both democracy and dictatorship if the latter is of a dynamic variety managed by a Napoleon.

Finally, the whole of British life is impregnated with a religious tradition, combining the Anglican faith of the established Church and the passionately Protestant fervor of the nonconformist churches. The Nazi struggle with both the Catholic and the Lutheran churches of Germany has not gone unnoticed in the British Isles.

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To combat and defeat National Socialism, however, is more easily said than done. For the British find it difficult to answer all of Hitler's accusations against their own institutions and to appeal effectively to people in either Germany or Eastern Europe. Whatever advantages a free-working capitalism may have had in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (and they were very great advantages), to the inhabitants of Central Europe after the World War the disadvantages were far more apparent than the advantages. Unemployment, poverty, unstable currency, falling prices, declining trade—these became the symbols of capitalism. In Germany and Austria particularly, people lost faith in either an orthodox, conservative economy or a Marxist Utopia; they turned to a nationalist party which challenged both camps and offered emotional remedies for despair and futility.

To command respect in Central Europe, then, the British must persuade the impoverished masses that the Bank of England is more valuable to them than National Socialism. The British must prove, at home and abroad, that capitalism can be made to work efficiently.

For the British, the political aspect of this problem is also hazardous. Parliamentary government was discredited in Germany and other countries; the party system turned into party chaos; and freedom became license. Hitler won support and held power partly because he brought order, prestige and authority to Germany. The Germans cannot be expected to overthrow the Hitler government, however much some of them may dislike it, merely in order to revive the Republic, introduce Communism, renew internal dissension, restore the Hohenzollerns or put the army in control. They must be convinced that a British victory would leave them the national unity and the equality in international affairs gained by Hitlerism, while freeing them of its excesses.

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Not the least important development on the political front will be the quickening pace of social change in Britain itself. Conscription, evacuation and air raid precautions, to say nothing of taxation, are swiftly changing the whole life of Britain.

If the war should continue a long time, it might render the present social structure almost unrecognizable. Conscription is essentially a leveling-off process, placing the son of a wealthy peer and the son of an impoverished miner on the same footing. The evacuation of the dangerous areas is also making both the upper and the lower classes aware that vast differences exist between the housing, health and educational opportunities of the rich and those of the poor. Many of the children who have been taken from the city into clean, country homes will probably never again be content with the slums. Furthermore, the bombing plane is no respecter of persons. What might happen to the political and social life of Great Britain if incessant bombing devastated its major cities is truly unpredictable.

X. Decline and Fall?

We have discussed the past and present development of the British Commonwealth. What about its future? The path of history is strewn with the fragments of once mighty empires—Egyptian, Persian, Roman, Mayan, Aztec, Spanish, Napoleonic, to name only a few of the most familiar.

Our own century, in fact, has shown an unusually high mortality rate for empires. Spain lost the remnants of its colonial possessions at the turn of the century. China became a republic in 1911. During or after the World War, the Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, Romanovs and Ottomans were toppled from their thrones. Four other modern empires—French, Bel-

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gian, Dutch and Portugese—depend more or less upon the existence of British seapower.

Will the largest and greatest of all the empires suffer the decline and fall of its once magnificent predecessors?

Without doubt, this war and its aftermath will bring on a severe test of the Empire's unity and strength. Great Britain, more than any other Great Power, needed peace and peacetime prosperity. The British people were "pacifist" between 1918 and 1938 because they knew full well the price of war. They had nothing to gain, everything to lose, in another war. They postponed the inevitable as long as possible because they knew that war, once started, becomes a Pandora's box of trouble.

"Empire," moreover, is synonymous with "*status quo*." Almost any revolt, any outbreak of violence, any demand for territorial change anywhere touches a British interest or sphere of influence. Like any prosperous banker or industrialist, old John Bull hates and fears all strikers, picketers, soapbox orators and similar "trouble-makers."

Friends and Enemies

From long experience in empire management, old John Bull has learned how to meet strikes and protests within his own domain. Through a well-perfected assortment of techniques—"divide and rule," compromise and concede if necessary, surrender shadow but not substance of power, withdraw gracefully as a last resort—old John Bull has granted self-government in section after section of his vast empire. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa—these are the living symbols of a wise and skillful imperialism. Ireland, India, Palestine, the West Indies—these are more difficult problems, often mismanaged but now, perhaps, on the way toward solution.

This policy of granting self-government and surrendering power, albeit reluctantly at times, has served the British well.

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In the World War and in this new conflict, the autonomous Dominions have remained loyal and joined the fight. And no people fight more bravely and tenaciously than a free people.

But this alone is not enough to preserve the Empire. After all, Germany is only one of several Great Powers that would welcome the Empire's decline and fall. The Soviet Union combines a dual threat—territorial and ideological—to Great Britain. Japan is already twisting the British Lion's tail out in the Far East. Italy is striving to dominate the Mediterranean.

Thus, in a world of seven Great Powers, the British Empire faces four actual or potential enemies: Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan and Italy. It has only France as an ally and the United States as a friend.

