

**Canadian Committee for the History
of the Second World War**

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**Comité Canadien de l' Histoire
de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale**

The first conference / La première conférence

at / au

Collège Militaire Royal de Saint-Jean

20 - 22 Oct 1977

Proceedings

Compte rendu

CANADIAN COMMITTEE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE
SECOND WORLD WAR

Proceedings of the First Conference
Held at Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean
Saint-Jean, Quebec
20-22 October, 1977

These proceedings are being distributed with the permission of the authors of the various papers given at our first conference. because of the disparate nature of the subjects it was considered preferable not to seek a publisher for the proceedings, but rather to limit distribution to members of the Canadian Committee and certain other interested people, such as the president and secretary of the international committee. Consequently no attempt has been made to link the papers to an overall theme, and there has not been the rigorous editing that would have accompanied publication.

It was a suggestion to hold a conference on the Dieppe landings in 1942 that prompted these meetings. When it was found that there was inadequate interest among historians in Canada for an exhaustive examination of the Dieppe question, or even of a reconsideration of Canadian military operations in the Second World War, we decided to build a conference around the most active research under way in Canada. This meant that there was no theme as such, unless it could be called "The Second World War: Research in Canada Today". Even that would have been inaccurate because there was no way of including all aspects of such research, which is in various stages of development in this country, in one relatively small and intimate conference. And a number of dis-tinguished Canadian scholars, particularly those working on European subjects, could not be included.

The scholars who did present papers represent three general areas of study, and thus the conference was divided into three parts; Canadian domestic policy during the war (the first day), Foreign Affairs, mostly British and Canadian (the second day), and military affairs (the final morning).

Domestic Policy

These topics were not without spice. Readers, like the participants, may be excused for confusing the sessions on this subject with Old Home Week for the Liberal establishment in Canada. Quite apart from what might be called the gospel according to Pickersgill, heard during both these sessions,

when the Hon. J.W. Pickersgill acted as commentator or joined in discussion, Professors Bothwell and English have been known to exhibit certain Liberal tendencies themselves. Equally apparent in this and even more in other segments of the conference, is the sparse representation of historians from French Canada. In spite of the best efforts of historians associated with the work of the Canadian Committee, it has been difficult to locate historians working in the French language who are specialising in this field. This is an extraordinary and unhealthy situation, and until a better balance is achieved the historiography of the period will lack an essential dimension.

Foreign Affairs

These contributions are particularly gratifying: they reflect the vital work being done by the historical section of the Department of External Affairs under Mr. Bert Hart and, in particular, the senior historian, Dr. Donald Page; and they offer a small indication of the significant work being done in Canada on international and non Canadian topics. The papers by John Hilliker and Donald Page suggest that Canadian scholarship and Canadian sources can make a contribution to the overall re-interpretation of diplomacy during and after the Second World War. Professor Trevor Burridge, author of British Labour and Hitler's War (André Deutsch, London, 1976), examines the role of dissent and Professor Bayer considers the conflict between prestige and military force, in the formation of British foreign policy in the Second World War.

Peter Hoffmann's paper was given as a luncheon address, and represents the essence of his research for his latest book, Die Sicherheit des Diktators (Piper & Co., Verlag, Munchen, 1975). It requires no further comment.

Military Affairs

The two papers on military subjects have no connection except that noted by Mr. Roy Ito, in his most illuminating comments, also included because of their intrinsic interest. Professor Patricia Roy's paper is part of a larger study which is not primarily military in nature. Professor Roy is not a military historian; her research however makes a useful contribution to our understanding of Canadian military policy and the social history of Canadian armed forces in the Second World War.

Professor Taylor's contribution, according to his own description, is more a conversation than a formal paper. He has raised certain points of

interest and concludes with an impassioned plea for reconsideration of Canadian military history during the Second World War. Whatever the merits of Professor Taylor's argument, he is right to issue this challenge. Sufficient new evidence exists to warrant detailed examination of the part played by Canadian armed forces in the light of sources previously not available. The official historians are playing their part in the R.C.A.F. history now under preparation. It is clear also that naval operations in the period demand proper historical analysis, and that the release of British Admiralty intelligence files will result in re-assessment, for example, of all convoy operations. There is a limit to the resources of the Directorate of History, however; other scholars need to get involved in such important endeavours.

The Banquet Address

Mr. Louis Audette, who gave the banquet address, kindly allowed us to reproduce his notes. Readers may find them of interest; Mr. Audette made a memorable impact upon his audience.

General

The discussions and commentary that accompanied all these papers allowed useful cross-pollination of ideas between historians and political scientists, between Canadian and non-Canadian specialists; and between scholars who have matured in different academic climates or traditions. Although it was not an international conference it had some international flavour because of this combination. Perhaps as good a representative as anyone of the mood and identity of the participants was Professor Trevor Burridge of the Université de Montréal, a Welshman who teaches British history to Canadians in French. The session on Adélard Godbout, it should be noted, prompted a lively debate from the floor, and although the majority of the audience was anglophone the discussion took place mostly in French, with easy transition between the two official languages.

COMITE CANADIEN D'HISTOIRE DE LA
DEUXIÈME GUERRE MONDIALE

Conférence tenue au Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean
Saint-Jean (Québec)
du 20 au 22 octobre 1977

Ce compte rendu est distribué avec la permission des auteurs qui ont présenté les diverses communications à notre première conférence. Nous avons préféré ne pas publier de compte rendu, en considération de la nature disparate des sujets traités, mais plutôt d'en restreindre la distribution aux membres du Comité canadien et à d'autres personnes intéressées telles le président et le secrétaire du Comité international. Nous n'avons pas, en conséquence, tenté de regrouper les communications sous un thème général, non plus que nous avons édité les textes avec la même rigueur que s'ils avaient été publiés.

Cette rencontre a été convoquée à la suite d'une suggestion de tenir une conférence sur le débarquement à Dieppe en 1942. Mais après avoir décelé une insuffisance d'intérêt chez les historiens canadiens à vouloir étudier en profondeur la question de Dieppe, ou même à vouloir reconsidérer les opérations militaires canadiennes durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, nous avons décidé de faire porter la conférence sur des sujets de la recherche actuellement poursuivie au Canada. Cela revient à dire qu'il n'existe pas de thème comme tel sauf, peut-être, celui de "La Deuxième Guerre mondiale: recherche historique actuellement poursuivie au Canada". Même alors, ce titre serait trompeur puisqu'on n'aurait pas su regrouper tous les aspects d'une telle recherche, effectuée à divers niveaux et à la grandeur du pays, dans une seule conférence qui se voulait relativement intime et de participation restreinte. Sans compter que plusieurs savants distingués du Canada, surtout ceux qui étudient la question européenne, ne pouvaient être présents.

Comme les participants ont présenté des communications traitant de trois champs d'étude en général, nous avons réparti la conférence sous trois entêtes:

- 1⁰ la politique interne du Canada durant la guerre (la 1^{ère} journée),
- 2⁰ affaires extérieures, surtout celles de la Grande-Bretagne et du Canada (la 2^e journée), et
- 3⁰ affaires militaires (la dernière matinée).

La politique interne

Les sujets discutés n'étaient pas sans saveur. On pardonnera volontiers aux lecteurs, comme aux participants, de se méprendre au sujet de ces sessions: il ne s'agissait pas d'un rassemblement à la bonne franquette de l'establishment libéral du Canada. En sus de ce que l'on pourrait appeler "l'évangile selon Pickersgill", répandue durant les deux sessions par l'honorable J.W. Pickersgill, soit à titre de commentateur, soit lorsqu'il participait à la discussion, les professeurs Bothwell et English ont parfois démontré eux-même certaines tendances libérales.

Il était également apparent, tant durant les autres sessions que durant celles-ci, que les historiens canadiens-français étaient sous-représentés. En dépit des meilleurs efforts des membres du Comité canadien, on a eu de la difficulté à trouver des historiens francophones qui se spécialisent dans ce domaine. Ceci est une situation non seulement hors de l'ordinaire mais critique. Et l'historiographie de cette période va certainement refléter l'absence d'une dimension essentielle à notre histoire jusqu'à ce que nous puissions parer à cette carence.

Affaires extérieures

On doit se féliciter de ces contributions: elles sont le reflet du travail vital accompli par la section historique du ministère des Affaires extérieures sous M. Bert Hart et, en particulier, sous l'historien en chef, le Dr. Donald Page; de plus, elles donnent une petite idée du travail important effectué au Canada concernant des sujets internationaux et non-canadiens. Les communications de John Hilliker et Donald Page nous portent à croire que les travaux et les sources canadiennes peuvent contribuer à la ré-interprétation globale de la diplomatie pendant et après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Alors que le professeur Trevor Burridge, auteur de British Labour and Hitler's War (André Deutsch, Londres, 1976), examine le rôle de la dissension, le professeur Bayer considère les conflits entre le prestige et la force militaire en rapport à la formulation de la politique extérieure de la Grande Bretagne durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale.

M. Peter Hoffmann nous présenta sa communication au déjeuner; celle-ci représente, en essence, les travaux de recherche effectués dans la préparation de son livre récent Die Sicherheit des Diktators (Piper & Co., Verlag, München, 1975, et ne suscite aucun commentaire additionnel.

Affaires militaires

Les deux communications sur des sujets militaires n'étaient pas reliés l'une à l'autre si ce n'est que par leur intérêt intrinsèque, tel que l'a remarqué M. Roy Ito dans ses commentaires éclairés. La communication de Mlle Patricia Roy fait partie d'une étude plus élaborée et dont la nature n'est pas primordialement militaire. Le professeur Roy n'est pas un historien militaire; ses recherches, cependant, sont d'un apport utile à notre compréhension de la politique militaire du Canada et de l'histoire sociale des Forces armées canadiennes durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale.

La contribution du professeur Taylor, à son propre dire, se range plutôt comme une "pièce de conversation" que comme une communication au sens formel du mot. Ayant soulevé plusieurs points d'intérêt il implore avec brio que soit reconsidérée l'histoire militaire du Canada, durant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Quelque soit le mérite de ses arguments, le professeur Taylor a raison de poser ce défi. Il existe suffisamment d'évidence nouvelle pour justifier un examen minutieux du rôle joué par les Forces armées du Canada, tenant compte des sources auxquelles nous n'avions pas eu accès précédemment. Les historiens officiels font actuellement leur part dans la préparation de l'histoire de l'Aviation royale du Canada. De même, il faut se rendre à l'évidence que les opérations navales durant cette période doivent subir une véritable analyse historique, et que la mise en disponibilité des dossiers du bureau des renseignements de l'Amirauté (britannique) poussera, à titre d'exemple, à de nouvelles études concernant toutes les opérations des convois navals. Et puisque les ressources du Service historique sont limitées d'autres chercheurs devront s'impliquer dans des travaux d'une telle envergure.

L'allocution au banquet

M. Louis'Audette prononça l'allocution au banquet. Il nous a gracieusement permis de reproduire ses notes de discours que les lecteurs trouveront sans doute intéressantes. M. Audette a laissé un souvenir inoubliable à son auditoire.

Généralités

Les discussions et les commentaires qui ont accompagné la présentation des communications ont permis un échange utile d'idées entre historiens et ipoliticologues, entre spécialistes canadiens et non-canadiens, ainsi qu'entre

chercheurs qui se sont spécialisés selon différentes formules et traditions. Même s'il ne s'agissait pas d'une conférence internationale on y a retrouvé une saveur internationale justement à cause de ces divers éléments. Le professeur Trevor Burridge de l'Université de Montréal -- un Gallois qui enseigne l'histoire de la Grande Bretagne à des Canadiens, en français -- résume autant que peut se faire l'esprit du colloque et l'identité des participants. Notons enfin que la session sur Adélard Godbout souleva une bonne discussion qui, même si la majorité de l'auditoire était anglophone, se fit surtout en français et sans heurts lorsqu'il s'est agi de passer d'une langue officielle à l'autre.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

L.C. Audette, Q.C.	Ottawa, Ontario.
Professor S. Aster	Erindale College, University of Toronto
Dr. J. Bayer	University of Western Ontario
Professor D Beatty	Mount Allison University
Captain V. Bezeau	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Professor R. Bothwell	University of Toronto
Dr. T. Burridge	Université de Montréal
Professor N. Cameron	John Abbott College
Dr. J. Campbell	McMaster University
Mr. P. Chaplin	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Dr. C. Christie	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Lt. R. Clarke	Department of National Defence
Mr. D. Cole	Department of External Affairs
Professor T. Copp	Wilfrid Laurier University
Dr. P. Dennis	Royal Military College of Canada
Dr. W.A.B. Douglas	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Dr. N.F. Dreisziger	Royal Military College of Canada
Professor J. English	University of Waterloo
Mr. G. Forrette	Minneapolis, U.S.A.
Mr. J.P. Gagnon	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Professor J.G. Genest	Université du Québec A Chicoutimi
Professor C. Girard	University of Victoria
Professor J.L. Granatstein	York University
Mr. B. Greenhous	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Dr. R.G. Haycock	Royal Military College of Canada
Dr. J. Hilliker	Department of External Affairs
Dr. N. Hillmer	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Professor P. Hoffmann	McGill University
Mr. R. Ito	Veterans Association, Hamilton
Professor M. Hogben	Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean
Professor H.P. Klepak	Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean

Mr. L. Kosche	Canadian War Museum
Professor E. Lavoie	Laval University
Professor J. Monet	University of Ottawa
Dr. D. Page	Department of External Affairs
Mr. J. Pariseau	Directorate of History, NDHQ
Hon. J.W. Pickersgill	Ottawa, Ontario
Professor Richard A. Preston	Duke University, Durham, N.C.
Professor W. Rodney	Royal Roads Military College
Professor P. Roy	University of Victoria
Dr. D. Ruddy	Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean
Professor D. Schurman	Queen's University
Professor G. Stanley	Sackville, N.B.
Dr. K.C. Taylor	University of Alberta
Captain G.K. Vachon	Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean

THE CANADIAN COMMITTEE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE
SECOND WORLD WAR CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT C.M.R.

20 - 22 Oct 77

Thursday, 20 October 1977

- 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Robert Bothwell - "C.D. Howe and the Transformation of the War Economy".
John English - "Dominion-Provincial Relations and Reconstruction Policy, 1943-1946".
David Ruddy - Chairman.
W.J. Pickersgill - Commentator.
- 7 p.m. - 10 p.m. Jean-Guy Genest - "L'attitude du premier ministre Godbout lors du plébiscite de 1942".
Elzéar Lavoie - Chairman.
Jacques Monet s.j. - Commentator.

N.B. This session will be followed by a brief business meeting.

Friday, 21 October 1977

- 9 a.m. - 12 noon James Bayer - "British Policy and the Russo-Finnish War".
Trevor Burridge - "The Trouble Makers in the Second World War: Labour's Left Wing and British Foreign Policy, 1939-1945".
D.M. Schurman - Chairman.
Sydney Aster - Commentator.
- 12 noon - 2 p.m. Luncheon Speaker: Peter Hoffmann - "Hitler's Personal Security: Gaps and Contradictions".
- 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Donald Page - "The Wilgress Despatches from Moscow, 1943-1946".
John Hilliker - "Canada's Attitude towards the Free French Movement, 1940-1944".
R.A. Preston - Chairman.
J.L. Granatstein) Commentators.
Charlotte Girard)
- 7 p.m. - 10 p.m. Banquet Speaker: •L.C. Audette, Q.C., (Commander of HMCS Amherst and HMCS Coaticook, 1942-1945; Commissioner for the Mainguy Report, 1949).

Saturday, 22 October 1977

- 9 a.m. - 12 noon Patricia Roy - "The Soldiers Canada Didn't Want: Her Chinese and Japanese Citizens".
K.C. Taylor - "Defeat is an Orphan: The defence of Hong Kong Reconsidered".
G.F.C. Stanley - Chairman.
Brereton Greenhous)
Roy Ito) - Commentators.

(Français au verso)

COLLOQUE
DU COMITÉ CANADIEN D'HISTOIRE DE LA 2^e GUERRE MONDIALE
AU COLLÈGE MILITAIRE ROYAL DE SAINT-JEAN

20 - 22 OCTOBRE 1977

Jeudi, le 20 octobre 1977

de 14 h à 17 h	Robert Bothwell - "C.D. Bava and the Transformation of the War Economy". John English - "Dominion-Provincial Relations and Reconstruction Policy 1943-1946". Président - David Ruddy.
de 19 h à 22 h	Commentateur - J.W. Pickersgill. Jean-Guy Genest - "L'attitude du premier ministre Godbout lors du plébiscite de 1942". Président - Elzéar Lavoie. Commentateur - Jacques Monet, s.j.

N.B. Une brève réunion d'affaires aura lieu après cette séance.

Vendredi, le 21 octobre 1977

de 9 h à midi	James Bayer - "British Policy and the Russo-Finnish War". Trevor Burridge - "The Trouble Makers in the Second World War: Labour's Left Wing and British Foreign Policy, 1939-45". Président - D.M. Schurman. Commentateur - Sydney Aster.
de midi à 14 h	<u>Conférencier au déjeuner:</u> Peter Hoffmann - "Hitler's Personal Security: Gaps and Contradictions".
de 14 h à 17 h	Donald Page "The Wilgress Despatches from Moscow, 1943-1946". John Hilliker - "Canada's attitude towards the Free French Movement, 1940-44". Président - R.A. Preston. Commentateurs - J.L. Cranatstein Charlotte Girard
de 19 h à 22 h	<u>Conférencier au banquet:</u> L.C. Audette, C.R. (Commandant à bord du ACS <u>Amherst</u> et du FMCS <u>Coaticook</u> de 1942 à 1945, et Commissaire pour le rapport Mainguy, 1949).

Samedi, le 22 octobre 1977

de 9 h à midi	Patricia Roy - "The Soldiers Canada Didn't Want: Ber Chinese and Japanese Citizens". K.C. Taylor - "Defeat is an Orphan - The Defence of Hong Kong Reconsidered". Président - G.F.G. Stanley. Commentateurs - Brereton Greenhous Roy Ito
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(English on reverse side)

R. Bothwell
University of Toronto

WAR INTO PEACE: C.D. HOWE AS MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION

On November 17, 1943, the Minister of Munitions and Supply, C.D. Howe, sent his views on reconstruction to the Prime Minister. There were, he told Mackenzie King, legitimate fears that the end of the war would mean a return to the economic conditions of the 1930s and the consequent collapse of production and recurrence of high unemployment. These fears naturally pressed upon the Government; Howe did not share them. Rather he declared that "if the present rate of production can be maintained after the war, the absorption into civilian life of the men and women of the Armed Services and in war industry presents no serious problem." In fact, Howe added, "the problem is simpler than the problem of organizing for War. A capable Liberal Government carried out the one and has the experience to undertake the second conversion."¹

Few people inside or outside the Government shared Howe's optimism. The Minister of Munitions and Supply was a notorious booster of Canada's productive abilities. Yet no-one in the Cabinet had more experience with production, nor with the intricacies of the Canadian economy. Until this point Howe had been hived off in his own small corner of Canadian policy making. He seldom moved outside his own particular sphere of interest, namely, producing as many munitions as fast and as cheap as possible for the armies of Canada and Canada's

allies. But Howe was also a politician, by 1943 the senior minister from Ontario in the King Cabinet, and like any politician he was sensitive to obvious political lessons. These lessons were plain in public opinion polls which indicated that the average Canadian was profoundly worried by the prospect of post-war unemployment, by the poll that showed the socialist C.C.F. pulling ahead of the Government in popular esteem, and by four recent by-election defeats. Howe, like other Liberals, was worried.

In later years, Howe's subsequent appointment in 1944 as Minister of Reconstruction seemed a natural development. He was, after all, renowned as an economic organizer, and his connections with business indicated an aptitude for still another portfolio. Retrospectively, Howe seemed both successful and inevitable as Minister of Reconstruction; for when he left the job in 1948 the post-war economy had performed better than anyone could have imagined in 1943.

But the post that Howe vacated in 1948 was not the one that King, or the Cabinet, had intended to create. That job was to have been, in fact, that of Minister of Employment, someone who would mastermind a government strategy in combating an anticipated economic crisis, and who would deploy considerable resources in fighting that battle. This definition of reconstruction had presumed that there would be a radical break in the economic climate at the end of the war, and that heroic measures would then be necessary to overcome the resulting downturn in production and employment. It is doubtful that Howe ever shared this point of view. His conception of reconstruction did not include a belief either in a downturn of

production or in large-scale unemployment. What he anticipated at the end of the war was just another problem of production, a matter of bringing together men and machinery and capital in essentially the same way as he had done for the purposes of war production. In Howe's mind, the occupant of the post of Minister of Reconstruction would really be a Minister of Production and Reconversion.

Howe had had little to say about the formal studies of reconstruction policy that had been going on since 1939. In the spring of 1943, he had told a friend, Senator Norman Lambert, that he would appear before Lambert's reconstruction committee if desired, but that it was really too early to draw up successful post-war plans. Howe had no time for the elaborate schemes of health insurance and social security that official and unofficial committees had spawned. Reflecting his public reputation as a hard-nosed business leader, hostile to labour, and unsympathetic to popular welfare schemes that appealed to the small 'l' liberal mentality. As one Liberal MP complained to the Prime Minister in August, 1943, "Mr. Howe ... is definitely a member of 'the employing class'" and a drag on the government in its relations with labor. Since the Liberals' political problem was a leakage of voters towards the left, and since the major political issue of the day seemed to be the prospect of unemployment and a lack of confidence in the ability of the business system to solve it, Howe's selection as the minister to handle unemployment held distinct political dangers. Over the previous three years, Howe's unenviable labour reputation had been firmly established with the Arvida Strike of 1941 and the Montreal Tramways Strike of 1943. Labour

leaders were definitely uneasy at the prospect that Howe would carry on with his arbitrary wartime practices and conspicuous hostility to labour in the volatile post-war situation.²

Howe, needless to say, had no such opinion of himself. He had, on a number of occasions, done his best to be fair to labour demands, so long as war production was not disrupted nor deliveries to the armed forces delayed. He was preeminently a pragmatic administrator, who was confident that, given the opportunity, others would share his optimistic and practical sense of what had to be done. He was prepared to satisfy some of labour's complaints, such as the exclusion of labour representatives from the myriad boards he had established during the war by the end of 1943 such boards, previously composed almost exclusively of businessmen and bureaucrats, included labour leaders. He was also prepared to concede that some kind of health insurance would be appropriate after the war. Nevertheless, his fundamentally conservative attitudes shone through when he warned the Prime Minister that a family allowance or baby bonus scheme would be an incentive to idleness. Howe's appointment, therefore, to the politically sensitive post of Minister of Reconstruction, was not automatic.

Mackenzie King did not share Howe's perception of the likely problems of the post-war economy, nor was he eager to entrust any post-war reconstruction department with the same autonomy as Howe's wartime Munitions and Supply Department. Nonetheless, Howe's prestige was great, and his talents were indisputable; there would be some political advantage in making him Reconstruction Minister. The solution that took shape in King's

mind, late in 1943 and early in 1944, was a compromise between the irresistible force of public opinion and the weight of Howe's experience.

The compromise drew on British experience. The British had already established a Ministry of Reconstruction, whose minister served as the chairman of a cabinet committee consisting of colleagues whose departments' responsibilities touched on reconstruction. The Minister of Reconstruction was to co-ordinate the programmes of the several departments in order to achieve a unified policy. This precedent was presented to a Canadian cabinet committee as the model for the future unified Department of Reconstruction. But two ministers on the committee, Howe and C.G. Power, both potential Ministers of Reconstruction, were profoundly unimpressed. When the scheme was brought before Cabinet, Howe commented that "if that was all there was to the Bill, there was nothing to do." Mackenzie King was disappointed: "Howe seemed to think the only purpose of a Reconstruction Bill was the reconversion of industry." Power too had no good to say of it. Despite these objections, the Cabinet approved the Bill creating the Reconstruction Department, and it passed through the House of Commons in June, 1944.³

The summer of 1944 brought victory closer in Europe. At home, Mackenzie King tested the air to discover if the time was ripe for a dominion-provincial conference and an election. By the beginning of September, he had decided against both: the political climate was not quite right, either for an over-haul of the Constitution or for the certain defeat of the opposition. King decided that the safest course was to face another session of

Parliament and await Germany's surrender before resorting to the polls. He therefore needed to show some definite advance in the direction of reconstruction and social security. This could be accomplished by the establishment of the Departments of Reconstruction, Health and Welfare, and Veterans' Affairs, all authorized by legislation, but not, as yet, officially created. His mind turned again to C.D. Howe.

If King still thought of Howe as Minister of Reconstruction, Howe did not. The Minister of Munitions and Supply had no intention of becoming a coordinator of a cabinet committee whose members retained their independent portfolios and independent authority. He had buried himself in the affairs of his own department, and through the summer and fall of 1944 he was primarily interested in questions of international civil aviation. He also seems to have anticipated leaving politics altogether and moving back into the business world at the end of the war. Getting Howe to stay on in politics and, moreover, to accept a portfolio that he had described as useless was a task worthy of Mackenzie King's persuasive talents.

On September 7, 1944, King made his first approach to his Minister, who refused immediately. "He spoke pretty feelingly against taking the department,!" King recorded. The Prime Minister then made the same offer to Power, who also refused. With no alternative to fall back on, King decided to come to terms with Howe. He asked the Justice Minister, Louis St. Laurent, whom Howe greatly admired, to sound out his colleague. St. Laurent agreed to speak to Howe, but warned King that their colleague would only change his mind "under certain

conditions". These conditions, needless to say, would mean extending the authority of the Minister of Reconstruction and the assumption of actual departmental powers. By now, King was resigned to accepting these terms, and on September 29, told Power and Pensions Minister, Ian Mackenzie, that he would "insist" on Howe taking the job.⁴

Howe had already told a friend that he could not resist King's persuasion. When the two men met for a second time on October 5, Howe had prepared a long memorandum of his terms which he proceeded to read aloud. In the first place, he told King, the carefully drawn analogy between Canadian and British reconstruction would have to go. The British Minister of Reconstruction, he told King, "has ceased to have any influence in the British Cabinet, giving as the reason that he can operate only through other Cabinet Ministers." The most that Howe would concede on this subject was to agree that he would chair a cabinet committee comprised of the relevant ministers. Howe and King both knew, although they did not say so, that there would be only one relevant minister, Howe himself.

Howe had already discussed the new department with two of his trusted advisors, Dr. C.J. Mackenzie of the National Research Council and John Baldwin of the Privy Council Office. From Mackenzie he got the idea that any department of Reconstruction ought to include a division of industrial research. King agreed to this, and also to the transfer to Reconstruction of civil aviation and industrial reconversion. These, along with war surplus disposal and economic controls, Howe defined as requiring "intensive

action", which meant action solely within the purview of Howe's new department. Other steps, defined as "extensive action" and including social security, labour and employment, public works and housing - in other words what most people understood by the words "reconstruction" - could be left to the workings of the cabinet Committee.⁵ As Howe commented to John Baldwin, "Until our course is fairly clear, I am not disposed to interfere with the workings of other departments of government."⁶

That course would be determined by the cadence of events, the course of the war and the personnel Howe was able to assemble in his new department. As his first priority, Howe had to select a deputy minister. After briefly considering Alex Skelton and W.A. Mackintosh for the job, Howe rejected the one because of his heavy drinking and the other on the grounds of administrative impracticality. Instead, Howe turned to R.A.C. Henry, who had been his trusted advisor in the early days of Munitions and Supply. Henry was a master of bureau-cratic manoeuvre, forceful when he needed to be, conciliatory when he had to be, and above all extremely knowledgeable of the workings of both government and business. For the time being, his task was to organize the new department as best he could, and wait for a more positive assignment. To assist Henry, Howe lured away W.A. Mackintosh from the Department of Finance, along with a small staff of economists. Mackintosh was happy enough to leave Finance, but his future duties in Reconstruction remained cloudy. Howe already had an economic staff in Munitions and Supply, busily producing reams of statistics on production and expenditure, and there was some rivalry between the two.⁷

Howe then happily departed for an aviation conference in Chicago, leaving matters much as they had been before the department was created. This meant that industrial reconversion, which had been proceeding for sometime under the Department of Munitions and Supply, continued full blast. There, the man responsible for Howe's industrial reconversion programmed was Harry Carmichael, Howe's production lieutenant. Carmichael, a veteran of General Motors, had successfully organized the growth and encouraged the efficiency of Canadian war production. Carmichael proudly noted that "his" and "Howe's" war industry had achieved cost-efficiency second to none on the allied side, and he was confident that what had been done in war could also be done in peace. As Howe and Carmichael saw the reconstruction problem, industry had to be encouraged to convert to peace-time production through a combination of grants, tax concessions, expedient sales of surplus war production, equipment and buildings, all designed to place Canadian industry in a favourable, competitive position as soon as the war was over. Howe later told a business luncheon, "The Canadian manufacturer had acquired such confidence by his experience during the war that he no longer had any fear of his ability to compete with his American neighbor, provided he had access to an equally large market", but just in case Canadian businessmen lacked this confidence, Howe was busily driving them out from the nest of government controls and guarantees that had comforted them during the war. As early as June, 1944, the Canadian Manufacturers Association was informed that economic controls administered by Howe's department would be wound up just as soon as the availability of scarce commodities allowed. In

October, Howe told his Metals Controller that the Canadian mining industry must stop looking to the government to guarantee its markets. Nor were these rhetorical flourishes; during the fall of 1944 and the winter of 1945, Howe's wartime edifice of regulations and provisions was steadily dismantled.⁸

It might be supposed that the effect of de-control and de-regulation was to diminish Howe's power to influence, not to speak of direct, the economy. Certainly that was Howe's stated purpose. Yet the peculiar conjunction of regulations, incentives and special powers, concentrated in Howe's hands, in fact, consolidated his position. During the war, Munitions and Supply had administered a system of accelerated depreciation permitting rapid tax write-offs to companies investing their own funds in projects directly beneficial to the war effort. Howe had repeatedly defended such agreements in the House of Commons, arguing that they stimulated investment which otherwise would have had to come directly from the public treasury. His rationale was that the assured markets for such investment would not outlast the war. In June, 1944, Finance Minister Ilsley announced that the arrangement would be continued. The government would relieve new investors in private projects from the heavy burden of wartime taxation in order to facilitate the conversion and expansion of industry. When the new provision took effect in November, 1944, Howe was chosen to administer it. Howe's new staff of reconstruction economists began to produce industrial surveys for him, examining the industrial plant created during the war, and conveying surprisingly encouraging information. It appeared, they reported, that of \$3.2 billion worth

of government expenditures on capital investment during the war, some \$2.2 billion could be re-employed in peace-time industry. This, coupled with Howe's accelerated depreciation. programme, guaranteed business a strong incentive to proceed with reconversion of wartime plants as quickly as materials and labour became available. By the end of 1945, almost \$250 million of accelerated depreciation had been granted and when the programme finally came to an end some years later, some \$1.4 billion of investment had been so favoured. Of that amount, Howe's economists concluded, 83% was for "new investment projects involving both construction for conversion, expansion and modernization of plant facilities and the purchase of new machinery and equipment."⁹

Industrial surveys were not enough to engage fully W.A. Mackintosh's talents. There is evidence that when he joined Reconstruction, he believed that it would still be pre-occupied with questions of employment and social security, and therefore mostly concerned with the "extensive action" that Howe had in his own mind dismissed. It is not surprising that Mackintosh found his first months of working for Howe remarkably frustrating.¹⁰

It was late in December, 1944 before faint stirrings were heard in the Department as some of its officers wondered how it might best present its programme to the public. A draft manual to assist businessmen in industrial reconversion was composed and circulated. Designed strictly as an aid to business, it showed clearly where the Department's priorities lay, and consequently attracted unfavourable comment from other Liberals anxious for the government's image as a creator of secure employment after the

war. As the draft wended its way through the department, John Baldwin-, its author, discussed it with Mackintosh. The two men agreed that something more was required, perhaps "a brief general government document along the lines of the white papers issued from time to time by the United Kingdom." Howe could table this document, or white paper, when he made his first general statement to the House of Commons on Reconstruction. Mackintosh hoped that such a presentation would squelch what he later described as "the uninformed proposals emerging from various sources on the subject of reconstruction"; he also hoped it would finally commit the government to a policy of full employment, requiring positive action and long-term planning. Baldwin secured R.A.C. Henry's approval and Henry and Mackintosh went to work on Howe. Howe was suspicious: there had never been a white paper before. Eventually, Howe's attitude softened. Mackintosh was told to go ahead and over a weekend he produced the first draft of what became The White Paper on Employment and Income.¹¹

When Mackintosh's draft arrived on his desk, Howe was still uneasy, and it took all of Henry's persuasive powers to keep the embryonic white paper on Howe's agenda. As Mackintosh envisioned it, the white paper would commit the government to "full employment". Howe sensed political danger in the phrase. "Full employment" as such, was impossible, he argued, mere rhetoric. But once uttered, it would fetter the government like a sitting duck inside the opposition's shooting range. Instead, Howe suggested, the white paper should refer to "a high and stable level of employment". It was milder, but much, much safer. After approval by a cabinet committee composed of Howe, St. Laurent and Ilsley,

the white paper was ready, only a month after its inception.¹²

On April 12, 1945, Howe rose in his seat in the House of Commons to present the government's statement on "reconstruction and table the 'White Paper on Employment and Income'". His statement was, as Baldwin had envisaged, a summary of the Reconstruction Department's activities to which the white paper was a backdrop. There was no attempt to claim the document as Howe's own; when the first congratulations flowed in, Howe publicly complimented Mackintosh on the "excellent reception" the white paper was getting. He had reason to be pleased, for the white paper restated, in a relatively sophisticated form, the basic programme of the Reconstruction Department in all its aspects: civil aviation, industrial research, surplus disposal and the reconversion of industry. There was, of course, more: unemployment insurance, agricultural stabilization programmes, and family allowances would all go toward the stabilization of consumers' income and the creation of demand for industrial goods. And in case of need, the government had decided to plan for public investment in the future to compensate for possible declines in export markets.¹³

The white paper was presented to Parliament a few days before a general election was called. During the campaign the Liberals' Central Office took full advantage of Howe's wartime reputation as an economic leader. "The Liberal Government has the man - the Hon. C.D. Howe, under whose direction, Canadians have done a great job during the war, and are ready to do it in peace." Howe repeated the promise in a radio speech on June

3: The Canadian economy was in great shape and could absorb the nation's returning veterans without difficulty. If problems developed, the government had already "a vast programme of public undertakings to take up the slack."¹⁴ This programme became known as the "public works shelf" referring to a shelf somewhere in Ottawa on which were to be stored plans and specifications for useful public projects designed to create employment in the case of economic depression.

With the election past and the Liberals still in office, the government's attention turned to dominion-provincial affairs. A cabinet committee had been pondering federal-provincial relations for over a year, trying to evolve some arrangement whereby federal and provincial governments could collaborate or, better yet, establish unified economic controls in the hands of the federal government alone. Since a large-scale programme of public works spilled over jurisdictional boundaries, Howe's reconstruction responsibilities became a factor in the federal proposals to the provinces in August, 1945. Howe accordingly spent most of the summer sitting in Ottawa trying to work out a magic formula that would commend itself to the provinces. The trouble with a large-scale programme of public works, in the short term, was that they were superfluous since Howe believed that there was no immediate economic crisis. "All the assistance [to the provinces] needed from the dominion, beyond a considerable expansion and direct federal works might be making 2% money available to the municipalities, perhaps in return for dominion control of timing," he explained to his colleagues. In any case, as Howe knew, there were

not enough engineers in the country to devise plans for public works on the scale envisaged by some government enthusiasts.¹⁵

The federal proposals stalled. As the central government and the provinces tried to work out constitutional revision, Howe was not greatly concerned. The real issue was already solved. When a Trades and Labour Congress delegation called on the government in mid-August, Howe told them "there is plenty of employment in this country". He did not add, as he privately told a friend, that "it is hard for our privileged class in the war plants to realize that the atomic bomb killed Santa Claus as far as they are concerned, and that they must now go to work."¹⁶ Unlike, some of his friends in business, Howe believed that there would indeed be full employment even if it had to be at slightly lower wage levels: "I am convinced that there are jobs for all, which is all that concerns me." Indeed, Howe could even claim that "1946 will be a good year and 1947 a boom year." There was no labour surplus, Howe argued to his colleagues, but a labour shortage: there would be no public works to take up a non-existent economic-slack. In fact, no public works would be necessary for at least two years, as far as intuition allowed him to see into the future.¹⁷ The reference to planning in Mackintosh's white paper receded in Howe's memory, as his industrial reconversion programme produced the goods for a starving consumer economy. As far as the public works shelf was concerned, if there was no unemployment, there would be no shelf. When the dominionprovincial conference broke up in disagreement in April, 1946, it was merely the coup de grâce.

The memory of the public works shelf lingered on, since no-one in government wished to explain that the shelf to all intents and purposes did not exist. That illusion was shattered only in 1949, when the government replied to an opposition enquiry that plans existed for a total of 17,000 jobs, rather than the million jobs that pundits had expected. Ordinary public works projects during 1949 would account for all but 5,000 of the 17,000 jobs.¹⁸ And so the shelf, and the White Paper that lined it, passed into oblivion. By the end of 1945, Howe was kept busy only by the peripheral sections of his department. Industrial reconversion, except for the ongoing accelerated depreciation programme, was at an end. His economists regularly produced studies to tell him that employment and production were, for the most part, in good shape. Housing remained a difficult area bedeviled by shortages of labour and building supplies, as well as finance for rental accommodation., and the affairs of Trans-Canada Airlines remained a perpetual source of interest. But the purpose of reconstruction, as Howe defined that purpose, had been fulfilled. The conversion of industry, Howe told the cabinet in November, . 1946, was "nearly completed." By December, Howe had wound up 22 crown companies and reported that four more were in their last stages. His department reflected these trends. From over 2000 employees at the beginning of 1946, it was down to 750 in December, 1946, and 538 the following March. This rapid de-bureaucratization perplexed Arnold Heeney, the Secretary of the Cabinet. "I understand", he wrote Mackenzie King "that [Howe] has also given instructions to his departmental officials to have matters so arranged that,

over the next few months, the whole department can be wound up ... and remaining functions transferred to other departments." Heeney urged King to remember Reconstruction's planning function and keep the department in existence. And so, Reconstruction remained artificially alive for a further three years, its existence prolonged despite its minister's strong desire for euthanasia. It was with relief and satisfaction that Howe assumed new duties as Minister of Trade and Commerce in January, 1948.¹⁹

The painless disappearance of the Department of Reconstruction signified the official termination of the elaborate plans for government intervention in the economy that the political seers and soothsayers of wartime had assumed would be necessary and inevitable. The King government's decision to confide reconstruction policy to C.D. Howe shifted the emphasis of post-war policy from planning to a straightforward encouragement by government of private business enterprise. Reconstruction in Canada therefore meant the rapid disappearance of as many government controls as possible in order to free the economy for an anticipated increase in total production. When examined in detail, the records of the Department show that planning, the word-talisman of social and economic critics during the war, was at best regarded as a secondary responsibility by the Minister to whom planning had been confided. Howe relied on his instincts, rather than his officials, to guide him in his encouragement of production in the post-war economy. The relative prosperity of that economy made Howe's political position inside the cabinet and as a public figure virtually unassailable.

The demise of a department of government is always a subject for comment, because of its comparative rarity. In this case, Reconstruction mirrored its minister's qualities. Howe's administrative style was ill-suited to perpetual bureaucracies. Rather, it was his special talent to create ad hoc organizations, for particular purposes, and to administer them in such a way as to ensure their early demise. Interestingly enough, the gradual self-destruction of the Department of Reconstruction was unrelated to the relative position or influence of its minister, whose standing increased throughout the period. As Howe knew, its programmes and its most important functions did not require an elaborate administrative hierarchy but depended on a close and trusting relationship between the minister and a small number of specialists.

When the minister moved on, so did most of his employees, some to Trade and Commerce, where the battle for trade had become the next phase of the battle of production, some to other departments, and some to private industry. Only the few who remained had cause for regret.

FOOTNOTES

1. Howe to King, 17 November, 1943, Mackenzie King Papers, J.1, vol. 342, Public Archives of Canada (PAC).
2. Norman Lambert Diary, 20 March and 25 June, 1943, Queen's University Archives; Ralph Maybank to King, 13 August, 1943, Maybank Papers, Manitoba Archives; interview with H. Carl Goldenberg.
3. The original idea was worked out in King's office, although C.G. Power also submitted comments. Power to King, 30 December, 1943, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 66, file 527-168, PAC; NA, "Post-war Policy", not dated but probably January, 1944, King Papers, J-4, vol. 415; King Diary, 24,27,30 March, 1944.
4. J.W. Pickersgill and D.J. Forster, eds., The Mackenzie King Record, II (Toronto, 1968, 96-8; interview with W.J. Bennett.
5. C.J. Mackenzie interview; John Baldwin to Howe, 10 October, 1944, Privy Council Records, series 18, vol. 30; file D-29.
6. Howe to Baldwin, 23 October, 1944, ibid.
7. King Diary, 12 October, 1944; O.J. Firestone interview.
8. H.J. Carmichael interview; Lewis Clark, U.S. Embassy, Ottawa, to Graham Parsons, 18 July, 1945, State Department Records, 842.00/7-1845, U.S. National Archives.
9. Department of Reconstruction and Supply, Encouragement to Industrial Expansion in Canada (Ottawa, 1948) 15, 17.
10. See W.A. Mackintosh, "Another Note on the Department of Reconstruction", 18 October, 1944, Finance Department Records, vol. 3580, file M-04, PAC; Grant Dexter memorandum, 17 March, 1945, Dexter Papers, Queen's.

Footnotes, continued...

11. Baldwin to Henry, 2 January, 1945, Privy Council Records, series 18, vol. 35, file D-29; Senior to Ian Mackenzie, 6 March, 1945, Mackenzie Papers, vol. 66, file 527-168; W.A. Mackintosh, "The White Paper on Employment and Income in its 1945 Setting", in S.J. Kaliski, ed., Canadian Economic Policy Since the War (Ottawa,

1966), 15. David Manson and O.J. Firestone interviews.

12. White Paper on Employment and Income with Special Reference to the Initial Period of Reconstruction (Ottawa, 1945).
13. Copy of radio speech, Howe Papers.
14. "Minutes of a meeting of Directors General and Controllers of the Department of Reconstruction held in the Minister's Office", 22 June, 1945, Carl Goldenberg Papers; Minutes of the cabinet committee on dominion-provincial relations, 5 September, 1945, Privy Council Records, series 18, vol. 42, file D-40.
15. Howe to J.M. Gilchrist, 10 September, 1945, Howe Papers, vol. 171, file 90-5.
16. Ibid.
17. "Backstage at Ottawa", Maclean's, 1 December 1946 and 15 April, 1949.
18. On housing, see the Reconstruction and Supply Quarterly Reports, 1945-48, which indicate bureaucratic conflict as well as shortage of supply and labour; Manson interview; Ilowe to Heeney, 8 November, 1946, King Papers, J-4, vol. 315, C217992; Heeney to King, 3 December, 1946, *ibid.* file 2392, C161297-8.

John English

Dominion-Provincial Relations and Reconstruction Planning, 1943-1946

Mackenzie King had never liked Dominion-Provincial conferences. Sitting around a table with Hepburn, Aberhart, and Paltullo, and watching them sumptuously assume their predictable postures was an excruciating experience which only wartime financial exigency and the absence of Matrice Duplessis could justify. When, therefore, the Dominion-Provincial Conference of January 1941 collapsed in what T.A. Crerar termed "the god damndest exhibition and circus you can imagine," King blamed his advisers and resolved to follow his own more cautious instincts in the future. And yet it seems that Mackenzie King once again had got his way. He and his government had plucked from among many provincial nettles the means of financing the war. In a final conference speech, the Finance Minister, James Ilesley, had warned the premiers that the federal government would simply have to invade provincial tax fields and do whatever else was financially necessary to win the war. The speech was effective, and Mitch Hepburn, having thoroughly entangled himself in the flag earlier, could only splutter aimlessly at this obviously patriotic appeal.¹

This view - that the federal government benefited from and indeed even expected a collapse of the conference - now seems generally accepted by historians.² It is certainly true that King was grey relieved and that

1 T.A. Crerar to J.W. Dafoe, Jan 16, 1941, cited in J.L. Granatstein Canada's war (Toronto, 1975), 170; King Diary, Jan. 6-18, 1941: Christopher Armstrong, "The Politics of Federalism: Ontario's Relations with the Federal Government 1896-1941." (PhD. thesis, Toronto, 1972, 580-96; and Donald Creighton, The Forked Road: Canada 1939-1957 (Toronto, 1976), 51-3. See also, Alex Skelton, "Dominion-Provincial Conference Aftermath," Feb. 11, 1941, RC 19, E2C, v. 108, file 135-0-167.

2 See especially Armstrong, "The Politics of Federalism," Ibid. Granatstein near a more limited federal victory, Canada's War, 172.

he considered the provinces' pledge " to let us take their revenues " if needed, " a tremendous achievement."³ Ilsley built upon this achievement and through the 1942 Wartime Tax Agreements with the provinces, the financial stability and success of Canada's war effort was assured.⁴ Nevertheless, Ilsley himself remained troubled by the necessarily ephemeral character of what he had done. In his 1941 conference speech, he had warned the premiers as well as his own colleagues that the opportunity might be unique. He urged them to accept the stability which Rowell-Sirois offered as a solution to the conflict and chaos of the 1930s. But the war had ended the bread lines, and the provinces quickly recovered their solvency as their welfare payments and public works projects halted. The urgency of the thirties had passed; so too, perhaps, had the opportunity.

Post Canadians followed Ilsley and the provinces in forgetting their chronic constitutional woes. The debacle of 1941 had created an equilibrium whereby not only constitutional problems but also social reform schemes were to be abandoned as harmful diversions from the war effort. This equilibrium was comfortable to Ilsley because it permitted him to face his task without disruption and to the provinces because it gave them an opportunity to replenish their empty coffers without facing immediate public demands for social schemes or other public works.⁵ But by late 1942 as the war's end

3 King Diary, Jan. 15, 1941

4 For an analysis, see J.H. Perry, *Taxes, Tariffs and Subsidies* (Toronto, 1955), II, 538-41.

5 Ilsley told Ian Mackenzie that he would be most reluctant to consider any social schemes until a solution had been reached with the provinces. The provinces were given a similar undertaking when they agreed to the Wartime Tax Agreements. Ilsley to Mackenzie, Nov. 28, 1941, RC 19 E2C v. 108, file 135-0-167; and J.A. Maxwell, " Recent Developments in Dominion-Provincial Fiscal Relations in Canada, " (National Bureau of Economic Research, New York, 1948), 12

finally appeared in distant view, this quilibrium began to break down. The origins of this breakdown were intellectual but its results were economic and constitutional. The war had been, to paraphrase Jane Addams, an education by the current event. Prior to the war, most Worth Americans had come to agree with the Harvard economist Alvin Hansen who accepted Keynesian nostrums to deal with society's economic woes, but who argued further that advanced industrial economies like the United States may have reached a " stagnant " phase so far as growth was concerned.⁶ But the evidence of the war's impact upon the economy clearly contradicted this, and the public, as well as economists like Hansen, came to realize that stagnation was neither inevitable nor likely, and that government participation in the economy could secure growth in peacetime as it did victory in wartime. This new confidence expressed itself in late 1942 and, early 1943 in Britain's Beveridge Report and in the report of the American National Resources Planning Board, " a landmark in liberal thought, "which envisioned " an expanding, democratic post-war, economy freed from monopolistic restrictions. "⁷ This vision had long since crossed the forty-ninth parallel. and had profoundly influenced Canadians and their politicians.

In the spring of 1943 with the constitution in limbo and the war still raging, Canadians were presented with a comprehensive outline of a of a social

⁶ The most important work of this genre war Hansen's Full Recovery or Stagnation? (New York, 1938). Several of the essays in Seymour Harris, ed., The New Economics (London, 1947) discuss the Hansen influence. For a brief discussion of how Hansen influenced Canadians and vice-versa, see J.K. Galbraith, " Came the Revolution, " New York Times Book Review, May 16, 196;. Hansen was also a member of the Joint Economic Committee during the early war years and had extensive dealings with W.A. Mackintosh.

⁷ Alonzo Hamby, Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism (New York and Lonaor., 1973), 11. The general discussion of the influence of the new economics on government is very good.

security programme, Leonard Marsh's Report on Social Security for Canada. The appearance of the Marsh Report symbolized Canada's and her government's new interest in domestic reform. As Marsh later wrote, " social security was in the air as never before."⁸ Picking innumerable social security notions out of the air, Marsh described how various social schemes might be applied to Canada. In the report, there were few limits placed upon what was possible, and in fact whatever was possible seemed to be considered probable. Constitutional problems were recognized only as " constitutional decisions," and the constitutional freedom of the federal government " to lead and co-ordinate " was deemed to be " a paramount consideration." The federal government must lead; the provinces could " participate."⁹

Social security ideas were not only pervasive 'out also, to politicians, quite persuasive. Even Mackenzie King forgot his constitutional coyness and became caught up in the fullness, of the tide. In January 1943 he lectured the cabinet on the importance of social legislation and " the significance "of the Beveridge Report."¹⁰ But he found James Iles to be unyielding. Suddenly Iles saw the delicate equilibrium which grew out of the 1941 conference breaking down. So did his officials, and they were alert to the dangers. The Economic Advisory Committee (EAC), which was composed of Finance Department officials and a few, other senior civil servants, challenged Cyril James Advisory Committee on Reconstruction which had fathered the Marsh Report and Ian Mackenzie whose department of Pensions and National

⁸ Leonard Marsh, Report on Social Security for Canada 1943 (Toronto, 1975), xvii.

⁹ Ibid., 249-50.

¹⁰ King Diary, January 12, 1943

Health had brought forward a rather fantastical health insurance scheme. 'The James Committee and Mackenzie were targets made bloated by ambition and carelessness. The EAC soon recovered control of reconstruction planning for the government's senior economic advisers, and King's characteristic caution reappeared. On March 24, 1943, he warned the caucus that the new order would not be built " in a day but would take years." Thus they should be patient, preparing for small steps rather than giant leaps.¹¹ But if King and Ilesley managed to reassert their control over reconstruction planning, they nevertheless recognized that they could no longer rest upon " the tremendous achievement " of 1941. A " new order " seemed inevitable even if its fiscal and constitutional foundations were not yet apparent.