After the War, What?

Even if the British Empire wins this war, what then? In some ways, its most difficult task will come *after* the conflict, particularly after a long and destructive conflict. Great Britain won the last war, but suffered immeasurably from the loss of its best men, from the dislocation of its trade, from new burdens of debt and taxation, from the spread of blighted areas and the rapid increase of unemployment. Its Dominions, as a direct result of the war, stressed independence and nationalism, raised tariffs to protect their new industries and helped to weaken any system of collective security in Europe.

Perhaps even more important, Britain entered this war relatively weaker in many respects than in 1914. In the past twenty years, especially in the past ten years, it has looked like a tired old country ruled by a group of tired old men, anxious only to avoid decision and action. It has seemed to lack the leadership, strength and will power to win another world war. Can Britain fight another war, both its enemies and its friends are asking, without exhausting its not inexhaustible resources of manpower and material? If Western Europe struggles on

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through years of devastating war, may not world power shift almost entirely to the U. S. A. and the U. S. S. R.?

If the British Empire should lose this war, it would leave an enormous vacuum for someone to fill. The destruction of the British navy and of the British imperial system would leave some tremendous problems on *our* doorstep. The fall of Singapore, for example, might give Japan a completely free hand throughout Asia—unless we chose to intervene. The collapse of British seapower would require our navy to defend the entire Western Hemisphere, and much of the Atlantic and Pacific as well, against a possible coalition of foes.

A British victory, on the other hand, might bring problems of another kind. The longer this war continues, the more regimented the British economy becomes and the more coordinated the British and French foreign trade controls become. The Allies are compelled to fight Germany on its own terms, with an Anglo-French totalitarian economy as a major weapon. After the war, we may find Allied competition exceedingly difficult to meet. We may, in turn, have to participate in a world trade war on the Allies' terms.

A stalemate, furthermore, may find the British even less able to maintain the balance of power, just as the World War weakened them in that respect. In that case, whether we like it or not, we may find it necessary to do some balancing of power ourselves.

Europe's Dilemma

Perhaps the Empire's survival depends upon the imponderables of world affairs—diplomatic skill and statesmanship, moral prestige and a will to survive. In the event of a British victory, it will certainly depend, in some measure, upon the nature of the peace settlement in Europe. If a durable peace can be arranged, perhaps through some new balance of power or some form of European federation, then Britain can profit as

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always from the prosperity that peace brings to the trading and investing nations. If the next peace, like Versailles, merely sows another crop of dragon's teeth, then Britain will face the same old series of diplomatic crises, revolutions and wars all over again.

Organizing a durable peace, however, is an extremely difficult task. For Great Britain, at least, it means finding some compromise between German and British interests throughout the world. Twice in only 25 years these interests have proved to be irreconcilable to such an extent that Britain's balance of power has disintegrated into world war.

Since Great Britain will not consent to German domination of the Continent, what compromise might be possible? An economic union or a federation in Europe would be farcically incomplete without Britain and might only lead to a new conflict, with a United States of Europe on one side and Great Britain on the other. On the other hand, the British can hardly enter an economic union without destroying the Ottawa agreements, or a political federation without seriously altering the present structure of the Empire. Europe cannot live with Britannia; it cannot live without her, either!

But these possible outcomes are still awaiting a military decision. We can hardly discuss the future of the British Empire until we know whether its war in Europe is going to end in victory, defeat or a prolonged stalemate.

We can only remind ourselves that Great Britain gained and held its empire through a combination of invincible naval strength and invincible political skill—or at least through an *appearance* of both. It can avoid the decline and fall that have been the doom of all previous empires only by continuing that combination of strength and skill in war and in peace.

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SUGGESTED READING

There are countless books on the history of Great Britain and the Empire, but very few comprehensive studies of current events in India and the Dominions. The following list includes only a few recent works of general interest.

Great Britain

ANGELL, NORMAN. *For What Do We Fight?* New York. Harper. 1939. A discussion—eloquent but somewhat long and diffuse—of Britain's war aims by a leading advocate of collective security, stressing "the British argument" for colonies outlined on page 58. Very readable.

AUDAX. *Men in Our Time.* New York. McBride and Company. 1940. Sprightly, informative sketches of nine British statesmen. Easy to read.

HAXEY, SIMON. *England's Money Lords.* New York. Harrison-Hilton. 1939. A revealing survey of the family trees and financial connections of Conservative Members of Parliament. Fairly technical.

KIRKPATRICK, HELEN P. *Under the British Umbrella.* New York. Scribners. 1939. The best recent interpretation of Britain's domestic politics and foreign relations, interestingly written by a young American journalist. Readable.

LOHRKE, EUGENE AND ARLINE. *The Long Watch in England.* New York. Henry Holt. 1940. Well-written impressions of confusion, demoralization and decadence, by two Americans living in an English village. Easy, entertaining, but not wholly reliable.

NICOLSON, HAROLD. *Why Britain Is at War.* New York. Penguin Books. 1939. Charmingly written but somewhat sketchy statement of Britain's war aims by a distinguished publicist. Very readable.