To determine what those foundations might be Alex Skelton, who had been involved in planning the 1941 conference, turned once again to the problems facing Canadian post-war reconstruction. His early thoughts reveal that Skelton was well acquainted with recent economic thought and that the centralization of economic decision-making in Ottawa had become a pleasant habit, perhaps even an addiction. Surveying what had been done to discover what was useful, Skelton found very little. He therefore recommended a number of special studies on particular problems. Prominent among these problems was renewed competition between the Dominion and the provinces in revenue fields. The Dominion, Skelton claimed, required exclusive taxation powers in the areas of income tax, corporation tax and succession duties. Only with these powers would it have what it needed to regulate nearly all areas of Canadian economic

¹¹ King Diary, March 24, 1943. On the health insurance bill, see Robert Bothwell, " The Health of the People, " in J. English and J.O. Stubbs, eds., Mackenzie King: Widening the Debate (Toronto, 1977

life. What, then, should the dominion do to achieve this end? It should, first of all, retain wartime powers for a limited post-war period. During this time, it should seek constitutional amendments providing for delegation of power and for concurrent Dominion powers in respect to " business legislation, labour legislation and prices in marketing legislation." mother constitutional amendment would be necessary to implement the financial rearrangement of Dominion and provincial revenue power while yet another would permit the transfer to the Dominion of all contributory social insurance jurisdiction excepting only workmen's compensation. In a final section " Immediate studies necessary, " Skelton succinctly and rather gratuitously urged: " draft of a new constitution."¹²

Although Skelton's memorandum was clearly a position paper and should not be taken to represent Finance Department or government policy, it does indicate a continuing adherence to comprehensive constitutional solution on the part of the government's economic advisers. There was a significant change however: while memories of the bankrupt provincial treasuries in the depression were believed to be the strongest force directing the provinces towards a comprehensive solution in 1940, now it was thought that the promise of full employment and social security had so completely caught the imagination of Canadians that they would forge provincial leaders to remove any hurdles which prevented Canada from fulfilling this promise. Both Skelton and the provinces knew that the fundamental concepts of the new economics did

¹² Alex Skelton, " Approach to Post-War Planning-II," June 10, 1943, RG 19, E3(h), v. 3542. The Skelton memorandum and other government documents of the time suggest that the Marsh Report had little influence upon specific social security plans. For a contrary view, see Michael Bliss, " Preface " Marsh, Report on Social Security, ix

not fit easily upon the traditional constitutional framework. In June 1943- Brooke Claxton, who had been recently appointed a Parliamentary Secretary to King, warned the prime minister that the provinces were disturbed because they did not know what the federal government was intending to do in the face of apparent public insistence on a large scale reconstruction programme. That the federal government itself did not know what it was intending to do was obviously an unsatisfactory answer. Claxton accordingly urged " that the time is ripe for a declaration of national policy which would set out the goal, declare the intention of the government to reach it, and say how it is to be done in general terms."¹³ Political events of the next few months- the collapse of the Ontario Liberals, the loss of four federal by-elections, and the astonishing rise of the CCF in the public opinion polls - suggested that the time was ripe for such a declaration; in fact, for the Liberals, it might be too late.¹⁴

The fall 1943 meeting' of the National Liberal Federation affirmed the party's commitment to social reform, but the statement was not very specific and, of course, it did not commit the government.¹⁵ In November, the youthful and increasingly influential J.W. Pickersgill warned the prime minister that there were too many questions and doubts about post-war policy. Taking a Socratic approach, the former history professor asked nine questions among which was " What method is to be used in approaching the provinces?" He gave no answer, but he did warn that if health insurance and contributory old age

¹³ Claxton, " Memorandum for the Prime Minister, " King papers, J4, v. 415.

¹⁴ This is covered well in Granatstein, Canada's War, 264-5.

¹⁵ King reminded Claxton of this, King Diary, Sept. 28, 1943.

pensions were to be part of the post-war programme, constitutional changes or agreements with the provinces were required. Pickersgill did see advantage in being specific about " social security plans " because it might then be possible " to mobilize " more public pressure in support of the necessary constitutional and financial re-adjustments.¹⁶ Pickersgill's perceptive comment illustrated how closely social security planning, and constitutional reform had become linked in the minds of federal officials. The popularity of 'the former might finally assure the latter, and, without the latter, not only social security but also the kind of dominion leadership in economic planning which the Finance Department deemed essential would probably be impossible. Different goals seemed to lead towards the same end, but before that end could be reached the provinces had to be met once more.

Mackenzie King was, if anything, more apprehensive about the Dominion-Provincial conference in 1944 than in 1947. The new premier of Ontario, George Drew, seemed to King like a grafting of Colonel Blimp onto Mitch Hepburn. Since his election, Drew had been noisily demanding another Dominion-Provincial conference, and this naturally exaggerated King's fear of such a meeting.¹⁷ He had responded by personally inviting all premiers to indicate when they wanted to meet. Simultaneously, the cabinet acted on Claxton's suggestion that a cabinet and interdepartmental committee be set up to plan for the forthcoming conference. In Claxton's view, delay could only mean danger: " Everything possible

¹⁶ Memorandum for the Prime Minister, " Nov. 11, 1943, King Papers, J4, v. 303, file 3128.

¹⁷ J.W. Pickersgill and Donald Forster, The Mackenzie King Record 1944-1945 (Toronto, 1968) , II, 54-5; King to Patterson, Pers and Con., Feb. 3, 1944, King Papers, J1, v. 36R; and Claxton. " Memorandum for the Prime Minister, " Feb. 4, 1944, Claxton Papers, v. 140.

should be done to avoid putting the provinces against the dominion."¹⁸ To that end, King invited the premiers to cooperate " with the preparation of the necessary financial materials," and provincial officials were asked to visit Ottawa at federal expense. Finally, the provinces were asked to select a date for the conference which could only come after the Parliamentary break.¹⁹ In the meantime, the Cabinet Sub-committee and its Advisory Committee began to prepare for what they expected would be summer conference.²⁰ Their mark of preparation fell under four headings:

- (a) Decision by the government as to what it wants by way of constitutional change and its attitude to the provinces' demands for assistance in public works.
- (b) Preparation of figures and thorough briefing to support position of Dominion Government.
- (c) Consultation with provinces to secure their views and if possible their agreement on the figures and on an agenda as well on the general approach and procedure. This consultation would vary with the provinces and might in some cases be quite informal.
- (d) Development of public opinion.

The Dominion tactics, it was declared, " will be to offer such favourable financial terms in connection with the tax transfer settlement as... to secure in return such jurisdiction in the fields of social services and welfare, public works in a broad sense, and economic regulation as to enable the Dominion to carry out a full-employment high-income post-war policy and to implement international agreements to which it will become a party..."²¹ The

¹⁸ Memorandum for the Prime Minister, " Jan. 22, 1944, with accompanying note by Pickersgill, Feb. 1, 1944, King Papers, J4, v. 267, file 2664.

¹⁹ King to " My dear premier, " Feb. 25, 1944, Claxton Papers, v. 140.

²⁰ The original members of the Cabinet Committee were T.A. Crerar (chairman), Ilesley, St. Laurent, Gardiner, McClarty, and Mitchell, with Claxton as head of a group of Parliamentary Secretaries working on reconstruction. The Advisory Committee had members from most departments and its secretary was Alex Skelton.

²¹ Cabinet Committee on Dominion-Provincial Conference, Agenda for Meeting Feb. 17, 1944, Claxton Papers, v. 141

time seemed propitious, the bargain was fair. In March a Gallup poll further encouraged the Dominion government planners. When Canadians were asked whether they believed the federal government or the provincial government or both should be responsible for "making jobs" after the war, the federal government was the first choice (38%) and "both" was a strong second (36%). A significant number (30%) were even willing to have their province abandon some of its powers "in order to have one plan to cover the whole country." Another poll revealed that 71% of Canadians wanted "changes or reforms," far more than in Britain (57%) or the United States (32%).²² It remained for the Dominion to convince Canadians that change could come most effectively through central government leadership. For the moment, public opinion was, in the planners' term, "developing" nicely. This time, it seemed, there would be no return to normalcy. The hopes, however, proved illusory. Suddenly, in the summer of 1944, the federal government's building blocks for the new federalism began to disappear. Premier Godbout of Quebec warned that the political climate in his province was too sensitive to permit him to attend any conference where it might appear that Quebec was giving up some rights. Other premiers also expressed reservations about meeting when their own plans had not been formulated, and even the federal Cabinet Committee on the Dominion-Provincial Conference found it difficult to reach agreement on some topics. George Drew became more outspoken in his attacks on the federal government and he announced that he had a large scale social programme of his own.²³ To Claxton, the last was most dangerous of all: he warned King that

²² Public Opinion Quarterly, 9 (1944), 528. Also, Claxton Papers, v.

²³ Godbout to King, : Feb. 4, 1944, King Papers J1, v., 360; Pickersgill to King, April 6, 1944, Ibid., J4, v. 269, file 2675; ad "Report on Trip by

Drew would exploit any differences between Godbout and King which might develop at the conference. Mr. Drew's one hope of getting power federally, " a suspicious Claxton claimed, " is to lead a crusade against Quebec." King needed no warning. On July 22, 1944 he learned of a Drew speech which was particularly offensive. He was delighted: "It gave me just what I needed for not having a Dominion-Provincial Conference before the [federal] elections."²⁴ In a few days more, King had even more reasons, a new government in Quebec and the conscription crisis. Thus there was no conference in 1944.

What had begun as a year of enormous promise ended with a divided nation, and, for the postwar settlement, an uncertain future. After King cancelled the conference, blaming Drew and the lack of Ontario cooperation, the Ontario government angrily rejected King's charges of Ontario non-cooperation and demanded that the conference be held. In a letter from Provincial Treasurer Leslie Frost to King, Frost pointed to the vast schemes " of the Government of Ontario and the municipalities of the Province." During the war, Frost continued, " the Province gave to the Dominion certain of its taxing and other powers. This was done patriotically and in good faith. " It was not, however, done permanently. There must be a Dominion-Provincial conference to arrange for the return of the taxing power to their rightful possessor.²⁵

In the late summer and fall of 1944, Rowell-Sirois was finally buried, and any other comprehensive constitutional and, financial solution seemed a far more

WHT [Turnbull], " April 20, 1944, Ibid., v. 268, file 2667. Correspondence with the premiers was tabled in Sessional Paper 257b, 1944.

²⁴ Mackenzie King Record, II, 55. See also, Canada, House of Commons Debates, Aug. 14, 1944, 6501-2 where King quotes the Drew speech and declares that Drew's hostile remarks about him make the conference impossible

²⁵ Frost to King, Sept 21, 1944, King Papers, J1., v. 360

distant hope than it had only a year ago. Facing apparently intractable provincial opposition as well as an electorate which clearly wanted action on social welfare, the federal government went ahead in 1944 with several measures, notably family allowances, which had formerly found place on now aging agenda for future Dominion-Provincial conferences. This decision to act immediately was not only a reaction to political needs but also an attempt to accustom Canadians to federal leadership in social affairs.²⁶ Time, it was thought, was the most valuable ally. King and Claxton were especially encouraged by the very-sympathetic attitude of the new Saskatchewan premier T.C. Douglas who told King in December that he and Manitoba Premier Stuart Carson were "working on" Alberta's Ernest Manning and British Columbia's John Hart. In the face of Bracken-Drew Conservatism, the interests of his government and Mackenzie King's were the same. Like Claxton, Douglas distrusted Drew whom he believed was trying to create a provincial bloc which would force a federal-provincial confrontation.²⁷ When the Ontario Health and Welfare minister invited his counterparts to a meeting in Toronto in January 1945, such suspicions seemed confirmed. The federal government was immediately informed and asked for advice by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Carson rejected the invitation immediately, claiming

²⁶ When analyzing the results of Gallup poll, J.D. Ketchum of the Wartime Information Board warned Claxton that the apparently pro-federal results were not so clear cut. He added: "As several of our observers have said recently, people at present know that they want full employment, social security, etc., but care very little what government gives them to them and have little idea how the various powers are divided." Ketchum to Claxton, March 31, 1944, Claxton Papers, v. 141.

²⁷ King Diary, July 24 and Dec. 14, 1944. In February 1945, the federal government and Saskatchewan had a quarrel over federal seizure of subsidies Douglas warned it must stop. A memorandum warned King that further seizure would mean a protest at the Dominion-Provincial conference. "Premier Douglas did not want this to happen,* particularly in the light of the forces opposing both C.C.F. and Liberals." "Memorandum," Feb. 6, 1945, King Papers, J4, v. 268, file 266;.

cent. Things will then go on as pre-war. Just have to do the best possible under these conditions.

Skelton was also pessimistic although more aggressive. Fortified by three beers and four coffee and rums during lunch at Madame Burger's, Skelton declared that the Dominion would simply offer to buy out all or any provinces. The weaker would oblige, and the others would eventually weary. It was, however, W.A. Mackintosh of the Reconstruction. Department who best summarized what eventually had to be the Dominion position. There would be no constitutional amendments or even significant transfers of power, merely a rationalization. In any case, Mackintosh was sceptical of any blueprints for the future.. he remembered some from 1919 and how dismally they had failedoth as prediction and guide. The proposition was really elementary: If the burden were placed fairly, " the country can face the future and meet the problems. Denied the right, the country is hamstrung." What was needed was " practical " public education.³⁰

A good example of such practical public education was the Reconstruction Department's White Paper on Employment and Income which Mackintosh largely authored. It was, Mackintosh later pointed cut, an attempt to clear up " the confused atmosphere of public, business and labour opinion in 1945." ³¹ It was also a relatively conservative statement of what the government had done, would like to do, and thought it const do. The emphasis was definitely upon government intervention in the economy to prevent economic recession (primarily by means of a " public works shelf."), and the social security schemes which were

³⁰ Grant Dexter memorandum, March 1, 1945, Dexter Papers, Box 4. Clifford Clark, who appeared to be " shrivelling a bit, " took the harshest view of all: " With him it is tax agreements or chaos

³¹ Mackintosh, " The White Paper on Employment and Income in Its 1945 Setting, " in Canadian Economic Policy Since the War (Canadian Trade Committee, 1966), 13. Canada, Department of Reconstruction, Employment and income (Ottawa 1945). The Economist (May 26, 1945) pointed to the restraint of the White Paper when it came to outlining the future.

described were mainly those of the past. Conspicuous by its absence was any mention of constitutional amendment or even reform. The White Paper was certainly a landmark in Canadian economic thought, but its importance lay in popularization rather than original contribution, and, ideologically, it took the road to Kingston not to Jerusalem.

The majority which the King government won in the June 1945 election assured that the federal government would continue to travel along the same road. The government had promised a Dominion-Provincial meeting after the election, and George Drew's impressive victory five days after King's meant that the federal government had someone who would keep them to the promise. For his own very good reason the preparation of the federal budget - Ilesley wanted an early conference and he finally persuaded a reluctant King to convene the conference on August 6. This meant that the various threads of the federal presentation which had been dropped during the campaign had to be picked up once again and woven together into an attractive fabric. Throughout July several committees worked on specific portions of the proposals.³² What Ilesley wanted, Grant Dexter wrote to Bruce Hutchison, was "a bang up programme based on the transfer of the taxing power." Ilesley realized that Ottawa would not get agreement in a day; it would have to be "patient and succeed by persuasion, aiming arguments over the head of the provincial governments at the electors of the provinces."³³

If there was agreement on tactics, there was often dissent about specifics. Much of this derived from the cabinet ministers' unfamiliarity with specifics. The election had meant that planning had been left to the officials, and even the prime

³² Records of these committees are located in RG 19, E2C, v. 110

³³ Dexter to "Brucie," June 21, 1945, Dexter Papers, Box 4, file 27, reporting on a private conversation with Ilesley.

that " piecemeal discussion of problems " would accomplish nothing. " An all-round adjustment " was what was needed.²⁸

During the winter of 1944-45, federal officials continued to plan such " an all-round adjustment." They did this knowing that the new political situation made acceptance of such an adjustment quite doubtful. Perhaps the encouragement of provincial premiers like Douglas and Carson explains this persistence, but it is likely that simple bureaucratic, the inertia, the influence of American and British post-war planning, and the forthcoming federal election are also important reasons. Thus, even though Mackenzie's cherished health scheme was in a state of rigor mortis, it was politically unwise to administer last rites during an election year when social reform was a major issue. Such schemes, moreover, could be useful federal bargaining points in what clearly would be a Dominion - Provincial confrontation. The Dominion Government was already prepared to take its losses, most of them social security programmes, and to salvage what it deemed essential: federal control of what Alex Skelton termed " the balance-wheel of the economy."²⁹

There was little confidence in Ottawa in the late winter of 1945 that such control could be maintained. When Grant Dexter called on Ilsley on March 1, he found the finance minister very gloomy. Dominion-provincial relations, Ilsley felt, were " pretty well hopeless ":

He saw it this way, after the election if they are still in office King will call a conference and put up a proposition. It doesn't matter much what it is. The provinces will turn it down. The tax agreements will be terminated as soon as the war is over and the Dominion will vacate and cut its corporation taxes down to 30 per

²⁸ Claxton, " Memorandum for the Prime Minister, " Dec. 20, 1944, Ibid

²⁹ Crerar to Claxton, March 8, 1945, enclosing Alex Skelton, " Dominion-Provincial Relations Post-war, " Claxton Papers, v. 14C. This paper is really a first draft of the Dominion Proposals.

minister seemed aware only of the general character of conference preparation.³⁴

Nevertheless, there were some serious disagreements as the plans were unveiled. Louis St- Laurent became disturbed about some aspects of the social security planning, notably the concept of a distinct social security tax. St. Laurent argued that .it would require a constitutional amendment, and it had been agreed that no constitutional amendments should be proposed. In another area, public investment, Howe grumbled that " all the assistance [the provinces] needed from the Dominion beyond a considerable expansion in direct federal works might be making 2% money available to the municipalities, perhaps in return for Dominion control of timing."³⁵ But with the conference so near debate could not be long. By the end of July the differences were largely resolved. In a characteristically conciliatory gesture, St. Laurent spoke out publicly for the proposals. He warned that if the conference failed and ".the Dominion comes to the conclusion that-essential things must be done, we will have to do them notwithstanding. [provincial opposition]."³⁶ Federal officials and ministers-were not so certain of the future, but they were not prepared to let others-know it.

On July 30, fourteen days later than expected, the cabinet gave the complete

³⁴ There is, in fact, not much evidence that King thought much about the subject at all. For example, MacKenzie King Record, II, gives no indication that King considered the specific schemes before the conference met. The King Papers, however, do show that King was kept informed, and marginalia on memoranda show that he read them even if he did not absorb them.

³⁵ Claxton, " Memoranda for the Prime Minister," July 27, 1945, King Papers, J4, v. 332, file ³⁵⁵¹; and Minutes of the Cabinet Committee on Dominion-Provincial Relations, June 20, 1945, Claxton Papers, v. 141. This committee had been expanded and changed since 1944. The members now were Ilsley, St. Laurent, MacKinnon, Mitchell, Claxton, and Howe.

³⁶ Quoted in Dale Thomson, Louis St. Laurent: Canadian (Toronto, 1967), 170. For an extended discussion of the speech, see Wilfrid Eggleston, The Road to Nationhood (Toronto, 1946), 192-3

programme its final scrutiny.³⁷ In its final form, it was an impressive package. Skelton was the principal author of the first two parts of the three part report, but the third part, the Dominion Proposals, was nearly completely the work of: committees which had toiled since a conference had first. been mentioned.³⁸

The Dominion Proposals were subdivided into three areas: public investment policy, social security, and financial arrangements. The interrelatedness of the three areas was stressed, but it was clear that the last was fundamental, the heart of the proposals without which the others would die. In exchange for giving up personal income taxes, corporation taxes, and succession duties, the provinces were offered by the Dominion an annual per capita grant of \$12 minimum which would be indexed to the value of the GNP in any year as compared to 1941. The Dominion also stated that it would take on additional financial obligations in regard to unemployment insurance, old age pensions, and health grants and insurance. The remainder of the federal presentation is too extensive to detail here. What is important to note is the absence of any proposals requiring constitutional amendment and the financial attractiveness of the financial proposals to most provinces.³⁹ Equally interesting is the continuing federal commitment to a comprehensive scheme albeit one which lacked the centralizing thrust Alex Skelton had proposed in 1943. Although there were many differences from the Rowell-Sirois conference four years

³⁷ Mackenzie King Record, II, 449; and Working Committee on Health Insurance Minutes, #1, RG 19, E2C, v. 110, file 137-0-167.

³⁸ Based on a comparison with Skelton's extended memorandum of February 1945 (see note 29) and with the records of the inter-departmental committees which had considered such areas as health insurance, old age pensions, etc

³⁹ The entire Dominion submission is found in Dominion-Provincial Conference(1945), Dominion and Provincial Submissions and Plenary Conference Discussions (Ottawa, 1946). (henceforth: Dominion and Provincial)

earlier, the Dominion tactics, epitomized by the preparation and presentation of the " Green Book," remained essentially- and surprisingly - the same. Whether the results would be similar was unknown as the conference opened and the proposals were presented on August 6.

That the programme was not presented earlier was probably the first federal mistake. Ilsley's hope that the federal government could talk over the head of the provinces was mere whimsy so long as Drew and Duplessis had immediate right to reply. Thus, as soon as the prime minister finished his opening remarks, George Drew objected to the Conference procedure and, most of all, to the fact that he had not seen the Dominion's proposals before that day. He then cleverly drew the discussion to those grounds where Claxton had warned the federal government was weakest: the issue of centralization versus a Canadian federal tradition. although Drew admitted- correctly but briefly- that King had expressed the view " that there be strong provincial governments which are free and adequately financed with their own affairs," this admission was obscured in rodomontade on the evils of centralization and on the existence of those (who remained unnamed) who wanted a unitary state in Canada.⁴⁰ In concluding, Drew advocated breaking up into committees, setting up a " Dominion-Provincial Co-ordinating Council," and conducting further discussions in secrecy.⁴¹ A short time Duplessis associated himself with Drew's objections, and a pattern was established. Federal officials were disappointed but not discouraged; consideration of the proposals went on. Drew's important suggestion that a Dominion-Provincial Coordinating Committee

⁴⁰ Dominion and Provincial, 10.

⁴¹ Ibid., 15-19, 48

be established was followed, and the premiers along with King, Ilesley, St. Laurent, and Howe were named as its members. The committee established, the photograph taken, the conference adjourned to meet again on November 26.

Coinciding with the dropping of the atomic bomb and the end of the Pacific war, the conference found its way onto the inside pages of newspapers. There was little reaction to the presentations, and public opinion gave no indication where it wished to be led. Thus Dominion hopes that their proposals would so completely commend themselves to the electorate that provincial opposition would vanish were not realized. Federal officials now knew that their schemes would require modification, and in September the interdepartmental working committees were re-established to prepare responses to provincial counter-proposals.⁴² For his part, Alex Skelton, now the secretary of the Coordinating Committee, toured Canada to discover what the premiers were likely to want and do when they returned to Ottawa.

In visiting the provincial capitals in late October and early November, Skelton learned that Ontario, British Columbia and Nova Scotia were preparing counter-proposals, and the other provinces were likely to submit "specific criticisms and a number of individual recommendations." Drew, Duplessis, and McNair felt that these provincial submissions should be presented in camera. The others, however, disagreed; and Carson, who was the strongest spokesman for the federal proposals, bluntly "emphasized the desirability of having the record clear in case of a breakdown." But, to Skelton, a breakdown seemed less likely in November than it had in August. He found Drew cordial and apparently willing to cooperate. Ontario naturally wanted more money than the Dominion

⁴² Skelton to George Davidson, Sept. 26, 1945, RG 19, E2C, v. 109, file 135-0-1b7. Federal officials had expected comments rather than counter-proposals

had offered, but, Skelton reported, the province appears ready to accept the transfer of tax fields." Duplessis was also gracious in his reception, and he expressed " no fundamental objections to the tax transfers in the manner proposed provided the constitution was not changed and... the deal was a favourable financial one to Quebec." Skelton soon discovered that Duplessis had not really studied the proposals, and it seemed likely there would be no Quebec counter-proposal, merely " a fence-sitting wait-and-see position." Nevertheless, there were troubles from two rather unexpected sources: the Liberal premiers John Hart of British Columbia and Angus L. Macdonald of Nova Scotia. To Skelton, Hart's position was " of critical importance ": If he opposed the proposals, Quebec and Ontario -probably would follow behind quickly. "The financial ramifications of the federal proposals apparently disturbed him, and he even went so far as to question the good faith of the federal government on 'some items. Skelton sought to reassure him, but he got no commitments. Macdonald was more puzzling. The former federal minister was not concerned with the financial arrangements which he admitted were " generous. " It was, rather, " the principle of the thing which disturbs him." According to one of his friends, he was also opposed to the Dominion proposals " because of Quebec domination in any possible set up " in Ottawa. this, of course, Skelton did not hear. Instead, he was warned " that a strong provincial government is necessary to offset the centralist tendencies" and that " the power to tax is an even more important element of strength and autonomy than larger revenues."⁴³

⁴³ Alex Skelton, " Notes on Provincial Visits October 28th-November 19th re Dominion-Provincial Meeting, " King Papers., J4, v. 267. The other information on Macdonald comes from the Norman Lambert Diary, January 28, 1946

It was a more discouraging report than Skelton seemed to realize. In his overall summary of his findings, Skelton agreed that the Dominion should consider the counter-proposals seriously, but he added:

The responsibility falls primarily on the provincial governments to be moderate in their demands and to frame their suggestions in the national interest, since failure of the Conference would react more sharply on the provincial governments (and the people of Canada as a whole) than on the Dominion government itself. If the conference does fail, the Dominion government will have no alternative but to use its very considerable powers, both constitutional and de facto to carry out the policies it thinks most desirable in the national interest.⁴⁴

Skelton's remarks reflect an inability to understand the political force of Macdonald's argument and of the provincial case in general.⁴⁵ The end of the war had fundamentally weakened the federal government's position, and no longer would the conference's failure produce dire political consequences for the provinces. The contrast between the 1941 and 1945 conferences in terms of publicity use already strong evidence of that. More important, however, was the attitude of the federal cabinet itself. The social security programme no longer seemed a pressing political necessity to a large number of ministers. after all the federal, government, using its. Own constitutional powers, had brought in family allowances, farm price supports, veteran resettlement plane, and a host of other measures which directly affected this welfare of Canadians. This had dulled the edge of the reformer's arguments as had the increasing opposition among businessmen and others to further reform.⁴⁶ This

⁴⁴ Skelton, Ibid.

⁴⁵ Dexter reported that Skelton had a low view of provincial leaders." He thinks that Drew has worked himself into the role of the saviour of the conference and Duplessis into that of sitter at the receipt of ever greater dominion hand-outs. You can buy the one and sell the other as it were. You sell George on the idea that he dun it." " Memo, " Dec. 20, 1945, Dexter Papers, Box 4, file 27.

⁴⁶ The opposition is most evident in the Financial Post during the conference period.

little importance at all. But this was not true of the Ontario submission in January.1946, for George Drew had changed both mind and mood since he talked with Skelton in November. His province came forward with its own comprehensive scheme to rearrange the shape of post-war Canadian federalism and a strong rejection of the Dominion proposals. In its counter-proposal, Ontario recommended that the provinces should continue to levy personal and corporation tax and succession duties; the first two " under acts uniform with the Dominion, the last alone. The rates could-vary from province to province although the Dominion would be the collecting agent for income tax. In return for this provincial concession, the Dominion should agree to vacate permanently from a number of other direct tax fields including gasoline, amusement, pari-mutuel betting, security transfer, and electricity taxes, and should not " invade additional direct taxation fields now or in the future." In answer to the complaint that poor provinces would suffer under its plan, Ontario proposed a National Adjustment fund which would be built up through contributions of 10% of all income tax and successions duties collected by the provinces. A permanent Dominion-Provincial Co-ordinating Committee was to dispense this money at appropriate times to appropriately poor province. Although Ontario discouraged immediate consideration of a health insurance scheme, it did urge that Old Age Pensions should be extended " as soon as the Dominion finds that it has the necessary resources." In light of the cost of the other proposals, Old Age Pensions would wait a long time. These proposals and others made by Ontario were embellished with the traditional rhetoric of provincial autonomy which even Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt were

called upon to defend.⁵⁰ The argument was old and at times unsophisticated, but it was nonetheless effective. Together with Angus L. Macdonald's reiteration of provincial rights arguments, it was enough to knock Maurice Duplessis off the fence where Skelton had found him sitting in November.

Federal officials were furious. The Financial Post's well-informed Ottawa correspondent reported that "The Dominion Government is prepared for a fight to the finish against the Ontario proposals." They might be fine, indeed even bountiful, for Ontario; but they would "destroy provincial autonomy for at least six jurisdictions, " and would make "any coherent national planning for leveling out booms and depressions... an impossibility."⁵¹ But when the Coordinating Committee convened in January, there was neither a fight nor a finish as Drew proved obliging and non-committal. After a few days of discussion of the Dominion proposals, which were financially sweetened during the meetings, the Coordinating Committee adjourned until April 25. Even King, who had been pessimistic at the meeting's outset, was encouraged. Drew, he observed in his diary, "was clearly retiring from the position he took at the start."⁵² The retirement would be brief.

Believing that Drew and perhaps even Duplessis might be prepared to settle, King urged his advisers to be more flexible. He continued to sympathise with the provincial arguments about the non-separation of spending

⁵⁰ "Submission of the Province of Ontario, " Dominion and Provincial, 225-45. Minutes of the in camera Coordinating Committee sessions are in RG 28, BE 4, v. 5.

⁵¹ Here is the Present Ottawa Point of View on Coming Dominion-Provincial Meeting, " Financial Post, Jan. 26, 1946

⁵² Mackenzie King Record, III, 127. King's opinion of Drew improved somewhat when Drew was "most observant" when visiting Laurier House, Ibid., 126-7. The charges in the federal proposal gave \$; million to the provinces. Economic Committee meeting, Jan. 14, 1946, RC 19, E2C, v. 110.

change of mood was even evident in the Dominion proposals. Although Claxton had warned that St. Laurent's opposition to a Social Security Tax " practically ensures " the demise " of the whole plan as regards social security, " the tax was not mentioned in the proposals, an omission which was noted and applauded by Ontario.⁴⁷ Indeed, Claxton himself found no place on the Co-ordinating Committee whose ministerial members- St. Laurent, Howe, and Ilsley - were scarcely enthusiastic social reformers.

The other federal member of the committee did have some reputation as a reformer, but his support for his government's proposals s half-hearted for other reasons. Hardly the centralizer some recent studies have suggested,⁴⁸ Mackenzie King in fact felt considerable sympathy for the position articulated by Angus L. Macdonald. Both a traditional politician and a traditional economist, King felt genuine " concern at the method of federal proposed finances which made one Government. the taxing power and the other Governments the spending power.... From the point of view of economic and public finance, " King concluded, " I do not see how the system can be efended."⁴⁹ This meant, therefore, that the federal defence would not be strong. If the federal defence was weaker than Skelton expected the provincial attack was much stronger than he had forecast. British Columbia's submission, which was presented to coincide with the November 26 meeting of the Coordinating Committee, did not possess the " critical importance " which Skelton thought it might. In fact, it and the Alberta brief presented the same day possessed

⁴⁷ Claxton, " Memorandum for the Prime Minister, " July 27, 1945, King Papers, J4, v. 332, file 3551; and Dominion and Provincial, 237.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Conrad Black, Duplessis Toronto, 1976).

⁴⁹ J.W. Pickersgill and DBA Forster, The Mackenzie King Record 1941-1946 (Toronto, 1970), 125.

and taxing power.⁵³ St. Laurent was also described as being willing to meet provincial objections, especially in the area of succession duties.⁵⁴ On the whole, Grant Dexter reported after speaking with federal officials in March 1946, " the Dominion will not stiffen in its attitude but will yield still further to the provinces." King and St. Laurent, he predicted, " will be the decisive factors." Deputy Minister of Finance Clifford Clark was also encouraged by the great increases in provincial budgets which meant that the provinces needed money and hence a rapid settlement.⁵⁵ Yet all these factors did not combine to create the foundations for such a settlement, for in Quebec City and Toronto other forces were active in strengthening provincial opposition.

Drew's arguments against centralization had appealed to many of his supporters who increasingly identified that tendency with socialism. Ironically, the arguments also appealed to French Canadians who feared that centralization could mean domination by English Canadians like George Drew. After the first meeting, Duplessis was encouraged take a more vocal stand for provincial autonomy and against federal takeovers of social welfare and taxes. Even union leaders, who wanted more generous social welfare, attacked the measures proposed by Ottawa as centralizing devices.⁵⁶ Duplessis sharp political ear: heard the growing rumble against "centralization " - from the

⁵³ See Mackenzie King Record, III, 127-8, 203.

⁵⁴ Grant Dexter, " Memorandum," March 6, 1946, Dexter Papers, Box 4, file 27.

⁵⁵ Ibid., and Lewis Clark to Jeff Parsons, April 17, 1946, State Department 842.00/4-1746, reporting on conversation with Clark. Clark pointed out that Saskatchewan had increased its budget from \$15 million to \$52 million, and Ontario from \$100 to 180 million.

⁵⁶ " Législation concurrente pour remplacer les mesures centralisatrices," Le Travail, (Oct. 1945), 1-2.

right as well as the left- and he prepared to proclaim himself the movement's leading though belated spokesman.⁵⁷ When, therefore, the Coordinating Committee reconvened on April 29, 1946, Quebec had a counter proposal commanding provincial rights and a premier prepared to articulate such views with vehemence. And George Drew's mood was hardly better. Together these unlikely allies raised both their demands and rhetoric at the very moment that others were ready to compromise. The conference was doomed.

An exhausted King and Ilsley did not seem to care. For their part, Pickersgill and Claxton expressed a gloomy belief that "Drew and Duplessis wanted the conference to fail" with the responsibility for the failure falling upon the federal government.⁵⁸ By the second day of the conference, April 27, seven provinces had agreed to give up personal income tax, corporation tax, and succession duties, but Ontario and Quebec were adamant in resistance. Drew was especially difficult, refusing even to elaborate upon or explain his own proposals.⁵⁹ With agreement so near, the federal government put forward another compromise: it would withdraw from the gasoline and amusement tax fields and temporarily jettison some welfare programmes in which neither the provinces nor the prime minister seemed much interested. The minimum annual subsidy would be 315 rather

⁵⁷ Black, Duplessis, 418-22 misleads the reader by failing to examine Duplessis' attitude before the April meeting. It is certainly wrong to suggest that Duplessis incited the other provinces. Duplessis' presentation was last, long after the critical submissions of Macdonald and Drew. See Dominion, and Provincial, 409-16, 528-31.

⁵⁸ "Ilsley himself has come now where he will not be sorry if the conference did not succeed. Personally, I have myself never liked the subsidy business. I fought it years ago and the whole line taken by the Finance Department,..." Mackenzie King Record, III, 206.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 206; and "Ontario's Alternative 'Proposal," RG 19, E2C, v. 109, file 135-0-167.

than \$12 per capita, and the provinces could levy succession duties subject to some financial adjustments. But it was not enough. Drew asked for more; and although his arguments impressed Mackenzie King, they horrified his economic advisers who quickly calculated that Drew's demands would cost the federal government \$126 million and all provinces except Ontario and Prince Edward Island would be worse off. Very simply, the advisers warned, the Dominion could not afford it and would be irresponsible to accept anything like it.⁶⁰ Three days later the conference broke up in mutual recrimination. As the "Green Book's" foundations fell down around him, King expressed the view that his own Finance Department's attitude was too much that of a small boy trying to take nuts out of a jar and in the end endeavouring to take them all he will lose them all."⁶¹ King was wrong in description but perhaps correct in prophecy. By the time the conference adjourned, the federal officials' commitment to the Green Book had largely disappeared. They had travelled a long road from the grand visions of 1943 when the proposals first took on life. The social security proposals, which have attracted so much attention, were consigned to archives dust not long after they were printed. The reforms of 1944 and 1945 seemed a to satisfy rather than whet the public appetite for more. And the public investment programme, with its "public works shelf" for times of recession, did not even have the

⁶⁰ "Ontario's Alternative Proposal, loc. cit.; and Mackenzie King Record, 209ff. The amendments which the federal government was willing to make at the last minute are described in Cabinet Conclusions, April 27, 1946, St. Laurent Papers, v. 148, file 259.

⁶¹ Mackenzie King Record, III, 210.

support of the minister who would have been most responsible-C.D. Howe.⁶² Thus when the post-conference federal budget was "stripped of the vast social security and public investment program," it was "much more than a 'spite' answer to unyielding provincial authorities." "It also reflected," Kenneth Wilson accurately reported, "divided opinion in the cabinet itself as to the wisdom of a vast, integrated 'full employment' and social benefit scheme."⁶³ In the end what seemed important was the ability to make decisions which would influence the "balance wheel" of the economy. That much could be salvaged and within a short time it was. In July 1947 with seven provincial tax agreements in place, Ilesley and his successor, Douglas Abbott, declared that the federal government was "in a very good position."

It was, however, a new position. Twice the federal government had presented programmes and twice they had failed. Yet in the process the federal-provincial relationship had taken a more definite form, and it was not the cramped equilibrium of the past but one which required continuous action. Dominion-Provincial conferences and their heirs were no longer a decennial diversion but a condition of Canadian life. In these new stagings, the actors of course changed, but the experience of 1941 and 1946 continued to shape the plot. There would never again be a "solution" so complete as the "Green Book" and Rowell-Sirois, but the memory of those federal initiatives and of provincial response endured. The complexities of the debate were

⁶² Howe felt that the public works plans might be of importance in some distant future, but that the immediate problem would be a shortage of workers. Minutes of a meeting of Directors-General and Coordinators of the Department of Reconstruction, June 22, 1945, Carl Goldenberg Papers

⁶³ "Budget Tough for Provinces; Social Security Program Out," Financial Post, May 18, 1946.

forgotten if, indeed, they were ever known; what remained ineffable was the image of federal dominance and provincial resistance.⁶⁴ As time passed, the shadow of this image fell more fully over Canadian political life. This was not inevitable, but the event of 1946 made it possible and perhaps even likely. After the Reconstruction conference, its chronicler wrote: "The strong and clear voice of a united Canada, and the harmonious partnership of ten governments grappling cooperatively with post-war issues, still lay in the future."⁶⁵ That future has still not come. Of the conference we might best say, in its end was our beginning.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Creighton, The Forked Road, 115

⁶⁵ Eggleston, Road to Nationhood, 336

ADELARD GODBOUT ET LE PLEBISCITE DE 1942

Adélard Godbout qui fut premier ministre du Québec pendant la période cruciale de la seconde guerre mondiale, soit de 1939 à 1944, fut un des chefs politiques les plus controversés du Québec. Pour les nationalistes québécois, il était le valet d'Ottawa, un collaborateur au sens péjoratif du terme. Dans d'autres milieux, il fut plutôt considéré comme un homme d'Etat qui se souciait d'abord des intérêts généraux du pays plutôt que des intérêts d'une région, fût-elle sa province.

Nous voulons examiner l'attitude qu'il tint en 1942, pendant la campagne du plébiscite, alors que le gouvernement fédéral demandait à être libéré de la promesse qu'il avait faite à la population et spécialement à la population cana-dienne-française de ne pas imposer la conscription pour ser-vice outre-mer.

I. Arrière-plan historique.

Pour comprendre l'attitude du premier ministre Godbout pendant le plébiscite de 1942, il importe de rappeler le contexte militaire et politique dans lequel le plébiscite de 1942 s'est déroulé.

C'est un fait assez bien établi que les Canadiens français ont contribué généreusement à la défense du territoire canadien quand il était envahi par l'étranger. Mais leur attitude change quand la guerre à laquelle on les invite à participer ne leur semble pas les concerner. Dans un discours retentissant qu'il prononça à Toronto, au début de son mandat, Godbout a donné les raisons de cette attitude:

"...Notre pays c'est le Canada; notre raison de travailler, de progresser, de nous répondre notre

avenir enfin, tout autant que notre présent, c'est
le Canada .¹

Cette indifférence des Canadiens français lors des conflits fut encouragée par les nationalistes canadiens-français pendant les quarante ans qui ont précédé la seconde guerre mondiale. Ils chauffèrent à blanc l'aversion canadienne-française contre les guerres, qui étaient repré-sentées comme les guerres de l'Angleterre.²

Les libéraux eux-mêmes contribuèrent à enraciner cette aversion des Canadiens français pour la participation aux guerres européennes. De 1917 à 1940, dans toutes les campagnes électorales fédérales et provinciales , les libéraux québécois dénoncèrent la conscription imposée par les conservateurs en 1917 et promirent de ne jamais l'imposer. Cette attitude des libéraux québécois fut d'une rentabilité incontestable.³ A l'élection générale de 1921, tous les candidats conservateurs furent défaits au Québec. Aux élections suivantes, le nombre de députés conservateurs au Québec fut insignifiant, à l'exception de l'élection de 1930 où leur succès s'explique par la récession économique.

Sur le plan provincial, les conservateurs subissaient un sort analogue à celui de leurs amis fédéraux. L'aversion contre les conservateurs était si grande au Québec que leur chef provincial, Maurice Duplessis, dut fonder un nouveau parti pour prendre le pouvoir en 1936.⁴

Quand la guerre éclata en 1939, l'attitude anticonscriptionniste des Canadiens français était si marquée que leurs chefs politiques, dirigés par Ernest Lapointe, n'acceptèrent de collaborer à l'effort de guerre qu'à la condition précise que la conscription pour outre-mer ne fût pas imposée.⁵ Dans un désir d'unité nationale, tous les partis politiques fédé-raux acceptèrent ce compromis. Quelques

semaines après l'entrée du Canada en guerre, le Premier ministre du Québec, Maurice Duplessis, déclenche une élection générale sur le thème de l'autonomie et contre la loi des mesures de guerre. Il se prononce même contre la participation à la guerre.⁶ Les libéraux fédéraux, ministres en tête, entrent immédiatement en campagne. Leur thème majeur est leur opposition à la conscription.⁷ Adélard Godbout, chef provincial du parti libéral, développe également le même thème et déclare même qu'il s'engage "sur l'honneur à quitter son parti et même à le combattre si un seul canadien français est conscrit contre sa volonté pour combattre à l'étranger".⁸ Le résultat de l'élection donne satisfaction aux libéraux. Même si Duplessis avait commis de nombreuses erreurs de 1936 à 1939,⁹ l'ampleur de sa défaite ne s'explique que par l'assurance donnée par les libéraux qu'ils n'y aurait pas de conscription si Godbout était porté au pouvoir.

A l'élection fédérale qui eut lieu quelques mois plus tard, soit en mars 1940, les libéraux promettent derechef de ne pas imposer la conscription pour outre-mer. Les conservateurs, désireux de s'attirer le vote canadien-français, prennent le même engagement.¹⁰

Après ces assurances reçues de tous les partis et particulièrement des libéraux, qui exerçaient le pouvoir à Québec et à Ottawa, les Canadiens français étaient bien assurés que la conscription ne serait jamais imposée. Le gouvernement libéral fédéral, qui s'appuyait sur le bloc solide du Québec,¹¹ était lié par ses promesses précises.

II La situation militaire se détériore en Europe.

Toutes ces promesses avaient été faites aux Canadiens français dans un contexte où la guerre paraissait bien éloignée. Mais au printemps 1940, la situation militaire se détériore rapidement en Europe. L'Allemagne met fin à la "drôle de guerre" et tourne ses

armes contre la Hollande, la Belgique et la France, qui succombent rapidement. Dès juin 1940, l'Angleterre, à deux doigts de la défaite, est seule en Europe en face de l'Allemagne victorieuse. L'Allemagne s'étant tournée contre la Russie, remporte des victoires spectaculaires. L'entrée des Etats-Unis en guerre, à la fin de l'année 1941, n'assurait pas l'équilibre des forces, car le Japon se joignait dans le même temps à l'Allemagne et remportait des victoires à la fois sur les Etats-Unis et sur la Grande-Bretagne. Guam, Hong Kong, Manille jalonnaient la marche victorieuse de l'Empire du Soleil Levant.

Dans cette conjoncture critique, le Canada anglais comprenait de moins en moins la politique d'Ottawa qui se refusait à imposer la conscription pour service outre-mer.¹² Aux Communes, tous les partis d'opposition abandonnaient l'attitude adoptée lors de la déclaration de guerre par le Canada et lors de l'élection fédérale de 1940. Désormais conservateurs, créditistes et membres du parti C.C.F.¹³ étaient unanimes à réclamer la conscription pour outre-mer.

Une bonne partie de la députation libérale et des ministres était aussi gagnée à l'idée d'imposer la conscription. Des tensions extrêmes se faisaient jour au sein du cabinet entre conscriptionnistes à tous crins et anticonscriptionnistes aussi résolus.¹⁴ King appuyait ces derniers, tout en s'efforçant de concilier les points de vue divergents. En janvier 1942, il y avait des semaines que ces affrontements se produisaient. Le principal argument contre la conscription pour outre-mer était le danger de division nationale.¹⁵

Devant les positions irréductibles des deux groupes ethniques et de leurs leaders politiques, King sentait que son gouvernement menaçait de voler en éclats. Il prévoyait une situation encore plus critique lors de la rentrée parlementaire alors que les attaques de l'opposition seraient peut-être dirigées par Arthur Meighen.¹⁶ Comment un gouvernement divisé pourrait-il résister aux attaques d'une opposition aussi acharnée appuyée par la majorité de la

population? Pour sortir de l'impasse, King décida de se retrancher derrière la volonté populaire, c'est-à-dire d'en appeler au peuple par un plébiscite, comme l'avait suggéré Laurier en 1917, dans des circonstances analogues.

Consultés au sujet de ce plébiscite, la plupart des chefs politiques canadiens-français et Godbout en particulier s'y opposèrent. Ils prévoyaient que les Canadiens français verraient anguille sous roche et considéreraient le référendum comme une étape vers l'imposition de la conscription pour outre-mer. King réussit tout de même à convaincre ses collègues fédéraux de l'opportunité de ce référendum, et annonça celui-ci dans le discours du trône de la session de 1942.¹⁷

Dès lors, les nationalistes québécois organisaient la Ligue pour la défense du Canada, qui allait être le fer de lance de l'opposition canadienne-française à la conscription.¹⁸ Dès le 7 février, la Ligue publiait un manifeste pour demander à la population de répondre "non" à la question ministérielle: "consentez-vous à libérer le gouvernement de toute obligation résultant d'engagements antérieurs restreignant les méthodes de mobilisations pour le service militaire?"¹⁹ L'activité de la Ligue pour la défense du Canada se développa comme une traînée de poudre. Ce fut un véritable mouvement populaire.²⁰ Le courant en faveur de la campagne des "non" était si fort que des députés libéraux fédéraux et provinciaux voire 3 ministres provinciaux firent campagne pour le "non" même si les ministres fédéraux canadiens-français demandaient de voter oui.

II. Attitude de Godbout.

Devant cette levée de boucliers du Canada français contre la conscription, une voie de facilité s'offrait à Godbout: appuyer inconditionnellement cette attitude générale. Ce faisant, il pouvait s'attirer l'attachement des Canadiens français et s'assurer une réélection facile, pour des années à venir peut-être. Si Godbout

avait été opportuniste, c'est cette voie qu'il aurait suivie.

Loin d'adopter cette attitude que lu aurait dictée son intérêt électoral, Godbout s'engagea dans la voie tracée par les ministres fédéraux du Québec qui demandaient à la population de voter "oui" lors du référendum. En fait, il ne fit campagne ni pour le "non", ni pour le "oui". Il participa cependant à diverses assemblées politiques pendant les semaines où se déroulait la campagne du plébiscite. C'est dans les discours qu'il prononça en ces occasions qu'il est possible de discerner le fonds de sa pensée.

En même temps que la campagne du plébiscite battait son plein, se tenait l'élection partielle de Québec-Est.. Louis Saint-Laurent, nouveau ministre de la Justice, y briguaient les suffrages pour obtenir le siège occupé tour à tour, pendant soixante-dix ans, par Laurier et Ernest Lapointe. L'élection de Saint-Laurent était d'autant plus importante qu'il venait de prendre place dans le cabinet fédéral comme principal porte-parole du Québec.²¹

Mais pour les Canadiens français, il n'était pas de tout repos d'appuyer ce nouveau porte-parole du Québec dans cette circonscription d'ouvriers canadiens-français qui avaient été témoins ou acteurs lors des émeutes anticonscriptionnistes de 1917.²² C'est que Saint-Laurent refusait de s'engager à combattre la conscription pour service outre-mer. Il était même prêt à voter la conscription, expliquait-il, si on lui en démontrait la nécessité²³ Parmi les libéraux canadiens-français en vue, il était le premier à ne pas s'exposer à la conscription. Il rompait ainsi avec une longue tradition. Wilfrid Laurier et Ernest Lapointe eux-mêmes avaient toujours promis à ces électeurs de Québec-Est comme du Canada français de s'opposer à la conscription. Si ces électeurs avaient été constamment fidèles aux libéraux c'est en grande partie en raison de ces assurances qu'on leur avait données.

Devant cette attitude de Saint-Laurent, le ministre provincial Oscar Drouin, qui était député de ce même comté de Québec-Est et

responsable de la campagne électorale de Saint-Laurent, abandonna son rôle d'organisation avec tout son personnel.²⁴

En apprenant l'attitude de Saint-Laurent, les nationalistes décidèrent de lui faire une lutte sans merci. Leur candidat était Paul Bouchard, celui-ci avait la parole facile et savait manier les foules. Candidat nationaliste à élection partielle fédérale de Lotbinière en 1938, il avait alors fait une campagne vigoureuse contre l'accroissement du budget de la Défense. A l'élection générale de 1940, il s'était présenté contre Ernest Lapointe lui-même. Il était donc bien connu dans Québec-Est.²⁵

Devant la tournure que prenait l'élection, la plupart des libéraux de la région de Québec se refusaient à faire campagne pour Saint-Laurent. Il fallut recruter des orateurs aux quatre coins de la province et ceux-ci faisaient figure de sacrifiés.²⁶

Appuyer Saint-Laurent équivalait presque à se montrer favorable à la conscription. Malgré ces circonstances défavorables Godbout voulait donner un coup de main à Saint-Laurent. La veille de l'ouverture de la campagne, Godbout en discuta longuement avec ses ministres. L'accord ne fut pas facile à établir. Quand on quitta la salle du conseil, bien après minuit, quelques ministres seulement avaient accepté d'assister à l'ouverture pour sauver les apparences et présenter l'image d'un parti uni.²⁷ Godbout, pour sa part, avait décidé de prononcer un discours à l'appui de Saint-Laurent. Il en était de même d'Oscar Drouin.