WOLFERS, ARNOLD. *Britain and France between Two Wars.* New York. Harcourt Brace. 1940. Scholarly analysis of the Anglo-French search for security and disarmament, as briefly outlined on pages 73-74. Technical.

The Empire

ADAMS, JAMES TRUSLOW. *Empire on the Seven Seas.* New York. Scribners. 1940. Well-written, pro-British history of the Empire since 1784. Very readable.

BRIFFAULT, ROBERT. *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire.* New York. Simon and Schuster. 1938. Brilliant, provocative, violently anti-British. Very readable.

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GREEN, JAMES FREDERICK. "The British Dominions at War." *Foreign Policy Reports.* February 1, 1940. "India's Renewed Struggle for Independence." *Foreign Policy Reports.* June 1, 1940. Brief, detailed studies of recent developments. Technical.

MacCORMAC, JOHN. *Canada: America's Problem.* New York. Viking Press. 1940. Clear, stimulating appraisal of Canadian affairs by the former Montreal correspondent of *The New York Times.* Fairly readable.

McGUIRE, PAUL. *Australia: Her Heritage, Her Future.* New York. Stokes. 1939. Delightful combination of travel, history, folklore and politics, illustrated by superb photographs and ably written. Readable, entertaining.

MUGGERIDGE, MALCOLM. *The Sun Never Sets: The Story of England in the Nineteen Thirties.* New York. Random House. 1940. Brilliant, cynical, epigrammatic interpretation of the past decade. Very readable, but should be taken with several grains of salt.

MULLET, C. F. *The British Empire.* New York. Henry Holt. 1938. The most useful general history that has appeared in recent years. Fairly readable.

SMITH, W. R. *Nationalism and Reform in India.* New Haven. Yale University Press. 1938. A detailed and impartial survey of developments down to 1935. Technical.

VITON, ALBERT. *Great Britain: An Empire in Transition.* New York. John Day Company. 1940. A comprehensive survey of the present Empire. Moderately difficult.

In addition to the above, the following British statesmen have published collections of their speeches on foreign policy within the past year: Neville Chamberlain *(In Search of Peace);* Winston Churchill *(Why England Slept);* Anthony Eden *(Foreign Affairs);* Alfred Duff Cooper *(The Second World War: First Phase).* Many interesting articles on Britain and the Empire, by Englishmen and others, are appearing in the magazines.

Anyone who wishes to go into the subject of Britain and the Empire in earnest will find bibliographies in several of the books listed above. Serious students will want also to follow contemporary affairs in such periodicals as *The Economist* (weekly) and *The Round Table* (quarterly). They will also find the publications of the Royal Institute of International Affairs indispensable.

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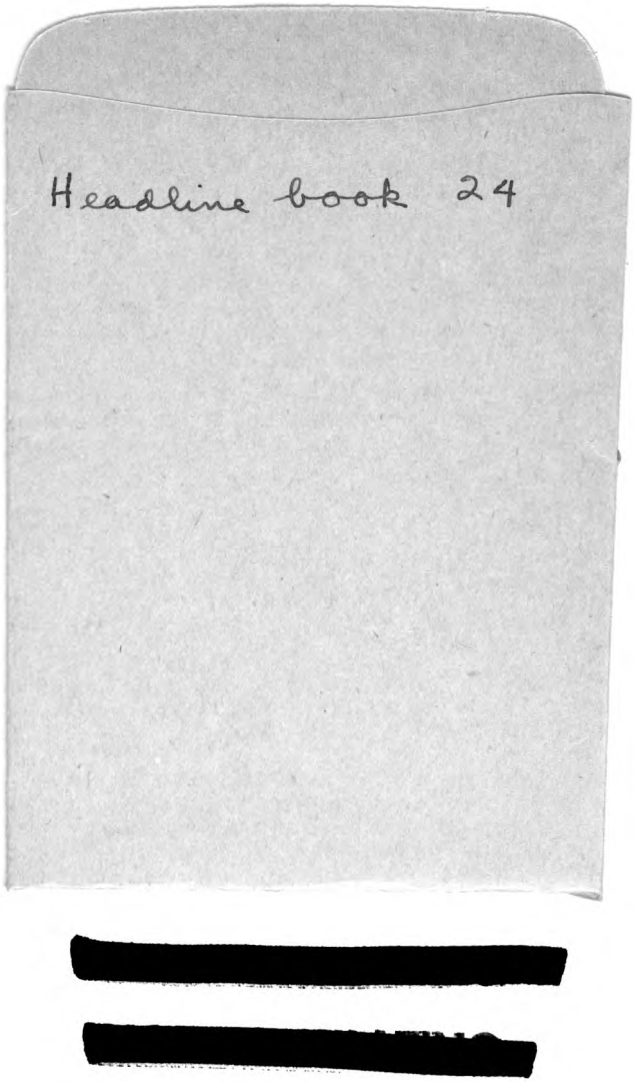

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