Lors de l'assemblée, Drouin demanda aux électeurs d'élire Saint-Laurent mais il les assura en même temps qu'il leur demanderait de voter "non" au plébiscite.²⁸ Quant à Godbout, il y alla d'un de ses meilleurs discours. Il réitéra son opposition à la conscription mais ne souffla mot de la campagne du plébiscite.²⁹

Ce fut la seule collaboration publique de Godbout à la campagne de Saint-Laurent. Ses députés ne participèrent pas davantage. Mais il ne faudrait pas croire que Godbout n'était pas de cœur avec

Saint-Laurent dans cette campagne électorale. Dans une lettre qu'il écrivait à Mackenzie King, le lendemain du vote, il expliqua son attitude. Il montra que c'était par stratégie et pour éviter le pire, soit de soulever davantage les nationalistes, que lui et ses collègues s'étaient abstenus de participer davantage à la campagne de Saint-Laurent.³⁰

Godbout prononça d'autres discours politiques à l'époque, Il est facile d'y discerner davantage ses véritables sentiments relativement à la campagne du plébiscite. Il assista à un ralliement libéral dans le comté de Montréal-Mercier alors que la fièvre anticonscriptionniste était à son comble. Avant l'assemblée, des jeunes gens lui avaient fait parvenir un message "lui demandant de définir son attitude et de se prononcer ouvertement contre le service obligatoire outremer".³¹ Au lieu de viser au succès facile en dénonçant la conscription dès le départ, Godbout entreprit d'abord de nuancer sa pensée, de défendre une thèse moins aguichante pour les étudiants. Il leur demande de réfléchir: " Nous entrons, leur dit-il, dans une heure grave de notre histoire. D'ici quelques mois, le sort du Canada français se jouera peut-être sur la terre d'Amérique; nous aurons peut-être à prendre de graves responsabilités..."³² Par ces paroles, prononcées malgré de multiples interruptions, Godbout laissait entendre qu'il était d'accord avec ses collègues fédéraux qui demandaient à être libérés de leurs promesses de ne pas imposer la conscription.

En mars 1942, Godbout se trouvait de nouveau à Montréal. Cette fois c'était dans le cadre d'une élection partielle. Participant à un ralliement au marché Saint-Jacques, il subit de nouveau les interruptions des jeunes gens qui criaient: "A bas la conscription". Malgré l'agressivité des étudiants, cette fois encore, Godbout montra qu'il vibrait à l'unisson des ministres fédéraux qui faisaient campagne pour le "oui". Il affirma aux jeunes gens qui le harcelaient que "la patrie ne se limite pas et ne doit pas se limiter pour nous à la province de Québec" et qu'aucun "citoyen ne doit refuser quelque sacrifice que ce soit à la patrie menacée."³³

Par la suite, c'est à l'Assemblée législative que Godbout eut à prendre parti sur cette question du plébiscite. Le député nationaliste René Chaloult présentait une motion où il affirmait que:

"les électeurs devraient répondre "non" à toute question relative à la libération du gouvernement fédéral des promesses et engagements touchant le service militaire obligatoire hors du Canada..."³⁴

Votée par la Chambre, la motion aurait reçu une publicité considérable car les journaux donnaient alors des comptes rendus détaillés des débats. Ce vote risquait d'amplifier, sinon de provoquer la déconfiture des ministres fédéraux qui faisaient campagne pour le "oui". Godbout entreprit donc de faire rejeter la motion mais il rencontrait une difficulté d'importance: bon nombre de ses députés approuvaient cette motion et menaçait de se diviser en Chambre.

Godbout retarda le débat sur la motion Chaloult jusqu'au début d'avril et ne tint pas moins de trois réunions du caucus pour mettre ses députés d'accord. Lors de la première réunion, une dizaine de députés s'étaient rangés du côté de Chaloult alors que le premier ministre exprimait l'opinion qu'il fallait répondre "oui" au plébiscite. A la seconde réunion, les députés ruraux, qui étaient allés sonder les sentiments de leurs électeurs, étaient revenus nerveux, et une vingtaine étaient prêts à appuyer Chaloult. Godbout ne recourut pas "à la manière impérative, il laissa ses députés jeter leur premier feu, se contempler dans de belles attitudes, s'admirer dans leur énergie et leur dévouement au peuple". Entre-temps, Godbout et certains de ces collègues particulièrement favorables au "oui" exercèrent des pressions individuelles auprès des députés récalcitrants. Finalement, à la troisième réunion du caucus, tous les députés se rallièrent au point de vue de leur chef et acceptèrent de rejeter la motion Chaloult.³⁵ Le gouvernement évitait ainsi d'embarrasser les collègues du cabinet fédéral.

A mesure que l'heure du vote du plébiscite approchait, la Ligue pour la défense du Canada intensifiait sa campagne. L'opposition canadienne-française à la conscription pour outre-mer devenait totale. Les assemblées de la Ligue étaient nombreuses. Des dizaines d'associations canadiennes-françaises, des centaines de conseils municipaux et de commission scolaires donnaient leur appui à la Ligue. Celle-ci reprochait à Godbout de ne pas donner de directives à la population. Le Devoir se livrait à des attaques incessantes contre Godbout. Des députés libéraux à tendance nationaliste le dénonçaient même au parlement fédéral.³⁶ Godbout garda la même attitude jusqu'au vote du plébiscite.

Si Godbout était favorable au "oui" qui libérerait les ministres fédéraux de leurs engagements en regard de la conscription, on peut être sûr cependant qu'il continuait d'être opposé à la conscription. On en trouve la preuve dans ses propres paroles au cours de la campagne mais aussi dans sa conduite subséquent qui confirme ses paroles. Peu après le scrutin plébiscitaire du 21 avril, il fait proposer une motion par un de ses députés contre la conscription et la députation libérale appuya massivement celle-ci.³⁷

En considérant cette attitude de Godbout au cours du plébiscite, on peut se demander pourquoi il l'a adoptée et pourquoi il l'a maintenue avec une telle opiniâtreté malgré son intérêt électoral évident. D'abord il faut se rappeler qu'il agissait ainsi en toute lucidité: plus d'une fois il souligna lui-même qu'il naviguait à contre courant et contre son propre intérêt électoral. Alors agissait-il par servilité à l'égard de ses amis d'Ottawa? Il faut plutôt invoquer le fait qu'il était convaincu de l'opportunité de libérer Ottawa de ses engagements anticonscriptionnistes, ne serait-ce que pour permettre au gouvernement fédéral de dire qu'il avait les mains libres et que s'il n'imposait pas la conscription c'est qu'elle n'était pas nécessaire. Car en même temps qu'il suggérait de voter "oui" Godbout réitérait son opposition invincible à la conscription.

Finalement une autre raison qui explique l'attitude de Godbout, c'est l'attitude même de ses députés et des ses ministres. Le tiers d'entre eux était favorables au "non" et faisaient campagne en ce sens. Par contre, une vingtaine votèrent "oui" lors du plébiscite. Parmi ceux-ci se trouvaient les anglophones et quelques Canadiens français qui agissaient ainsi par conviction personnelle ou en raison de la composition ethnique de leur électorat. Neuf comtés de la région de Montréal donnèrent une majorité de "oui". Parmi les ministres favorables au "oui" se trouvaient les plus influents dont Arthur Mathewson, T.-D. Bouchard et Hector Perrier. Il reste que Godbout, en se montrant favorable au "oui" a sans doute évité d'accentuer la division qui se faisait jour entre les deux groupes ethniques au Canada. Ceux qui tiennent à l'unité du Canada lui doivent reconnaissance.

1. Adélard Godbout, Unité nationale, Québec, 1940.
2. Sur l'attitude des nationalistes canadiens-français avant 1939, voir en particulier L'Action française (1917-1928), Le Devoir, (1910-1939), L'Action nationale (1933-1939) André Laurendeau, La crise de la conscription, Montréal, ed. du Jour, 1962, pp. 11-24.
3. Le Canada (1914-1939).- Ce journal libéral est une source précieuse pour la connaissance des attitudes des politiciens libéraux au Québec.
4. H.A. Quinn, The Union Nationale, Toronto, U.T.P., 1963, pp. 48-72, Leslie Roberts, Le chef, Montréal, Les Editions du Jour, 1963, pp. 29 a 35.
5. J.W. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, Toronto, U.T.P., 1960, vol. I, p. 22.
6. The Montreal Star, 5 octobre 1939.
7. Le Devoir, 26 septembre 1939, 10 octobre 1939.
8. Ibid., 2 octobre 1939.
9. Ernest Lapointe à A.-J. Price, 26 août 1937, Archives publiques du Canada, gonds Ernest Lapointe, vol. 30, folio 123; E. Lapointe à Robert Taschereau, 22 août 1938, fonds Ernest Lapointe, vol. 33, folio 153.
10. Marc La Terreur, Les tribulations du parti conservateur au Québec, Québec, P.U.L., 1973, pp. 87-88.
11. Canadian Parliamentary Guide.
12. J.W. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, vol. I, p. 332.
13. Le Devoir, 10 janvier 1942.
14. J.W. Pickersgill, op. cit., pp. 294-295.
15. Ibid. pp. 306-307, 312; N. Word, ed., A Party Politician, The memoirs of Chubby Power, p. 134
16. J.W. Pickersgill, op. cit., p. 315.
17. Ibid., p. 337. Journaux de la Chambre des Communes, session 1942.Le Devoir, 17 février 1942.- Les papiers de la Ligue pour la défense au Canada sont déposés à la Fondation Lionel Groulx, rue Bloomfield, Montréal.
18. Le Devoir, 11 mars 1942.

19. Ibid., 9 février 1942.
20. D.C. Thomson, Louis St-Laurent: Canadien
21. Sur ces émeutes de 1917, voir Jean Provencher, Québec sous la loi des mesures de guerre, 1917, Trois-Rivières, Boréal Express, 1971.
22. N. Ward, éd., op. cit., p. 133; D.C. Thomson, op. cit., p. 113.
23. Ibid.
24. Le Devoir, 10 février 1942. - Sur P. Bouchard, voir Lionel Groulx, Mes mémoires, vol. III: 1926-1939, pp. 250, 293.
25. N. Ward, éd., op. cit., p. 133; D.C. Thomson, op. cit., pp. 116-117, William Morin, entrevue, été 1967.
26. D.C. Thomson, op. cit., p. 115.
27. Le Devoir, 5 février 1942.- Dans ses mémoires, C.G. Power fait erreur quand il affirme qu'aucun ministre du cabinet provincial n'a voulu participer à la campagne de Saint-Laurent (N. Ward, éd., op. cit., p. 133).
28. Le Devoir, 5 février 1942.
29. Adélar Godbout a Mackenzie King, 16 février 1942, Fonds Mackenzie King, vol. 324, Primary Series.
30. Le Devoir, 27 janvier 1942.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 17 mars 1942.
33. Journaux de l'Assemblée législative, session 1942; Le Devoir, 5 mars 1942.
34. Le Devoir, 9 avril 1942.
35. Ibid., 27 janvier 1942, 17 et 18 mars 1942.
36. Québec, Journaux: de l'Assemblée législative, session 1942; Le Devoir, 8 et 13 mai 1942.

British Policy Towards the Russo-Finnish War 1939-40

In mid-September 1939 a crisis developed in Russo-Finnish relations when the Soviet Union sought to improve its strategic defences through the acquisition of territories and bases in Finland. From the onset of the crisis to the outbreak of the Winter War the British government encouraged the Finns to resist these demands.¹ Military and political opinion clearly agreed that the preservation of Finnish neutrality and territorial integrity was not essential to the war with Germany: on the contrary, the expansion of Russian power in the Baltic area appeared inevitable after the Nazi-Soviet pact, and held potential benefits for the Allies in that it increased the probability of an eventual break in Russo-German relations. What lured the British to encourage Finland was the prospect of attaining even greater advantages if Russian expansion in the Baltic involved the use of force. At the Foreign Office, D. H. Lascelles wrote that

...any military campaign by the Soviet Union, even against a country as weak as Finland, would absorb Soviet oil, food and war materials which might otherwise go to Germany and would--temporarily at any rate--distract the attention of the Soviet Government from other fields--e.g. Central Asia--where their expansionist activities would be more harmful to ourselves.

It seems to me conceivable that a Soviet war of conquest in Finland might sufficiently rouse public opinion in the USA to bring about, if not

¹ Foreign Office (FO) Minute, Collier, 21/9/39, FO.371/23643, N4712/194/56.

a rupture of American-Soviet relations at any rate an American boycott of raw materials for the Soviet Union; and this would be of great value to us.²

What convinced the British that this policy might succeed was Finland's apparent determination to defend her independence come what may. Indeed the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish war on 30 November was more a monument to the stubborn optimism of the Finnish government than a direct result of British policy. Throughout the autumn crisis the British gave little in the way of open encouragement to the Finns. Financial assistance to help the Finns overcome the strain of mobilization was prohibited by Britain's own weak condition.³ Military deficiency and opposition from the Services limited military assistance to six tanks and a number of aircraft engines.⁴ Lord Chatfield, Minister for

Coordination of Defence, summed up the position when he wrote

...that we ourselves are so short of armaments that it is only with the greatest difficulty that we have been able to meet a proportion of the requirements of those foreign countries which are allied to us or guaranteed by us, and Departments are clearly obliged to give preference to such countries. I must also point out that Finland has never figured in any form of priority list, either political or strategical.⁵

On the political side, the desire for rapprochement with Russia lead the British to assume a judicious attitude towards the crisis. The Foreign Office agreed to boost media coverage of Finland and make discreet enquiries in Moscow as to the progress of the negotiations, but refused to sanction criticism of Russia, extend a guarantee to Finland, or consider a proposal for joint military action

² Minutes by Lascelles 9/10/39, on Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., #124, 8/10/39, F0.371/23692, N5093/991/38.

³ Minutes by Barclay (15/11/39) on Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., 6/11/39, F0.371/23693, N6667/991/38.

⁴ Chatfield to Halifax, 1/11/39, F0.371/23644, N5934/194/56; Street (War Office) to Cadogan, 1/11/39, F0.371/23644, N5926/194/56.

⁵ Chatfield to Halifax, 21/10/39, F0.371/23644, N5686/194/56.

with Japan in the event of Soviet aggression.⁶ Perhaps the only effective form of diplomatic encouragement to the Finns throughout this period was silence. The Foreign Office rejected repeated appeals from Snow, the British Minister in Helsinki, for Britain to encourage Finnish acceptance of Soviet terms.

In the days immediately following the Soviet invasion of Finland the prime concern of the British government was to hold open the lines of rapprochement with Russia and at the same time keep in step with world and domestic opinion which had loudly condemned the Soviet attack.⁷ Assistance to Finland was not considered. The resignation of the Cajander cabinet immediately following the attack appeared to prelude Finnish capitulation to Soviet demands. To the British cabinet the most suitable response in view of the circumstances was to couple a mild rebuke of Soviet actions with expressions of regret that Allied preoccupation with Germany made stronger action impossible. This was unlikely to offend Stalin who seemed impervious to words, nor was it likely to incite public opinion to demand more punitive measures against Russia. At the same time it would protect the government's position at home and abroad and free it to exploit the anti-Nazi Soviet feeling which swept the neutral world after the Russian attack.

The capitulation of the Finnish government never materialized. The Soviet creation of a puppet Finnish regime at Terijoki on 1 December precluded a negotiated settlement between Moscow and the new Helsinki government. With resistance the only option to Bolshevization, the Ryti cabinet elected to fight. The Army had already achieved unexpected success, aided as it was by

⁶ Chatfield to Halifax, 21/10/39, FO.371/23644, N5686/194/56

⁷ WM 99(39), 30/11/39, CAB 65/2; WM 100(39), 1/12/39, CAB 65/2; Minutes by Cadogan and Halifax (P12/39) on Carr (Ministry of Information) to Sargent, 29/11/39, FO.371/23678, N7143/57/38.

geography, climate and Soviet incompetence; and future prospects appeared bright. The Swedish government, terrified at the thought of a communist neighbour, decided to lend Finland material and manpower assistance on 2 December.⁸

When the Winter War seemed likely to continue, the British government agreed to afford Finland every assistance consistent with the prosecution of the war against Germany.⁹ Such a course seemed politically expedient given the domestic desire to help the "plucky little Finns", the pro Finnish attitude of the neutral powers, and Stalin's territorial ambitions which seemed to include Scandinavia as well as South Eastern Europe.¹⁰ Foreign Secretary Halifax warned that:

...the Russians were out to Bolshevize the whole of Finland, and, if they succeeded in the conquest of that country, there was little doubt that they would ultimately endeavor to edge around and seize the northern ports of Norway.¹¹

Indirect assistance to Finland moreover seemed unlikely to give up any-thing in Moscow.¹² The British could not pursue rapproachment with Russia as long as the war continued in Finland, and as long as the war continued in Finland, Russia seemed likely to try to avoid hostilities with the Allies.

The Finns derived few benefits throughout December from this change in policy. Material shortages continued to restrict the scale of military assistance available. The Chiefs of Staff reluctantly gave up 20 Gladiators, 10,000 hand-grenades, 2,000 anti-tank mines and 100 machine

⁸ Monson (Stockholm) to F.O., #190, 2/12/39, F0.371/23694, N6867/991/38.

⁹ WM 103(39), 4/12/39, CAB 65/2; WM 107(39), 7/12/39, CAB 65/2.

¹⁰ WM 101(39), 2/12/39, CAB 65/2; WM 103(39), 4/12/39, CAB 65/2; WM 107(39), 7/12/39, CAB 65/2.

¹¹ WM 103(39), 4/12/39, CAB 65/2.

¹² Minutes by Maclean, Lascelles, Collier and Sargent (8/12/39) on Seeds (Moscow) to F.O., #503, 6/12/39, F0.371/23678, N7134/57/38.

guns and anti-tank rifles but refused to part with anti-aircraft guns, howitzers and other heavy military equipment so greatly needed at the Western Front.¹³ Similarly Russia continued to be handled "somewhat gingerly," at least by Cabinet and London based Foreign Office officials.¹⁴ The British Ministers in Stockholm, Moscow, and Helsinki proposed to save Finland through joint military intervention with Japan, Italy and the United States.¹⁵ But far from contemplating direct intervention, officials in London were working feverishly to avoid being stampeded into war with Russia. The media were encouraged to blame Hitler for the Russian attack so as to stem the tide of anti-Soviet hysteria and refocus public attention on the on the German danger.¹⁶ At Geneva, where the League of Nations considered the Russo-Finnish dispute on 11 December, British diplomats worked behind the scenes to prevent Russia's expulsion and the application of sanctions.¹⁷ After an emotional debate the League expelled the Soviet Union but stopped short of sanctions when it invited members to give Finland all possible assistance.

The war in Finland became more central to Allied grand strategy on 19 December, when it became associated with the question of Swedish

¹³ WM 112(39), 12/12/39, CAB 65/2, .

¹⁴ Op. Cit.

¹⁵ Seeds (Moscow) to F.O., #503, 6/12/39, F0.371/23678 N7134/57/38; Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., #218, 9/12/39, F0.371/23695, N7450/991/38; Monson (Stockholm) to Halifax, #345 (7/12/39), 9/12/39, F0.371/23695, N7418/991/38; Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., #230, 18/12/39, F0.371/23696, N7578/991/38. The term Minister was used to denote diplomatic rank.

¹⁶ Minutes by Sargent (2/12/39) on F0. Memorandum, Speaight, (News Dept.), 1/12/39, F0.371/23704, C1973/3356/18; Minutes by Maclean (24/12/39) and Haigh (5/1/40) on Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., #239, 21/12/39, F0.371/23696, N7721/991/38; WM 103(39), 4/12/39, CAB 65/2.

¹⁷ WM 103(39), 4/12/39, CAB 65/2; F.O. Minute, Randall, 4/12/39, F0.371/23694, N7111/991/38.

iron ore at the fourth meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council. When Chamberlain and Daladier met in Paris on that day they agreed to increase Allied assistance to Finland in order to forestall the unwelcomed need for direct military intervention in Scandinavia.¹⁸ Both feared that a Russian attempt to seize Narvik would prompt Germany to intervene in Scandinavia to safeguard the vital Gallivare iron ore mines in northern Sweden.¹⁹ On the one hand it was of paramount importance that Germany not be allowed to gain control of the mines for this threatened to lengthen the European war by one or two years.²⁰ on the other hand it seemed equally dangerous to try to stop them. An expedition to northern Europe not only risked war with Russia but threatened to develop rapidly into a large military commitment which could endanger the security of the Western Front.²¹

¹⁸ SWC 4(39/40), 19/12/39, CAB 93/3. It is often claimed that the Supreme War Council met on 19 December specifically to discuss the Scandinavian situation. In fact the meeting was originally called to discuss a French proposal for intervention in the Balkans. When Paris subsequently dropped the plan Chamberlain decided to let the meeting stand as he planned to be in France in any event, and a personal exchange of views could do no harm. He made this decision on 13 December, a full day before Daladier announced his intention to raise the Scandinavian situation. L. Woodward, British Foreign Policy in the Second World War, Vol I, London, HMSO, p.47.; WM 113(39), 13/12/39, CAB 65/2; Memo by Bridges on Fourth Meeting of Supreme War Council, 19/12/39, Prem 1/437, SWC; Campbell (Paris) to F.O., 14/12/39, Prem 1/437, SWC.

¹⁹ Reports from Stockholm indicated that the Germans intended to invade southern Scandinavia if Russia advanced beyond Finland while the German Minister to Norway reportedly informed the Norwegian Foreign Minister that "Germany did not intend to adopt a passive attitude if Russia invaded Norway or Sweden." See WM 111(39), 11/12/39, CAB 65/2; WM 113(39), 13/12/39, CAB 65/2; WF' (39)164, Halifax, Scandinavia, 15/12/39, CAB 66/4.

²⁰ SWC 4(39/40), 19/12/39, CAB 99/3. Daladier also produced a memorandum by Fritz Thyssen, an exiled German industrialist, which argued that victory belonged to the side that seized the iron ore mines first.

²¹ WM 111(39), 11/12/39; CAB 62/5; WM 118(39), 18/12/39, CAB 65/2; WP (39)164, Halifax, Scandinavia, 15/12/39, CAB 66/4; WP (39)133, COS., Assistance for the Scandinavian Countries, 21/11/39, CAB 66/3; WP (39)107, COS., Soviet Aggression Against Finland and Scandinavia, 31/10/39, CAB 66/3.

If both leaders agreed that support for Finland was desirable to forestall more dangerous developments in Scandinavia, they could not agree on the best way to go about it. Daladier was anxious. He wanted assistance upgraded to the official level and expanded to include technical missions and credits.²² He also wanted to deliver a demarche to Norway and Sweden which requested transport facilities for Allied assistance and offered a guarantee of Anglo-French assistance should either power be attacked in the course of supporting Finland. He felt a guarantee would induce the Swedes to lend Finland direct assistance and encourage both Nordic powers to appeal for Allied assistance when threatened by Russia and Germany. But Chamberlain was cautious. He opposed "official" aid to Finland for fear of complicating relations with Russia, and hesitated to guarantee Norway and Sweden until a Nazi-Soviet attack was imminent. The Allies had to avoid a situation whereby they were called upon to help Norway and Sweden when fully engaged on the Western Front.

Unable to reconcile their differences the two leaders agreed to continue discussions through diplomatic channels. On 20 December a revised French demarche reached London.²³ It outlined the Allies intention to give the Finns all the unofficial aid in their power, including credits and technical assistance, and offered to discuss an assurance against attack arising from direct or indirect assistance to Finland. Foreign Office officials believed this still went farther than

²² It is sometimes claimed that Daladier proposed at this meeting to send an expedition to Finland. No evidence of this was found in official or un-official records of the conference. See SWC 4(39/40), 19/12/39, CAB 99/3; WM 120(39), 20/12/39, CAB 65/2; Bridges, Fourth Meeting of the Supreme War Council, 19/12/39, Prem 1/437, SWC.

²³ French Draft Demarche, 19/12/39, F0.371/23696, N7521/991/38.

envisaged by the government but felt that something along this line was desirable, particularly since a Soviet offensive now threatened to overrun northern Finland thereby opening the door to an advance on Gallivare and Narvik.²⁴

To Foreign Office officials the time had arrived for direct military intervention in Finland. Sir Orme Sargent, Deputy Under Secretary of State wrote that:

Our present policy of giving Finland out of our superfluity an occasional gun or aeroplane as a gesture of good will would have to be abandoned, and in its place we should have to organize and maintain, in collaboration with Sweden and Norway, an expedition to Finland much on the lines of Italy's assistance to Spain during the civil war.²⁵

Three important considerations led Sargent to this conclusion, which, admittedly seemed "quizzotic", "unnecessary" and "impractical" at first sight. First, the Allies, in this way, stood a better chance of denying Russia access to the Atlantic than if they delayed organized resistance until after Finland collapsed. He continued:

The Finns--unlike the Swedes and Norwegians--have demonstrated their fighting qualities and their will to resistance. It seems a pity not to avail ourselves of such a valuable force while it is still in being. In other words, would it not pay us to stop the Russian advance while it is still held up in Finland, instead of waiting until it has reached the Norwegian frontier.²⁶

Secondly, it offered to solve the problem of stopping Swedish iron ore deliveries to Germany which was the cause of so much "heartsearching" in

²⁴ WM 120(39), 20/12/39, CAB 65/2; "Crisis Approaching: Russians Advance from the North", The Times, 19/12/39; "Soviets Prepare 'Super Blow'", The Daily Telegraph, 19/12/39; "Critical Days for Finland", The Times, 20/12/39; Minutes by Collier, Sargent (20/12/39) and Cadogan (21/12/39) on Conversation between Cadogan and Corbin, 14/12/39, FO.371/23696, N7521/991/38.

²⁵ F.O. Memorandum, Sargent, 20/12/39, FO.371/23667, N7752/5542/63.

²⁶ Ibid.

Cabinet at that time.²⁷ All members were agreed that the total interruption of these supplies would profoundly shorten the war but could not agree on whether to take immediate naval action against winter shipments from Narvik unless it was also possible to interrupt summer deliveries from Lulea, which accounted for the bulk of German supplies.²⁸ Intervention in Finland solved the problem "in one stroke" by allowing the Allies to establish themselves at Narvik and Lulea.²⁹

Thirdly, and most importantly, the Scandinavians seemed likely to collaborate in this scheme to assist Finland given their fear that the Soviet northern offensive would continue on to Gallivare and Narvik.³⁰

The Military Co-ordination Committee considered Sargent's proposal as well as the ore stoppage problem on the afternoon of 20

²⁷ Minutes by Sargent (20/12/39) on Conversation between Cadogan and Corbin, 14/12/39, F0.371/23696, N7521/991/38.

²⁸ Churchill wanted immediate action in Norwegian waters to stop the Narvik traffic and believed the Lulea shipments might be stopped at a later date by sabotage. To Halifax this was unrealistic. He believed the only way to interrupt shipments from Lulea was to embroil Sweden in war with either Russia or Germany. As this seemed impossible he opposed the Narvik operation on its own. The temporary damage to German industry from the loss of Narvik shipments was not worth the damage to Allied prestige from having violated Norwegian neutrality.

The British estimated that Germany had to import 22 million tons of iron ore in order to maintain her 1938 steel output: Of this, 9 1/2 million tons came from sources closed to Germany by the war; and a further 9 million tons came from Swedish mines at Gallivare. As she had no appreciable stock piles it seemed that Germany would have to import 9 to 12 million tons from Sweden to avoid industrial breakdown. If the Narvik exports were stopped, Germany could still get 9-10 million tons of ore through Sweden's Baltic ports, especially Lulea. If the entire export of the Northern Gallivare Melks were stopped she could only expect to receive 5 million tons, at most, from Sweden's southern ore fields. WP (39) 162, Churchill, Norwegian Iron Ore Traffic, 16/12/39, CAB 66/4; WP (39)(G)153, MEW, Stopping Germany's Importation of Iron Ore, 18/12/39, CAB 67/3; WP (39)168, Halifax, Iron Ore Traffic 20/12/39, CAB 66/4.

²⁹ Minutes by Sargent- (20/12/39) on Conversation between Cadogan and Corbin, 14/12/39, F0.371/23696, N7521/991/38.

³⁰ F.O. Memorandum, Sargent, 20/12/39; F0.371/23667, N7752/5542/63.

December. Ironside, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, believed an expedition to Finland was not necessary to achieve the objectives put forward by Sargent. A small operation in northern Scandinavia could do the same trick. He stated that

...the northern minefields were most inaccessible, and it would be very difficult to operate large forces in that area. The advantages would lie with the power which was in possession of the fields.... Even if both Finland and Sweden completely collapsed he doubted whether the Russians could reach the northern minefields within, say, three months from now. We could forestall the Russians if we went through Narvik.... A large force would not be required for the purpose, and would indeed be a disadvantage. It would be better to use a force of three or four thousand men, specially equipped to move on skis or snowshoes. The French had Alpine troops trained in the use of skis, and we could pick special troops from the British Army and from the Canadians who would be well fitted to operate under the difficult conditions prevailing in the mine-field area in the winter.³¹

Moreover, by confining the operation to northern Scandinavia the Allies seemed likely to avoid war with Russia. Churchill concluded that

...the dispatch of troops to Sweden to hold the mines would not make war with Russia inevitable. Russia might hold back from further aggression if she found us already in occupation; and even if she did come on, it did not necessarily mean that we should be engaged in general hostilities with Russia. It was the Russian practice to engage in local hostilities without a general declaration of war, as for example in Manchuria. There was undoubtedly a risk that we might ultimately be drawn into a general war with Russia, but this was a risk which we should have to run.³²

To Churchill and the Committee the best means to gain access to the ore mines was to precipitate a German attack on Scandinavia.³³ In short, the Allies would

³¹ MC 10(39), 20/12/39, CAB 83/3.

³² Ibid.

³³ Minutes by Lord Chatfield (21/12/39) on F.O. Memorandum, Sargent, F0.371/23667, N7752/5542/63.

inform the Scandinavians of their intention to augment assistance to Finland and simultaneously offer to discuss a guarantee against Russo-German aggression. Immediately after they would take naval action to cut off Narvik ore shipments. When northern Scandinavia became accessible via the Gulf of Bothnia in early spring, the Germans would attempt to secure their vital supplies of iron ore. The Scandinavians in turn would appeal for Allied assistance thereby allowing a force to occupy the Gallivare mines. All this, of course, depended on the outcome of a military investigation, undertaken at the Committee's request, of all the military implications involved in the dispatch and maintenance of a force in northern Scandinavia able to hold the mines against German and/or Russian attack.

When Cabinet heard the proposal on 22 December Chamberlain enthusiastically proclaimed it to be "a chance of dealing a mortal blow to Germany" if not "one of the turning points in the war"³⁴ was decided to proceed with the demarche immediately without waiting for the report by the Chiefs of Staff, since it only offered to discuss a possible guarantee and as such was not binding. In doing so, however, the Cabinet agreed on the advisability of making two changes in the procedure outlined by the Military Co-ordination Committee. First, a guarantee of assistance was to be offered against Russian aggression alone. Halifax felt Russia to be a better card of entry to play in dealing with the Scandinavians for they were unlikely to welcome any Allied guarantee against Germany, regardless of their attitude towards the offer of assistance against Russia. Secondly, it was decided to accompany the demarche with an oral communication which outlined the Allied intention to

³⁴ WM 122(39)1, CA.22/12/39, CAB 65/4

"stop the supplies of iron ore from going to Germany". Halifax preferred to remain quiet about iron ore, at least until the results of the demarche became known, in case it irritated the Scandinavians and ruined the chance to secure their co-operation. Chamberlain, however, believed the statement would prevent Norway and Sweden from temporizing before replying to the Allied offer.

The Cabinet adjourned for its Christmas recess on 22 December and the Foreign Office delayed the demarche to the Scandinavians. This was done to satisfy a few Cabinet members who hesitated to reveal Allied intentions with regard to Swedish iron ore until the impending report on the implications of the military operation gave them a better idea as to what they could do in the way of military assistance.³⁵ Shortly thereafter the Chiefs of Staff and Foreign Office agreed on the necessity to drop all reference to iron ore when making the demarche in view of the vastly improved Finnish military situation.³⁶

All our recent information goes to show ... that the Finns are putting up a very stout resistance, and the possibility of a Russian invasion of Scandinavia has temporarily receded, and with it has gone for the present our excuse to send a force there.

It is probable that the Swedes are now less apprehensive of a Russian invasion and would, on that account, be less susceptible to our advances for co-operation with them. If, therefore, at this juncture we tell them that we intend to take steps to stop the supply of iron ore from Sweden to Germany, there is a danger that the information will prove unpalatable to them and might have the effect of swinging them back into the German orbit.³⁷

Indeed, in Stockholm, Monson, the British Minister, had concluded that when the Swedes talked of getting help against Russia, they referred to Germany and

³⁵ Cadogan to Halifax, 23/12/39, FO.800/322, H/32/11.

³⁶ A Finnish counter-offensive launched on 23 December had recaptured the Waistline and Northern Finland as far as Petsamo.

³⁷ WP (39)175, COS., Scandinavia, 26/12/39, CAB 66/4.

not the United Kingdom.³⁸

When the Cabinet convened on 27 December, Halifax and the Chiefs of Staff were astonished to hear Chamberlain insist that he never intended for the oral communication to divulge Allied plans to stop all shipments of iron ore to Germany.³⁹ Instead, it was simply intended to inform the Scandinavians that Britain planned immediate naval action against German commerce in Norwegian waters in retaliation for submarine attacks against British and neutral shipping. This raised two questions: Was it desirable to make the oral communication along with the demarche, and, was the interruption of Narvik traffic detrimental to the larger operation. Chamberlain felt that action against the Narvik traffic would not prejudice the chance to carry off the larger operation because the Norwegians and Swedes were unlikely to do more than protest, which, in itself, was of little importance. But to ensure that the offer of co-operation against Russia was not linked to the iron ore question, the Cabinet instructed Halifax to deliver the demarche that afternoon, without reference to the impending Narvik operation. Instead, the oral communication was to be made in early January followed by naval action once the reaction of the Scandinavians had been judged.

That afternoon as Halifax delivered the demarche to the Scandinavian representatives in London, Foreign Office officials were no longer confident of securing their co-operation. What little chance there was rested in the possibility of manipulating widespread Swedish discontent with the Hansson government's policy. Sargent wrote that

³⁸ Monson (Stockholm) to F.O., #267, 25/12/39, F0.371/23708, N7786/1818/42.

³⁹ WM 123(39)1, CA 27/12/39, CAB 65/4.

If, as I suspect, out of sheer fear they will decline to co-operate with us, we will have to consider whether we should not give the utmost publicity to this fact, in the hope thereby of overthrowing the present Swedish government and replacing it by one which will co-operate with us.⁴⁰

Late that evening this possibility disappeared when Monson reported that public discontent with Hansson's policy had been largely dispelled after the press published a full account of Swedish aid to Finland.⁴¹ Consequently when Sweden formally rejected the demarche on 4 January it proved anti-climatic. The mood at the Foreign Office had been summed up by Cadogan days earlier:

If I were to be more cynical ...I would say that the Russian failure is rather embarrassing. If Russia were more successful, and were to constitute more of a menace to Scandinavia, that would suit our book better, from one point of view. And the more Russia shows how rotten she is, the less Germany will be deterred from a Balkan adventure, if she was deterred from it by doubts as to what the Russian reaction might be (cf Poland). I am beginning to think that the Russians may be almost as embarrassing as enemies as they would have been as Allies.⁴²

Shortly thereafter the Cabinet postponed its planned invasion of Norwegian waters when Norway and Sweden reacted in an unexpectedly severe manner to the oral communication.

With the Scandinavian project in temporary disarray, it seemed time to disentangle the question of assistance to Finland from that of Swedish iron ore as far as was possible. Towards this end the Cabinet instructed the Military Co-ordination Committee on 4 January to explore the possibility of intervention in Finland along the lines practiced by Italy and Germany in Spain.

⁴⁰ Minutes by Sargent (27/12/39) on Monson (Stockholm) to F.O. #268, 24/12/39, F0.371/23646, N7785/194/56.

⁴¹ Monson (Stockholm) to F.O., #271, 26/12/39, F0.371/23705, N7793/270/42.

⁴² Minutes by Cadogan (1/1/40) on Monson (Stockholm) to F.O., #277, 30/12/39, F0.371/23708, N7946/1818/42.

The Lord Privy Seal, Sir Samuel Hoare, stated that

Our assistance had hitherto taken the form of sending such equipment as we could spare, but not on any definite plan. Italy and Germany had shown in Spain how the technique of non-intervention could be exploited as a serious military operation. He suggested that we should examine the possibility of giving assistance on the Spanish precedent, but with the difference that personnel sent to Finland should be true volunteers and not recruited from the serving ranks of the regular Armed Forces.⁴³

To Foreign Office officials it was not necessary to curb a more vigorous policy of indirect assistance to Finland: Stalin was not likely to quarrel with Hitler as long as German threats kept Sweden out of the Finnish war. War with the Allies would only compound his economic and military difficulties but not extract him from the disastrous Finnish adventure.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the dispatch of material aid to Finland and the prolongation of the Winter War promised to keep Soviet war materials away from Germany, divert Nazi-Soviet attention from the Balkans, maintain Allied prestige amongst the neutral powers, and satisfy British domestic opinion. Moreover reports of food riots in Murmansk and Leningrad led some cabinet members to conclude that the prolongation of the Finnish war would result in the collapse of the Soviet state.⁴⁵

At the same time assistance to Finland remained a vehicle through which to secure Scandinavian co-operation for Allied occupation of the ore fields.⁴⁶ The Chiefs of Staff preliminary report on military

⁴³ WM 3(40), 4/1/40, CAB 65/5.

⁴⁴ Conversation between Collier and Charbonnier, 29/12/39, F0.371/24791, N1/1/56; Minutes by Maclean and Coote (1/1/40) on KnatchbullHugessen (Ankora), #875, 29/12/39, F0.371/23686, N7939/243/38. Minutes by Maclean (2/1/40) on Seeds (Moscow) to F.O., #1, 1/1/40, F0.371/24845, N40/40/38.

⁴⁵ WM 3(40), 4/1/40, CAB 65/5; WP (40)8, COS., Situation, 28/12/39/1/40, CAB 66/4.

⁴⁶ Minutes by Cadogan (29/12/39) on WM 123(39)1, CA.27/12/39, F0.371/23660, N7869/64/63.

implications indicated the operation was feasible notwithstanding the fact that the initial force of some three to four thousand men had expanded to at least two divisions. Such a diversion seemed possible without undermining the security of the western front. On one point, however, the Chiefs of Staff were adamant: the necessity for Scandinavian co-operation. Without it the expedition was not impossible.

Our reasons are, briefly as follows: First, we should have to prepare for a landing, probably opposed, under severe climatic conditions, and without many of the existing port facilities, which might have been demolished. Secondly, it would be a simple matter for the Norwegians or Swedes to make the railway running inland from Narvik unusable, either by the removal of rolling stock or the cutting off of electric power, even if they did not demolish it.... In these circumstances we should be faced with an advance across very difficult ground, against an enemy who knows the country and is used to the conditions.⁴⁷

The resulting delay in the Allied advance would ensure that Germany reached Lulea and Gallivare first.

Immediate steps to implement the "non-intervention" policy ran into delay after the Military Co-ordination Committee deferred all decisions on military, technical and manpower assistance pending a report from Brigadier Ling, who the War Office had sent to Finland to get a clear idea of Finland's military needs.⁴⁸ At the time the delay seemed justified. Ling's report was expected in a matter of days, and would enable the Committee to recommend assistance that was practical and wanted. As it turned out, however, the Brigadier was unavoidably delayed until 12 January and in the interim material assistance was confined to goods of a non-military nature, such as horse

⁴⁷ WP (39)179, COS., Military Implications, 31/12/39, CAB 66/4.

⁴⁸ MC 2(40), 4/1/40, CAB 83/3.

blankets and saddles.

When Ling finally arrived in London he carried a list of Finland's immediate and projected material needs.⁴⁹ The most urgent requirement was for fighters and anti-aircraft weapons to protect civilian and industrial centers from bomber attacks. Long range guns, field artillery and anti-tank weapons to break up a major Soviet offensive anticipated on the Karelian front in early February were also urgently needed. But the most crucial requirement was for manpower assistance to prevent a spring breakthrough in northern Finland, which, if successful, could lead to direct German military intervention. Ling told the Committee:

As regards personnel, the Finns would be reasonably well off until the thaw came; but then the Russians would have an overwhelming superiority while the Finns would be very tired, as they had no reserves and could not rest their formations. Field Marshall Mannerheim was very anxious to get reinforcements of about 30,000 men by next May, but he stipulated that these should be trained soldiers. Both Finland and Sweden were nervous of German intervention, and hoped on that account that no forces would be sent officially. Volunteers would have to be passed through Sweden in small bodies only.⁵⁰

Specifically, he hoped to get 20,000 British 'volunteers' and a further 10,000 from Sweden.

With the receipt of Ling's report, the question of assistance to Finland once again became intricately entwined with the problem of Swedish iron ore. On 16 January, the Military Co-ordination Committee directed the War Office to prepare a complete scheme for direct and effective military intervention in Finland by May.⁵¹ As viewed by the Committee it was

⁴⁹ MC (40)24, Ling, Assistance to Finland, 13/1/40, CAB 83/4.

⁵⁰ MC 6(40), 16/1/40, CAB 83/3.

⁵¹ Loc. Cit.

imperative that Mannerheim's manpower needs be met to prevent the Gallivare mines from falling under German control. This being so the dispatch of a full scale military expedition appeared a more practical method of direct intervention than the piecemeal approach suggested by Mannerheim: Even if the Swedes agreed to transit a large number of British troops disguised as 'volunteers', the Germans were likely to discover the true nature of the contingent and force Sweden to accept their protection. On the other hand, if the Allies prepared a scheme for direct intervention in May, they stood a good chance to secure the Gallivare mines. The Committee agreed that

Assistance to Finland might indeed be the card of entry for Swedish co-operation in obtaining control of the Gallivare ore fields [I]f the Swedes were frightened of a Russian invasion in May they would be more likely to turn to us for assistance if they knew that we had a force already organized to send.⁵²

The following day the Cabinet endorsed the need to meet Mannerheim's requests.⁵³

With the decision to prepare a scheme of direct intervention, the immediate concern of British policy was to ensure that Finland held out until May.⁵⁴ Particular efforts were made to harden Finnish air defences in view of Mannerheim's fear of an early defeat through the collapse of civilian morale. A total of 149 fighters and 24 anti-aircraft weapons were pledged by 26 January, notwithstanding strong Air Ministry objections.⁵⁵

⁵² MC 6(40), 16/1/40, CAB 83/3.

⁵³ WM 16(40), 17/1/40, CAB 65/5.

⁵⁴ Op Cit

⁵⁵ This brought to 299 the total number of aircraft pledged from all sources. Finnish and Allied experts estimated that a force of some two to three hundred would provide the Finns with an adequate defence. Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., #2, 10/1/40, F0.371/24791, N712/1/56.

The Cabinet was less willing however to satisfy other requests for military equipment, especially if they entailed interference with the training and equipping of units scheduled to take the field before autumn 1940.⁵⁶ Mannerheim himself was confident that he could hold the north until spring with existing military equipment and the Finns were known to have captured large quantities of Russian materials during their devastating January offensive.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the pace of military planning for intervention in Finland and Scandinavia quickened in late January after Chamberlain and Daladier agreed to meet in Paris on 5 February. The topic for discussion was to be northern Europe. The French, not yet informed of British military planning, hoped to use the occasion to commit their ally to more positive action in northern Europe; irresolution over naval action in Norwegian waters and timidity on the question of indirect assistance to Finland courted disaster for the Allied war effort, at least as viewed from Paris.⁵⁸ The British wanted to sound out the French on direct intervention in Finland as well as settle certain questions arising from the now completed plan for military intervention in Scandinavia.⁵⁹ Above all it was necessary to find out whether Daladier wanted to proceed with

⁵⁶ MC (40)27, Stanley, Assistance to Finland, 14/1/40, CAB 83/4.

⁵⁷ Ibid ., MC (40)24, Ling, Assistance to Finland, 13/1/40, CAB 83/4.

⁵⁸ Conversation between Cadogan and ^{Corbin}, 18/1/40, F0.371/24817, N1008/7/63; Conversation between Halifax and Corbin, 18/1/40, F0.371/24817, N792/7/63; Daladier (Paris) to Corbin, #18, 18/1/40, in Deutschland, Austwartiges Amt. Die Geheimakten des franzosischen Generalstabes, Berlin, Buch and tiefdruck Gesellschaft, 1941, pp. 201-4. The French were particularly disturbed by Britain's reluctance to allow attacks by Polish vessels on Soviet shipping in the Arctic Sea.

⁵⁹ WM 18(40)10, CA., 19/1/40, CAB 65/11.

the operation now that it had mushroomed to include nine divisions in three interrelated military operations: two divisions were to occupy Narvik, Gallivare and Lulea; a force of 7,000 was to deny Germany the strategic ports of Bergen, Trondheim and Stavanger while six divisions were to operate in southern Sweden, the likely price for Stockholm's co-operation.⁶⁰ If the French agreed to the scheme it was imperative that they understand the need for Scandinavian co-operation, which meant avoidance of all measures, such as naval action in Norwegian waters, likely to alienate Norway and Sweden or provoke German retaliation.

Shortly before the Paris meeting the French suddenly produced their own scheme for intervention in northern Europe which Daladier wanted approved on 5 February.⁶¹ The plan centered on Petsamo in view of the Scandinavians' likely unwillingness to open the preferred Narvik route. In short, it called for three or four Allied and Polish brigades to land at Petsamo in late March and drive the Russians from northern Finland, cut the Arctic canal and Murmansk railway, and eventually sack Murmansk itself.⁶² At the same time three or four divisions of volunteers were to be filtered in small batches through Norway and Sweden so as to provide Mannerheim with sufficient manpower to hold south and central Finland. No

⁶⁰ WP (40)13, COS., The Dispatch of Forces to Norwegian Ports, 9/1/40, CAB 66/4; WP (40)23, COS., Scandinavia: Plans and Preparations, 16/1/40, CAB 66/4.

⁶¹ Campbell (Paris) to F.O., unnumbered, 28/1/40, F0.371/24791, N1102/1/56; Campbell (Paris) to F.O., unnumbered, 28/1/40, F0.371/24814, N1103/2/63. The French feared that Finland could not withstand the anticipated February offensive without direct Allied assistance.

⁶² COS (40)228(S), Minutes of a COS meeting with the French High Command, 31/1/40, CAB 80/104; COS (40)229(S), Minutes of a COS meeting with the French High Command, 1/2/40, CAB 80/104.

immediate action was contemplated against the iron ore mines, however, as it seemed unwise to initiate a major diversion before Hitler clarified his intentions on the Western front. Gamelin continued:

... if in the Spring it became certain that the Germans did not intend a mass offensive in the West, there would be every advantage to the Allies in diverting German forces elsewhere as much as possible. It would be a difficult situation and a bad one from the point of view of the moral of the troops, if the two main armies continued to face each other inactively.⁶³

in the meantime the landing at Petsamo was certain to give the Scandinavians sufficient courage to co-operate in the Gallivare venture.

To the British this proposal seemed a "military gamble without a political prize" as it threatened to embroil the Allies in war with Russia without securing Finland or the iron ore mines.⁶⁴ The introduction of four volunteer divisions to south and central Finland seemed unlikely to prevent a Finnish collapse, if, as believed in London, the Germans intervened to end the war once the Gulf of Bothnia thawed in May. In the meantime the landing at Petsamo would have resulted in war with Russia and a likely military disaster for the Allies who lacked a sufficient number of qualified forces for mobile operations under Arctic conditions. Moreover, the operation in northern Finland, even if successful, was unlikely to provide the Allies with an opening to seize the Gallivare mines. The imposition of a force between the Scandinavians and the Russians was likely to increase their sense of security and reinforce their deter-

⁶³ COS (40)229(S), Minutes of COS meeting with the French High Command, 1/2/40, CAB 80/104.

⁶⁴ Ibid., COS (40)228(S), Minutes of COS meeting with the French High Command, 31/1/40, CAB 80/104; WP (40)41, COS., French Proposals for Assistance to Finland, 2/2/40, CAB 66/5.

mination to cling to their neutrality. In any event, if the Allies hoped to forestall the Germans at Lulea in May, they had to act in March, at least a month before the date envisaged by the French.

Nevertheless the French plan created a major dilemma for the British decision makers. Unless they found the key to Scandinavian co-operation before the Supreme War Council met, Daladier was likely to reject the British plan of intervention and insist upon the Petsamo route. If Chamberlain refused he ran the risk of a major crisis in Anglo-French relations given the strong domestic pressure on Daladier to save Finland. If he agreed he risked war with the Soviet Union and a likely military disaster in northern Europe.

The Cabinet found an apparent solution to the dilemma on 2 February.⁶⁵ It called for the Finns to appeal to the world in general and to the Allies and Scandinavians in particular to save them from Soviet domination. Finnish co-operation in this regard seemed likely if the Allies made it clear before hand that this was their only hope of salvation. Having received the Finnish appeal, the Allies would inform the Scandinavians of their intention to send an expedition to Finland, and request co-operation in facilitating its passage under the League of Nations resolution. Chamberlain believed

...the effect of such an approach would be tremendous; and he doubted whether the Scandinavian Powers would be able to resist it. It was a matter of common knowledge that public opinion in both countries was appreciably ahead of their Governments. If, however, these two Governments refused to accede to the Allied demands on the grounds that German reprisals would be swift and far reaching, then the Allies would counter by offering immediate and substantial assistance to Scandinavia in

⁶⁵ WM 31(40)1, CA.2/2/40, CAB 65/11.

the shape of an armed force ready to co-operate with them at once in the defence of their territories.⁶⁶

At this the Scandinavians would have no other course but to co-operate.

With regard to the Soviet Union, the Cabinet believed that open hostilities might be avoided if they adopted the Italian precedent, and sent regular forces into Finland disguised as volunteers.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, if this failed British opinion agreed that the advantages involved in gaining control over the Swedish ore mines out-weighed the disadvantages of war with Russia. Foreign Office opinion particularly felt there was little to lose through hostilities with Russia. To begin, it no longer appeared necessary to avoid war with Russia for fear of losing the chance to exploit a breach in Nazi-Soviet relations. To Collier and others, a falling out now seemed unlikely:

So long as Germany is at war with the Allies, it is not worth the Germans' while to quarrel with the Russians, and we cannot make it worth the Russians while to quarrel with the Germans: So the two robbers will probably continue to hang together until they both hang separately.⁶⁸

Nor was it necessary to fear closer Nazi-Soviet collaboration in the event of war with Russia. For political reasons Stalin seemed likely to resist closer economic co-operation with Hitler than already existed, and this in itself was not sufficient to prove of immediate value to the German war effort. Collier continued:

⁶⁶ SWC 5(39/40), 5/2/40, CAB 99/3.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ F.O. Memorandum, Collier, Soviet-German Co-operation, 31/1/40, F0.371/24845, N1360/40/38.

...past experience suggests that the Soviet Government would be very reluctant to allow the servants of a foreign Power, whose ultimate aims they must always mistrust, to obtain the more or less complete control of essential branches of the Soviet economy which alone could, in all probability, bring about a real change in present conditions, and that they would resist this development until their state became really desperate, when it might be too late from the German point of view. Even if they did allow it, moreover, the chances are that it would take German technicians a long time to produce effective results in face of local obstruction and incompetence which they would encounter and considerable political friction would be likely to be generated in the process.⁶⁹

Finally, Foreign Office opinion believed there to be little military reason to avoid war with the Soviet Union. Unlike the Chiefs of Staff, the diplomats were sceptical of Russia's ability to attack Allied colonies in the Near and Middle East while pre-occupied in northern Europe. Fitzroy Maclean, the Soviet specialist in the northern department, wrote that

...there does not seem to be any real danger of a direct attack by the Red Army on either India or Iraq, for the reason that the Soviet military machine, though capable of small-scale operations against limited objectives in favourable conditions, would quite certainly not be capable of operations on a large-scale with immensely long lines of communication and against a well-equipped adversary. Moreover, the experience of Finland, coupled with fear of internal repercussions inside the Soviet Union and of eventual British reaction, may well deter them from embarking even on small-scale operations.⁷⁰

Nor was Soviet intervention on the Western front likely, if, as seemed certain, Hitler questioned the value of the Red Army and Stalin wished to avoid greater dependence on Germany.

On the other hand, there were several advantages to be had from

⁶⁹

Ibid.

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F.O. Memorandum, Maclean, Observations on a Report by the Chiefs of Staff, 2/2/40, F0.371/24845, N2736/40/38.

war with Russia unrelated to the iron ore mines. Foremost were the immeasurable benefits likely to flow from action against the Caucasus and Black Sea region. Maclean continued:

Owing to the discontented frame of mind of the population, and the vulnerability of the oil supplies (which constitute 80% of the total Soviet oil supplies), it should be possible to obtain in this area results out of all proportion to the effort expended. With their oil supplies cut off and a portion of their dominions in turmoil, not to mention the drain on their strength in Finland, the Russians would no longer be in a position to afford any support whatever to the Germans or to cause us any annoyance in the Middle East or elsewhere.⁷¹

Finally, hostilities with Russia arising from intervention in Finland seemed likely to have a generally favourable impact on important neutrals such as Italy, Japan and the United States.⁷² On 5 February the Supreme War Council gathered at Paris, and in less than two hours the British "rode the French off their silly Petsamo scheme."⁷³ The task was not difficult. Daladier, likely surprised to find Chamberlain committed to action in any form, enthusiastically endorsed the plan as the best way to "kill two birds with one stone." The Council agreed to land the expedition in Norway in the third week of March which would allow sufficient time to reach Lulea before the thaw in the Gulf of Bothnia. Nothing was to be said to the Finns or Scandinavians until the completion of military preparations in early March lest the Germans got wind of the plan and intimidated the Norwegians and Swedes. The Petsamo scheme was to be reconsidered if the Scandinavians withheld co-operation, but

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² F.O. Memorandum, Collier, Political Repercussions of Open Assistance to Finland, 29/1/40, FO.371/24798, N1204/9/56.

⁷³ Entry 5/2/40, Cadogan, The Diary of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-45, (David Dilks, ed.), London, Cassell, 1971, pg. 253; 'SWC (39/40), 5/2/40, CAB 99/3.

all agreed this to be an outside chance at best.

Throughout early February the British remained confident in their ability to carry off the northern expedition. The Finnish Army felt certain of its ability to hold out until spring, despite the heavy Russian offensive on the Karelian front,⁷⁴ while Chamberlain remained positive that fear of world and domestic condemnation would compel the Scandinavians to join in the venture.⁷⁵ In London, military planning for intervention in Finland proceeded smoothly, but on a scale less grandiose than envisaged earlier. To the Chiefs of Staff there was no question of sending 20,000 troops to Finland.⁷⁶ Mannerheim was to receive one division which was to remain under direct British Command, and under no circumstances was it to operate south of Kemi. The Chiefs justified these restrictions on grounds that the network of communication through Scandinavia was inadequate to support a larger force, and that possible German intervention made operations south of Kemi tactically unwise. On the latter point they reasoned that

The main danger in the Spring would arise from the possibility of a German landing in Finland, on the shores of the Gulf of Bothnia, and Allied forces, if sent Southwards, might in this way be cut off. The first essential, therefore, was to secure the Northern shore of the Gulf of Bothnia, and thus hold the Gallivare ore fields, and the line of communication into Northern Finland.⁷⁷

From the Chiefs of Staff point of view there was no question of saving Finland.

⁷⁴ PID 19(40), Weekly Summary, 1/2/40-6/2/40, F0.371/25235, W2175/192/50; WP (40)46, COS., Situation, 1/2/40-8/2/40, CAB 66/5; Snow (Helsinki) to F.O., #64, 4/2/40, F0.371/24792, N1368/1/56.

⁷⁵ WM 35(40)1, CA. 7/2/40, CAB 65/11.

⁷⁶ COS 25(40)1, CA 8/2/40, CAB 79/85; COS 27(40)1, CA 10/2/40. CAB 79/85; WP (40)51, COS., The Employment of Allied Land forces in Scandinavia and Finland, 14/2/40, CAB 66/5.

⁷⁷ COS 25(40)1, CA 8/2/40, CAB 79/85.

The greatest importance of the Finnish operation to the Allies was to provide a card of entry into Scandinavia. Once this was achieved there was no reason to squander military resources on such a non-strategic area, except to maintain the facade before world opinion that Allied intervention in Scandinavia had been motivated by a desire to help Finland. For this purpose one division was enough.

Meanwhile by 12 February the Foreign Office had become less confident of Finland's ability to hold out until spring without the immediate receipt of additional military supplies.⁷⁸ Specifically they pressed the Cabinet to meet urgent appeals from the Finnish government for 96 pieces of heavy artillery, 96 thousand shells, and the prompt delivery of those aircraft already released by Great Britain. A military crisis had suddenly erupted at the Karelian front. The Soviet February offensive was more determined and better organized than anything before. Breach of an outer section of the Mannerheim Line on 12 February was a major psychological victory for the Soviets. Without artillery, ammunition and airpower to break the attack, the once confident Mannerheim reportedly now felt it "impossible to speak with certainty about the future."⁷⁹

Initially the Cabinet discounted Foreign Office appeal on grounds of British military weakness.⁸⁰ They doubted that a crisis had really gripped the Karelian front. To Ironside the situation remained unchanged from that personally described by General Enckell, the Finnish Chief of Staff, on 10 February. Ironside had stated:

⁷⁸ WM 39(40)6, CA 12/2/40, CAB 65/11.

⁷⁹ Conversation between Halifax and Gripenberg, 10/2/40, F0.371/24800, N1705/9/56.

⁸⁰ WM 39(40)6, CA 12/2/40, CAB 65/11.

The latter had given a much more re-assuring account of the situation in Finland than that contained in recent reports from other, and in particular French, sources. This confidence was, moreover, confirmed in a letter which he had brought from Field Marshall Mannerheim, who, in referring to the Finnish need for long range guns, had written of the campaign as 'certainly a long one.' This was in keeping with views which had been previously expressed by Field Marshall Mannerheim.⁸¹

Disbelief finally gave way to dismay but only after a further two day delay.

The British were finally moved to action on 14 February after Mannerheim personally warned that the Army faced an early collapse without the aid requested, and the Cabinet learned that their aid programme was riddled by delay and incompetence.⁸² Heavy congestion on the Swedish railways had delayed all but a small portion of the military equipment while Air Ministry incompetence had held up the arrival of all but 36 aircraft: 102 still sat in England, 6 more could not be found! Chamberlain reacted swiftly. He ordered the Air Ministry to expedite the delivery of those aircraft in England, and instructed the War Office to provide the Finns with an additional 30 heavy guns and 30,000 shells. Halifax was directed to take immediate measures in Sweden to ease the rail congestion, and to appeal to the French to release more heavy guns.

Two days later Halifax appealed for even stronger measures to preserve the pretext for Scandinavian intervention. On 16 February he recommended the immediate revelation of Allied plans to the Finnish government.⁸³ Foreign Office opinion now feared that the Finns might sue

⁸¹ WM 38(40), 10/2/40, CAB 65/5.

⁸² WM 41(40), 14/2/40, CAB 65/5.

⁸³ WM 4340)1, CA 16/2/40, CAB 65/11. These minutes are closed until 1991 and have been pieced together as best possible from other sources.

for peace unless heartened by the knowledge of impending Allied assistance.⁸⁴ Stalin's abandonment of the Kuusinen regime in early February removed a major obstacle to a negotiated settlement, and now the Finnish Army reportedly was near exhaustion with no end in sight to the Soviet offensive.⁸⁵ Halifax also wanted the Cabinet to sanction an immediate Finnish appeal for Allied assistance through diplomatic channels to provide an opening for an early approach to Oslo and Stockholm. With rumours of an Allied expedition now widespread in Europe, the Foreign Office feared that Norway and Sweden might be coerced into accepting German protection unless made aware of Allied preparations to bring them extensive military assistance.⁸⁶ If such an appeal were made through diplomatic channels Germany was unlikely to learn of the plan in sufficient detail to react militarily before the Allies completed their preparation on 12 March.

Strong opposition from the Chiefs of Staff forced a modification of the Foreign Office proposals.⁸⁷ Ironside argued successfully that the earliest possible date for a Finnish appeal was 5 March, one week before the completion of all military preparations; this seemed sufficient time to gain Scandinavian co-operation, but was insufficient to enable Germany to learn precisely of Allied intentions, intimidate, or seize strategic points in Norway and Sweden. The Chiefs of Staff agreed, however, to inform Mannerheim of Allied intentions so as to clarify conflicting reports now

⁸⁴ Minutes by Maclean and Sargent (15/2/40) on Mallet (Stockholm) to F.O., #12, 8/2/40, F0.371/24800, N1697/9/56.

⁸⁵ WP (40)56, COS., Situation, 8/2/40-15/2/40, CAB 66/5.

⁸⁶ Minutes by Maclean and Sargent (15/2/40) on Mallet (Stockholm) to F.O., #12, 8/2/40, F0.371/24800, N1697/9/56.

⁸⁷ COS 32(40)1, CA 17/2/40, CAB 79/85; COS (40)246(S), COS., Assistance to Finland, 17/2/40, CAB 80/104.

reaching London regarding his attitude towards direct intervention. One source had him opposed to direct military aid for fear of German intervention; another put the Finnish Government on the verge of making an appeal for direct Allied assistance. The military wanted the position clarified at once: if the Finns didn't want direct aid, the whole question of assistance would have to be reconsidered; if the Finns contemplated an immediate appeal, they had to be stopped as this could precipitate German action against Norway and Sweden before the Allies could offer them direct assistance.

Shortly after Ling set off for Finland to sound out Mannerheim, the Cabinet abandoned all hope of carrying off the expedition.⁸⁸ The coup de grace came on 19 February when the King of Sweden publically endorsed his government's rigid opposition to open great power intervention in the Winter War. By throwing his immense prestige behind Hansson's policy, he effectively destroyed the possibility of turning Swedish opinion against a non-co-operative government.⁸⁹ Mallet surmized:

It must be realized that even [the] so called activist public are now convinced that the policy outlined by the King's declaration is the correct one.⁹⁰

Without Scandinavian co-operation, the operation became impossible.

The apparent collapse of the Scandinavian venture caused a shift in Cabinet's attitude towards Scandinavia and Finland. Outwardly they remained committed to the Scandinavian operation, if only to forestall French demands for the Petsamo alternative, but they refused to try and influence events to make the improbable possible. A continued effort to prolong the

⁸⁸ WM 49(40), 22/1/40, CAB 65/5.

⁸⁹ WM 45(40)1, CA 18/2/40, CAB 65/11.

⁹⁰ Mallet (Stockholm) to F.O., #76, 22/2/40, F0.371/24824, N2246/2166/63.

Finnish War was' desirable to the extent that it didn't jeopardize Anglo-Soviet relations or security on the Western front.⁹¹ Similarly, it remained desirable to avoid measures likely to alienate the Scandinavians but to ensure long term collaboration when Allied military strength surpassed that of Germany.⁹²

This inertia and defeatism dominated Cabinet when word arrived from Ling on 26 February that the Finns agreed in principle to Allied intervention. Immediately upon receipt of the Brigadier's cable it became painfully obvious that he along with Gordon Vereker, the newly appointed British Minister in Helsinki, had completely botched their assignment.⁹³ Mannerheim and others had been informed that if Finland appealed on 5 March she would receive 20,000 well armed Allied troops by 15 April. Worse yet, they had convinced Foreign Minister Tanner to leave immediately for Stockholm where he was to reveal Finland's intention to appeal for Allied assistance and request Swedish co-operation. The Cabinet in discussing these events, decided not to try and stop Tanner. Halifax argued that

He had thought of telephoning to Stockholm to stop the communication which the Finns were proposing to make. He had not done so, however, first, because he had always thought a longer time would be necessary for negotiations with Norway and Sweden than had been allowed for, and secondly, he thought the Swedes would be likely to keep quiet about the whole matter, as it would not be in their interest to let it leak out.⁹⁴

They agreed, however, to inform the Finns to expect only 12,000 troops, and not before the end of April.

⁹¹ WM 49(40)6, CA 22/2/40, CAB 65/11.

⁹² WM 50(40), 23/2/40, CAB 65/5.

⁹³ Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #141, 25/2/40, F0.371/24802, N2332/9/56; Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #142, 25/2/40, F0.371/24802, N2333/9/56.

⁹⁴ WM 52(40)7, CA 26/2/40, CAB 65/11.

But the most negative aspect of the British reply. involved its response to questions put by Tanner. First, he enquired whether he might give the Swedes an assurance of Allied assistance; second, he wanted permission to describe the Allied force as an "armed volunteer formation" as this was less likely to offend Sweden; and thirdly, as a Finnish appeal was likely to embroil her in war with Germany, he asked if the Allies would guarantee her territorial integrity and extend her financial assistance until the end of the war. The Cabinet agreed to the first request, hoping this would create an opening for direct Anglo-Swedish negotiations, but was unresponsive to the rest. The Allied force could not be called a "volunteer formation" because of legal difficulties in Britain, and only a vague assurance was to be given regarding Finnish territorial integrity and financial aid. Halifax instructed that

His Majesty's Government plainly cannot give a simple affirmative to the first question, [territorial integrity] but the Finnish Government can rest assured that if His Majesty's Government are fighting by the side of Finland, they will do everything in their power to secure and preserve Finland's independence. 2. Similarly, as regards the second question, [financial assistance] if His Majesty's Government can send a force to fight for Finland, the whole resources of the Empire, so far as they are not necessarily engaged elsewhere, will be behind that force.⁹⁵

A firm commitment to Finland risked difficulties and embarrassment in the volatile future.

The French, in complete contrast, became increasingly insistent on action to encourage a Finnish appeal and to promote Scandinavian cooperation. Daladier, unlike Chamberlain, now felt a Finnish appeal was by no means certain. Corbin on his return from Paris told Halifax on 27 February that

...the Finnish government had given certain information to

⁹⁵ Halifax to Vereker, unnumbered, 27-8/2/40, F0.371/24802, N2332/9/56.

the French Minister in Helsingfors. In the first place the Finnish Government had said that they could not take any decision with regard to the proposal that they should appeal to the Allied Governments before they knew what attitude the Scandinavian Governments would adopt in the matter. Secondly, the Finnish Government had stated that they had been approached privately by the Soviet Government with conditions for peace consisting of cession of Viborg, Sortavala, and the bases at Hango, and the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance. The Soviet Government had asked for a quick reply and had stated that, if this were not forthcoming, the conditions would be made more severe. The Finnish Government had not expressed any views on these peace terms to the French Minister; they had only said that if Allied help were not forthcoming until April it would be very late, if not too late.⁹⁶

To encourage a Finnish appeal and gain Scandinavian co-operation, Daladier wanted the sailing date for the expedition advanced, and demanded that the Allies use the Altmark affair as a pretext to mine Norwegian waters and occupy her principle ports.⁹⁷

The French were not alone in their desire for action to influence northern events. At the Foreign Office Sargent, Collier and others, fearing disaster at home and abroad from a failure to undertake the expedition, urged the government to confront the unco-operative Scandinavians with a fait accompli and land a contingent at Narvik disguised as volunteers on 12 March. Collier argued that

For what might then be expected to happen would be that the Norwegian authorities at Narvik, and the Swedish frontier guards would not oppose by force the movement of what could be represented as merely a fresh contingent of 'volunteers', but the Germans, finding an Allied force moving towards the source of their supplies of iron ore, would at once take counter measures. Scandinavian public

⁹⁶ Conversation between Halifax and Corbin, 27/2/40, F0.371/ 24802, N2492/9/56.

⁹⁷ On 16 February British warships had entered Norwegian waters and liberated prisoners of war from the German vessel Altmark. French Aide Memoir, 21/2/40, F0.371/24814, N2266/2/63; Campbell (Paris) to F.O., #28, 23/2/40, F0.371/24801, N2291/9/56, WM 49(40)5, CA 22/2/40, CAB 65/11; WP (40)71, Halifax, Scandinavia, 24/2/40, CAB 66/5.

opinion would hardly permit the Norwegian and Swedish Governments to become active allies of the Germans in turning out the Allied forces on their territory; and, if the Germans persisted in forcible measures, they would have to fight the Swedes and Norwegians as well--which is exactly what we wish them to do and what, we have good reason to believe, they are anxious not to have to do.⁹⁸

In the meantime they wanted the Finns to make a public appeal on 5 March. The Swedes were presumably aware of Allied intentions as the result of Tanner's visit, and if they refused to co-operate it was desirable to let world and domestic pressure work on them for as long as possible.

The Cabinet was unmoved by these appeals. The plea to accelerate the expedition was attributed to "irresponsible French circles in Helsinki" who wished to hurry matters along when in reality there was no need to do so.⁹⁹

British information indicated the Finnish Government unlikely to accept Soviet terms, particularly now that the Army had checked the Karelian offensive and once again felt confident of its ability to hold out.¹⁰⁰ Gripenberg told Halifax on 28 February that

... it was inconceivable that his Government would accept terms such as those put forward by the Soviet Government. There was not a single member of the Finnish Parliament who would advocate such a course; and the whole Finnish nation knew that capitulation, on whatever terms, would be followed by massacre and mass deportation.¹⁰¹

Similarly, the Cabinet opposed the occupation of Norwegian ports, remained divided over naval action in her territorial waters, foresaw "deep difficulties" in a fait accompli at Narvik, and saw no reason for a public appeal on 5 March as it was not known for certain that Tanner had divulged

⁹⁸ Memo from Collier to Halifax, 28/2/40, F0.371/24802, N2492/9/56.

⁹⁹ WM 54(40)4, CA 28/2/40, CAB 65/11.

¹⁰⁰ Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #145, 26/2/40, F0.371/24793, N2416/1/56.

¹⁰¹ Conversation between Halifax and Gripenberg, 28/2/40, F0.371/24802, N2493/9/56.

Allied plans to the Swedes.¹⁰²

The Cabinet was finally moved early on 1 March when Gripenberg announced that his government felt obliged to open negotiations with the Russians in view of the uncertainty surrounding Allied assistance. He stated:

In the first place it was evident that the military situation of the Finns was very difficult. More over, the Finnish Government were now confronted with a Swedish refusal to allow the passage of Allied troops across their territory and had the feeling that, since Sweden had refused to co-operate, there was now little hope of obtaining Allied assistance. Another factor which had contributed to their depressed state of mind was the impression, derived apparently from an English or French source, that the help which we were offering could not reach them before the end of April, when it would be too late to be of any use, and, further, that it would remain strictly limited to the initial contingent of 12,000 men.¹⁰³

That morning the Cabinet considered this development and decided to ask the Scandinavians to give passage to an expedition and to inform the Finns that a force, eventually to exceed 12,000, could begin to arrive before the end of April if an appeal were made on 5 March.¹⁰⁴ This was intended to make it difficult for the Finnish government to justify capitulation, and failing this, to claim that the Allies had been prepared to do all that was possible to save Finland but had been foiled either by Finnish reluctance to accept their offer, or a Swedish refusal to co-operate with the Allies.

The Cabinet decision opened a game of cat and mouse diplomacy the object of which was two fold. First, they hoped to extract a Finnish appeal for direct military assistance by throwing every conceivable obstacle in the

¹⁰² Minutes by Halifax (28/2/40) on Jebb to Cadogan, 26/2/40, FO.371/24803, N2595/9/56.

¹⁰³ Conversation between Halifax and Gripenberg, 1/3/40, FO.371/24803, N2623/9/56.

¹⁰⁴ WM 56(40)1, CA 1/3/40, CAB 65/12

path of capitulation. Admittedly an appeal was unlikely to result in an expedition, but it was hoped that it might force Sweden to give Finland direct assistance in order to prolong the conflict, embroil Sweden in war with Russia, and eventually drive her into the Allied camp.¹⁰⁵ Failing this, the Cabinet hoped to pin responsibility for Finnish capitulation on someone else's shoulder. Reports now warned that Finland, in the eyes of the world, had become the acid test of Allied strength, trust-worthiness and sincerity.¹⁰⁶ If she collapsed because of Allied inaction the effects were likely to be "calamitous everywhere" but particularly grave in the United States, Rumania and Italy. If she collapsed because of British inaction the Chamberlain government was likely to be swept from office.

The diplomatic Game intensified on the afternoon of 1 March after Gripenberg announced that the "very serious" military situation necessitated a Finnish decision on Soviet terms within 24 hours, and that this final decision hinged on the Allied response to a request for material assistance. More specifically, he demanded the immediate dispatch of one hundred bombers and crews, 50,000 troops by the end of March to fight under Mannerheim's command on any front, and an assurance of Allied military assistance regardless of the Scandinavian attitude.¹⁰⁷ On receipt of these demands the Cabinet concluded that the Finnish government intended to capitulate to Soviet demands but hoped to pin responsibility on the Allies by making requests for assistance which were impossible to meet. They agreed that

It was doubtful whether Field Marshall Mannerheim was

¹⁰⁵ Mallet (Stockholm) to F.O., #93, 29/2/40, F0.371/24803, N2602/9/56.

¹⁰⁶ Reith (MI.) to Halifax, 29/2/40, F0.371/24802, N2512{9/56.

¹⁰⁷ Conversation between Halifax and Gripenberg, 1/3/40, F0.371/24803, N2618/9/56.

really at the end of his tether, and it might be that there was a difference between him and his Government. Probably the Finns were being pressed by the Russians to accept a settlement under the threat of worse to follow if they refused the terms offered. They could hardly imagine it was physically possible for us to send them the assistance of which they asked, but they might be making the appeal so as to be able to say, if they surrendered, that they had done so because they had refused the help which was essential.¹⁰⁸

So as not to fall into this trap, the Cabinet responded to the Finnish demands in very general terms, emphasizing that technical difficulties alone limited the assistance immediately available but that more was certain to follow as circumstances allowed. Moreover on 2 March they agreed to keep Mannerheim directly informed of all communications with the Scandinavians and Finnish governments as it seemed possible that he was not being given full information on the extent to which the Allies were offering aid.¹⁰⁹ If he were aware of the latest Allied offer Mannerheim seemed certain to insist on an appeal, since British reports showed the Finnish Command to be in no way alarmed at the military situation and Mannerheim to be unalterably opposed to peace on the terms offered by Russia.

At the same time the Cabinet felt it was time for some plain speaking in Paris.¹¹⁰ Midway through their discussion of Finnish demands on 1 March the Cabinet incredulously learned that Daladier had agreed to all the requests and had expressed a willingness to enter Scandinavia forceably if necessary. As the French knew full well that the Allies could not spare 100 bombers or 50,000 troops, or execute the expedition without Scandinavian co-operation, the British angrily concluded that Daladier intended to pin the

¹⁰⁸ WM 57(40)1, CA 1/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹⁰⁹ WM 58(40), 2/3/40, CAB 65/6; WM 58(40)4, CA 2/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹¹⁰ WM 57(40)1, CA 1/3/40, CAB 65/12.

responsibility for Finnish collapse on Britain's shoulders by making extravagant promises of assistance which the British, as organizers of the operation, had to reject. This game had to stop at once. Aside from straining Anglo-French relations, any obvious discrepancy in the Allied position risked a Finnish capitulation on the grounds that the Allies were not serious about their offer of aid. As 5 March approached the British and French became increasingly less confident in the likelihood of receiving a Finnish appeal. To rectify the situation Foreign Office opinion pressed the government to reverse its position on military operations south of Kemi and above all to provide the Finns with a few additional bombers.¹¹¹ Halifax viewed the bomber question as potentially decisive for information now showed that Mannerheim's final decision on an appeal depended on Britain's response to the earlier request for bombers.¹¹² Moreover, it was desirable to keep in step with the French who had released 18 bombers on 3 March. From Paris Daladier proposed to salvage the northern expedition, in the wake of Sweden's formal refusal to cooperate with the Allies, through a mixture of diplomacy and intimidation. To secure a Finnish appeal he suggested a joint demarche in Helsinki which underlined Allied solidarity on the question of military assistance, and which warned "qu'en acceptant une paix avec Russie, la Finlande se détache de nos buts de guerre et que nous ne pouvons répondre de son avenir."¹¹³ To secure Scandinavian cooperation, he proposed a joint demarche in Oslo and

¹¹¹ WM 59(40)6, CA 4/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹¹² Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #170, 4/3/40, F0.371/24803, N2690/9/56; Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., unnumbered 2/3/40, F0.371/24803, N2652/9/56; Conversation between Cadogan and Gripenberg, 3/3/40, F0.371/ 24803, N2761/9/56.

¹¹³ Letter from Corbin to Cadogan, 5/3/40, F0.371/24804, N2841/9/56; Also see Note from Corbin to Cadogan, 4/3/40, F0.371/24803, N2754/9/56.

Stockholm which underlined Anglo-French determination to send Finland assistance, regardless of the Scandinavian attitude, but which also offered to do everything possible to save Scandinavian face if they agreed to co-operate. According to Daladier's information, Norway and Sweden intended to give way if confronted by resolute Allied demands for passage, provided their own culpability remained shielded from Germany.

By and large the Cabinet was unresponsive to these suggestions. A joint demarche in Helsinki appeared desirable to erase any misapprehension created by Daladier's rash and wild promises but concerted action in Stockholm seemed premature until the Finns made up their minds on the appeal.¹¹⁴ With the military situation at the Karelian front reported to be stable, the majority in Cabinet were convinced that the key to an appeal lay in Moscow and Stockholm, and not in the dispatch of a few additional bombers.¹¹⁵ In their opinion, the Finns were using the bombers question to stall the Allies on the appeal in the hope that the threat of Anglo-French intervention might moderate Soviet terms, or failing this, secure direct Scandinavian assistance. As they would appeal for Allied assistance only as a last resort, there seemed nothing to be gained for the dispatch of bombers until the Finns actually made an appeal. Chamberlain reasoned on 4 March that

...during the next 24 hours we should probably know whether the Finns were going to make their appeal or not. If they did, and asked for Allied forces to help them, it would mean that they had every intention of holding out, and it would be in our interest to help them resist by any means in our power. If, however, they made no appeal and showed signs of negotiating with the Russians it would clearly be absurd to send them any more bombers. On the other hand, it was conceivable that

¹¹⁴ WM 59(40)6, CA 4/3/40, CAB 65/12; WM 60(40)6, CA 5/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹¹⁵ WM 59(40), 4/3/40, CAB 65/6; WM 59(40)6, CA 4/3/40, CAB 65/12; WM 60(40)6, CA 5/3/40, CAB 65/12.

they might restrict their appeal to a request for additional material only.¹¹⁶

When no decision materialized on 5 March the Cabinet extended its prohibition to cover all material aid. Before the Finns received any more equipment the British wanted to be sure that they intended to carry on the war, with, or without, direct Allied assistance.¹¹⁷

On 7 March the Cabinet beat a hurried retreat from its uncompromising position with news that the Finns had opened direct negotiations with the Russians because of the desperate military situation and their inability to obtain much needed bombers.¹¹⁸ A stormy Cabinet session agreed to release 50 bombers as well as abandon the northern expedition and dispatch its equipment to Finland. In doing so the Cabinet hoped, above all, to avoid responsibility for Finnish capitulation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon stated that

...the offer of 50 bombers would make a very big difference in the presentation of our case to the world; the Swedes would no doubt try to make out that we were only serving our own selfish interests and had no real desire to assist the Finns at all. But if we now offered 50 bombers, which we could ill afford, after the Swedes had refused to allow us to send an expedition to help Finland, it would be clear that we had done everything possible to aid Finland.¹¹⁹

At the same time it was also hoped that the release of bombers might rekindle the Finnish Army's wavering desire to carry on the struggle. Sir Oliver Stanley told Cabinet that

There was still time to save the situation, but the remedy-- and according to Major Magill, the only remedy in the opinion of the Finns--was the immediate dispatch of bombing aircraft. The Finns had had to withdraw two

¹¹⁶ WM 59(40)6, CA 4/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹¹⁷ WM 60(40)6, CA 5/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹¹⁸ WM 62(40)7, CA 7/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹¹⁹ Loc. Cit.

divisions to deal with the attacks which the Russians were launching across the ice, but these attacks could easily be countered by bombing the very vulnerable targets which were presented by the Russian columns advancing without cover across the open ice. More bombers were also required for attacking the Russian lines of communication in the Karelian Isthmus, where very telling damage could be inflicted. Above all, these bombers were needed to put heart into the Finns, without which there was a very grave danger that they might make peace at any moment.¹²⁰

Mannerheim wanted to turn to the Allies now that Stalin had increased his demands to include the cities of Viborg and Sortavala but felt obliged to enter discussions with the Soviet Union after the British rejected his appeal for bombers.

Almost at once Chamberlain delayed the implementation of these decisions and threw the whole issue back before Cabinet. The decision to abandon the northern expedition was premature in light of a message received from Gripenberg on the afternoon of 7 March. He stated that

[The] Finnish Government had reason to believe that within the next few days [the] Soviet Government would inform them of minimum conditions on which they were prepared to make peace. For this reason and because they were not hopeful of being able to accept Soviet terms, the Finnish Government considered first that it would be necessary for them to postpone their appeal for Allied assistance until at the latest 12 March, and secondly, that it was of the greatest importance that the Allied preparations for intervention continue.¹²¹

Moreover, as Chamberlain interpreted the suggested date for the appeal to mean the military situation was not so desperate as to demand an immediate reply on the question of bombers, he felt the Cabinet had time to reconsider its decision in light of a report circulated by the Chiefs of Staff that same afternoon. In short, they firmly opposed the release of 50 bombers unless the Finns appealed for direct military assistance and the Cabinet believed there to be a

¹²⁰ Ibid. Major Magill was the Assistant British Military Attache in Finland.

¹²¹ WP (40)88, Halifax, Conversation with Gripenberg, 7/3./40, CAB 66/6.

"reasonable prospect" of securing the iron-ore mines; the military advantages to be gained from simply prolonging Finnish resistance with the release of 50 bombers failed to outweigh the danger to the Western and Home fronts, particularly as Finnish resistance seemed likely to crumble in May as a result of direct German intervention.¹²²

The Cabinet debate on 8 March proved stormy and inconclusive until Chamberlain imposed a compromise and far-reaching solution.¹²³ He agreed to make the offer of 50 bombers conditional on an appeal for direct Allied assistance. This would meet the demands raised by the Chiefs of Staff, shield the Allies should Finland capitulate, and, should Soviet terms prove unacceptable, increase the probability of a Finnish appeal being along the lines desired. At the same time, however, he felt the slight opportunity to seize the ore mines, should the Finns launch an appeal, justified the military risks involved in the dispatch of 50 bombers:

[He] agreed that the case for sending the bombers was weak from the military point of view. He did not feel there was much chance of our Scandinavian expedition coming off, but it was quite clear that unless the Finns did make their appeal, there was absolutely no chance at all of the expedition. It was conceivable that the Finnish appeal might stir up public opinion throughout the world, and in Scandinavia, to such an extent that the Swedish Government might fall and be replaced by another which would be prepared to co-operate with us.¹²⁴

But to ensure that the Allies brought maximum pressure to bear upon the Scandinavians, should they remain unco-operative, he favoured sending "test forces" to various Norwegian ports. If their arrival changed the atmosphere

¹²² WP (40)86, COS., Assistance to Finland, 7/3/40, CAB 66/6.

¹²³ WM 63(40)4, CA 8/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹²⁴ ibid.

and found the people willing to co-operate, the rest of the expedition could put ashore and proceed to Gallivare. On the other hand, if they were forced to withdraw, the loss of prestige from trying unsuccessfully to help Finland seemed likely to be less than if nothing had been attempted at all.

On 10 March the British once again came under intense pressure to show a more encouraging attitude towards Finland. A Finnish appeal for direct Allied assistance now appeared a real possibility. According to Gripenberg the terms received from Moscow were much worse than expected and his government now faced the difficult decision on whether to make further concessions or break off talks and appeal for Allied assistance.¹²⁵ To encourage them at this crucial juncture he begged Chamberlain to have a few bombers flown instantly to Finland, and to make a public statement, not later than 11 March, to the effect that the Allies had decided to give the Finns "all help" at their disposal, if so asked.

The French, invigorated by this renewed hope for carrying off the expedition, were now determined to let nothing stand in their way, especially British intransigence and Scandinavian non-co-operation.¹²⁶ On the morning of 11 March Corbin indulged in a 3/4 hour "tirade" denouncing Britain's negative attitude towards Finland:

The latter had said the French were beginning to doubt whether we meant business, and thought that our messages to the Finns were having a discouraging effect. The situation was critical, with half the Finnish Government in favour of making terms with the Russians, and the French urged that, as an immediate measure we should dispatch as many bombers as possible. The French hoped that we should make as soon as possible a firm declaration, not hedged about with reservations, and not making the giving of assistance dependent upon an appeal by the Finns. If our joint efforts to go to the assistance of the Finns failed, M. Daladier's position

¹²⁵ Note handed Chamberlain by Gripenberg, 10/3/40, [FO.371/24805](#), N3047/9/56.

¹²⁶ Entry 10/3/40, Cadogan, Diary, 260.

would extremely difficult, and he might have to resign.¹²⁷

This outburst followed a session the previous evening during which he demanded that the British follow the French example and immediately fly a few bombers to Finland, and insisted that the Allies attempt test landings along the Norwegian Coast should the Scandinavians refuse to co-operate with a Finnish appeal.¹²⁸ Daladier was convinced that Scandinavian opposition would crumble when confronted by such resolute Allied action; but in any case he believed that unless the plan was carried out up to that point at which it became impossible to proceed, they risked charges of insincerity, duplicity and deceit.

When Cabinet convened on 11 March it agreed without debate to the immediate dispatch of 3 bombers, and to a declaration in Parliament along the lines suggested by Gripenberg.¹²⁹ This was necessary in order to hearten the Finns, appease the French, and avoid the possible political consequences, should Finland capitulate, of not having kept abreast of Paris on the question of bombers. At the same time, the Cabinet confirmed its earlier decision to attempt landings in Norway if the Scandinavians proved unco-operative. Churchill argued that

It would be a matter of persuasion and cajolery. He did not think that the Norwegians would vigorously oppose our landing by force of arms. Once ashore we should have secured a valuable prize not only in the possession of about a million and a half tons of iron ore, but also in our occupation of the harbour which would be of the greatest use for naval purposes. Even if the railway had been sabotaged, our forces should install themselves securely in the port in the hope that ultimately we might persuade the Scandinavians to give us railway

¹²⁷ WM 65(40)6, CA 11/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹²⁸ Conversation between Halifax and Corbin, 10/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3045/S/56.

¹²⁹ WM 65(40)6, CA 11/3/40, CAB 65/12.

facilities for further advances.¹³⁰

The only points of disagreement were on timing and the desirability of giving the Norwegians prior warning. Churchill wanted to seize Narvik before moving against the other ports but the Chiefs of Staff wanted a simultaneous landing at least at Trondheim. Halifax, for his part, wanted to give the Norwegians prior warning but the Chiefs of Staff feared this would allow them time to prepare effective defences if they intended to resist. Both issues remained unsettled until the following day.

March 12, the day of decision, was one of rumours, uncertainty and speculation as to Finland's intentions. Some reports showed that Stalin's refusal to moderate his demands made an appeal likely;¹³¹ others held the government and Mannerheim dubious of Allied military assistance and ready to accept harsh Soviet terms.¹³² Ironically, the bright spot on the northern horizon was evidence that an Allied expedition stood to gain passage through Norway and Sweden. In response to an enquiry from Halifax, the British Minister in Oslo wired that the expedition would get into Norway with ease.

¹³³ Mallet in Stockholm was less optimistic but information gleaned by the Ministry of Economic Warfare from "an extremely secret but absolutely sure source" pointed to Swedish capitulation in the face of strong Allied pressure.¹³⁴

The Cabinet that morning reaffirmed their belief that the operation

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #123, 12/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3058/9/56;
Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #199, 11/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3054/9/56;
Vereker (Helsinki) to F.O., #198, 11/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3066/9/56.

¹³² Vereker (Helsinki), to F.O., #198, 11/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3066/9/56; Note from Corbin to Cadogan, 12/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3131/9/56.

¹³³ Dormer (Oslo) to F.O., #100, 11/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3106/9/56.

¹³⁴ Hambro (MEW) to Halifax, 10/3/40, F0.371/24794, N3389/1/56. Halifax and Chamberlain read this on 12 March.

was worth the risk of war with Russia, and then turned to resolve the remaining issues surrounding the expedition.¹³⁵ After some discussion it was decided not to give the Norwegians advanced warning but to limit the landing to Narvik in the first instance so as not to create the impression of a general invasion. Finally the Chiefs of Staff warned that it would be necessary to increase the size and speed of those forces destined for Finland. Chamberlain's statement to the House the previous day had elevated the collapse of Finland from a mere political setback to an outright military defeat!

That afternoon the military completed embarkation and the store ships set sail for Narvik as the Foreign Office took two last minute measures to encourage the Finns and appease the French. First, Halifax tried unsuccessfully to stop Dormer and Mallet from making a further appeal for Scandinavian co-operation.¹³⁶ Cadogan, at the request of Tanner, had agreed to the approach on 11 March, to avoid further French charges of inaction; but now the French wanted to stop the demarche because it was designed to strengthen the peace faction in Finland! Secondly, Halifax wired Vereker to contact the Finnish government and Mannerheim and hint "very confidentially" that the Allies would not abandon their plans to dispatch troops on account of Norwegian and Swedish non-cooperation.¹³⁷ Daladier had given the Finnish Minister in Paris a similar intimation earlier that day when he stated that "notre décision [on troops] ne serait pas subordonnée à l'attitude Scandinavia."¹³⁸

¹³⁵ WM 66(40)2, CA 12/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹³⁶ WM 66(40)2, CA 12/3/40, CAB 65/12.

¹³⁷ Halifax to Vereker, #123, 12/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3058/9/56.

¹³⁸ Note from Corbin to Cadogan, 12/3/40, F0.371/24805, N3131/9/56.

British efforts however proved to be too little and too late. That evening as the Cabinet completed instructions for the Narvik Commanders, the B.B.C. announced the end of the Winter War. Confirmation followed the next morning, and to the secret relief of many the Scandinavian scheme was dead.

The basis of British policy towards the Winter War passed from reality to illusion when it became fully committed to support a war against Russia in the midst of a life and death struggle against Germany. Fantasy replaced reality when the politicians and the diplomats perceived the course of the war in Finland to be crucial to the outcome of the struggle with Germany. The collapse of Finland never threatened to result in Allied defeat through German domination of the European neutrals or Russian expansion into northern Europe. The Allies had no evidence to suggest that Russia had northern ambitions beyond Finland, while it was their own military planning, combined with poor security, which prompted German preparations for intervention in Scandinavia. Moreover, the policy of the Scandinavians throughout the Winter War clearly showed that they, along with the other European neutrals, were in effect already dominated by Germany. In any case, the continued independence of Scandinavia and the European neutrals was not crucial to the outcome of the war. Conversely, Finnish resistance never held the key to Allied victory. Stalin seemed unlikely to risk the collapse of the Soviet state to improve his overall security through the acquisition of a few strategic spots in Finland. Moreover, the Scandinavians and other European neutrals were unlikely to co-operate in Allied schemes to seize German iron ore and build an anti-Nazi-Soviet bloc as long as German military power dominated European diplomacy. In reality, the Allies always stood to benefit more from Finnish collapse than from efforts to prevent her defeat. Indeed, Allied support for Finland undermined those objectives which it was designed to support in that it encouraged the squandering of valuable

resources on a non-strategic objective.

Allied leaders drifted into their fantasy world for a combination of reasons: historical prejudice with respect to Russia, a garrison mentality with regard to Germany, wishful thinking in terms of their own efficacy and the age old, habit of overestimating the importance of ones own prestige. The end result was confusion both in regard to policy objectives and the enemy. Stalin became indistinguishable from Hitler, while Allied leaders remained uncertain whether their ultimate objective was the salvation of Finland or simply the prolongation of the Winter War. With no clear idea as to goal or enemy, there was less tendency to question feasibility and cost, with the result that the Winter War became an extension of the Western Front by default. The diplomats and politicians were first to fall into the fantasy world because they were ultimately responsible for the outcome of policy as long as British assistance was confined to material aid. When responsibility for Finnish policy seemed likely to slip into military hands after 12 March, the Chiefs of Staff finally entered the world of illusions with demands that Finland receive an even larger expeditionary force.

To what extent did Allied illusions over Finland contribute to the 1940 debacle in France? On balance, very little. The outcome of the battle in France would likely remain unchanged regardless of whether the Allies seized the Gallivare mines, or had done more or less to aid Finland. In the spring of 1940, the Allies were not overwhelmed by a preponderance of German military and air power. They simply were out-manoeuvred. That this was so reflects the tendency for Generals to believe that every new war will be fought in terms of the last. At the outset of the battle for France the Allied High Command moved its forces

into Belgium on the assumption that the main weight of the German offensive would be directed through the Low Countries a la 1914. They had miscalculated. Earlier that year Hitler had shifted the weight of the attack from northern Belgium to the Ardennes forest, thereby securing the three basic elements for a successful Blitzkrieg against the West-- surprise, mobility, and concentrated military superiority at the point of attack. Allied policy towards Finland was unrealistic precisely because the military believed that the German offensive would develop through Belgium and settle into a war of attrition as in 1914. By squandering limited Allied military strength to support a non-decisive objective in Finland, the politicians undermined the Anglo-French ability to fight that anticipated war of attrition which failed to materialized on the Western Front in the spring of 1940.

The Trouble Makers during the Second World War: Labour's Left Wing and British foreign policy, 1939-45

T.D. Burridge

Obviously and shamelessly, I owe the title and, indeed, the theme of this paper to A.J.P. Taylor. Labour's leftwingers during the Second World War, it seems to me, were none other than Mr Taylor's dissenters of 1792 to 1939 come to life again. You may, therefore, care to recall how Taylor defined his trouble makers, for precisely the same applies to mine.

'Whereas', he wrote, 'a man can disagree with a particular line of policy while still accepting its general assumptions, the dissenter repudiates, its aims, its methods and its principles. What is more, he claims to know better and to promote better causes: he asserts a superiority, moral and intellectual. And though dissenters have differed widely in their practical conclusions, they have all been contemptuous of those in authority'.¹ It made no difference that those in authority', for most of the war, included almost all the Labour Party's official leaders, themselves erstwhile dissenters. There is nothing more common, as Mr Taylor has said, than the lapsed dissenter.² One of the Left's own heroes, Sir Stafford Cripps, went over to the other side, so to speak, in the course of the conflict. No matter: it simply lent zeal and personal animosity to the Left's strictures which, until 1943 at least, were primarily directed at the Labour hierarchy itself.

But the war-time dissenters did more than criticize: they also had the temerity to propose alternative policies. Perhaps it was this audacity which most disturbed the prevailing consensus of opinion and made the dissenters a constant source of irritation to the orthodox exponents and practitioners of foreign policy. The general harmony, it deserves to be

emphasized, was not that of a one man-band. Churchill's government was a genuine political partnership, especially in the field of foreign affairs which was the very reason for its existence. Otherwise, it was a somewhat odd 'national coalition', consisting not so much of the old Conservative, Liberal and Labour parties as it did of King Winston's Court Party with a re-vitalized and re-organized Labour Party. The foreign policy that emerged from this combination was an agreed policy, in spite of Churchill's predominance in its execution and historical interpretation. This, too, made no difference: dissent thrives on isolation.³

That the leftwingers were able to propagate their views so widely is a remarkable tribute both to British war-time democracy and to the loose internal structure of the Labour Party so far as debate was concerned.⁴ The liberty enjoyed by the voices of dissent in the Second World War contrasts vividly with the severity of their repression during the First. There was, of course, much less hysteria in 1939-45. Above all, there was no disagreement about the immediate cause of the war and whether the British should be in it. With that single qualification, however, everything else was disputed. The critics could be heard in parliament and in closed committee rooms, on the political platform and on the lecture rostrum. They published pamphlets and books. They could be read in the national press, notably the weeklies Tribune and New Statesman. (The latter, incidentally, doubled its circulation during the war.)⁵ They corresponded with each other and with outsiders. They were free to hold public meetings and to form political parties had they wished. Labour's Left Wing constituted, in effect, The Opposition.

The trouble makers did not, however, throw bombs, organize riots or strikes, or anything of that sort. They posed no serious political threat, not even to the Labour Party. This, of course, may account to some extent for the

licence permitted them. Their great weakness lay in the area of political organization which is a fundamental characteristic of dissent. During the Second World War there were also particular reasons to explain it. Unlike 1914-13, the dissenters of 1939-45 became increasingly divided among themselves. Possibly as a consequence, they produced no overall leader comparable to E.D. Morel, no dynamic body such as the Union of Democratic Control. Even if they had done so, it is unlikely that any individual or pressure-group would have had the same kind of influence. The nature of the Nazi régime alone was sufficient to prevent that happening. As well, the Labour establishment continued to use the language of dissent, and retained the old aspirations at the same time as it prepared to accommodate itself to the reality of priorities and what appeared to be pragmatic necessities. In any case, on the 'ideological' level, the character of the Soviet régime, even in the headiest days of war-time comradeship proved an insurmountable obstacle to the effective advocacy of alternative foreign policies. The Labour hierarchy proved quite unyielding on that point.⁶ Moreover, open as the Labour Party was to debate, the official leadership was in an unassailable position of authority. I have indicated elsewhere how the advent of war coincided with a significant turning-point in the Party's structural cohesion.⁷ And when, in May 1940, Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin joined the new government, they took with them control of Labour's political, parliamentary and industrial wings.

Dissent, nevertheless, flourished. What, indeed, makes the re-emergence of the dissenters the more striking, despite their political weakness, is the fact that the internal party situation at the beginning of the war corresponded with and partly reflected a new sense of confidence and unity within Labour ranks. The manifest failure of the Chamberlain government's foreign policy helped Labour to resolve a deep-rooted issue of priorities. The Party as a whole

was obliged to agree that the international enemy would have to be given precedence over the domestic one. Still more important, on September 3, 1939, Labour's foremost ideo-logical enemy became the nation's enemy. Small wonder that Taylor concluded his narrative of the inter-war period with the words that, "At the last minute, the dissenters had won."⁸ So they had, most of them. But, in winning, the Labour Party ceased to be the 'party of Dissent' that it had been. Instead, it immediately set about preparing itself psychologically and politically to be a party of government though not, of course, in alliance with Chamberlain. This did not apply to a minority who held out for the 'pure milk of the gospel, and it is they who are my subject. For them, the victory turned out to be fleeting in the extreme, and barely survived the fall of Poland. In early October 1939, Maynard Keynes, himself a former dissenter, felt obliged to deliver the first and most famous rebuke: "The intelligentsia of the Left", he charged, "were the loudest in demanding that the Nazi aggression should be resisted at all costs. When it comes to a showdown, scarce. four weeks have passed before they remember that they are pacifists... leaving the defense of freedom and civilization to Colonel Blimp and the Old School Tie, for whom Three Cheers."⁹

It was a stinging accusation, perhaps the more effective for not being entirely justified. In his first speech as a member of the government, nearly two years later, Cripps went out of his way to refer to 'the funeral of the late and not lamented Colonel Blimp'.¹⁰ To understand what had provoked Keynes' vituperation one must unfortunately backtrack, though this has the advantage of bringing us rapidly to the cardinal feature of the trouble makers' attitude to foreign policy during the war. This had relatively little to do with that of the pacifists who, though overrepresented in the Parliamentary Labour Party, had no foreign policy in the strict sense of the term. Their pre-war

influence had been due not solely to a general abhorrence of the 1914-18 bloodbath, but also to an almost equally strong conviction that any repetition would be worse. As well, much of the mass support for Labour's adherence to the collective security doctrine had derived from the belief that this would prevent war and not to the consideration that the possession of allies would be the best way to fight a war. Hence, in the light of the British failure to secure the Russian alliance and the subsequent enigma of Russian neutrality, the 'pacifist' tendency did reassert itself to some extent. It had been one thing for the Party to demand an ultimatum towards Germany, quite another for it collectively to contemplate the actual waging of war, particularly after the conquest of Poland. But this position was not confined to either Left Wing or Labour ranks. How, indeed, was the war to be fought?

More pertinent to the Left Wing was the inter-war history of Labour's attitude to the problem of Germany in Europe. Practically no-one in the Labour Party had doubted that the Versailles Treaty had been anything other than a gross injustice. Labour's apparent ambivalence, if not confusion, over the policy of appeasement owed a great deal to post-Versailles guilt, despite the fact that Labour had had nothing to do with that settlement. Equally as the Party and Movement had witnessed with horror and detestation the growth of German National Socialism, so too could hardly anybody be found within its ranks to deny the validity of certain German grievances which had been appropriated by the Nazis. What had united the Party on September 3, 1939, was not any considerable opinion that war was the answer to the problem of Germany: rather the emphasis was placed on the Party's almost unanimous opinion (and here one must exclude the pacifists) that a declaration of war was the sole remaining possibility of resolving the Nazi problem. For Labour, as a

whole it was Hitler's war, a war they had been forced into. The point on which almost every member agreed ¹¹ originally was that they were 'fighting' Nazism, not the German people.

The Left alone retained this distinction throughout the war. It directly reflected the principle which underlay their entire attitude to foreign policy, namely that the conflict had to be seen in revolutionary rather than nationalist or imperialist terms. The revolutionary thesis was capable of several interpretations, on which the dissenters were to place different emphases. But in regard to German policy the dissenters were at one. Such was not the case in the rest of the Party, though the distinction between Nazis and Germans remained a prominent feature of official Labour pronouncements until 1943. Its practical significance was the implication that 'the other Germany' was entitled to play a full part in the shaping of European affairs. During the 'phoney' or 'bore' war period the immediate corollary, especially in Left-wing circles, was the hope that the war might not have to be seriously 'fought' at all; a revolution inside Germany would largely suffice for the bloodletting. The other side to both the European problem and the Left's revolutionary thesis concerned, of course, Russia. Here the Left was in a quandary from which it never entirely escaped and over which it eventually split. This is the context in which the intellectual Left's reactions to the initial phase of hostilities must be viewed. The widespread and somewhat ironic feeling of relief ¹² at the declaration of war was rapidly succeeded by certain doubts as to the form the war might take, the aims for which it would be fought and its possible outcome.

Keynes' letter had been addressed to the group connected with the New Statesman. It says something for the paper that it was published at all. Describing the leading organ of the intellectual Left during the

first weeks of the war, its historian has noted a curious similarity to the New Statesman of August and September 1914; "it follows events as an observer and commentator whose patriotism must not be allowed to interfere with his objectivity".¹³ This was something of a cover for what. Hyams admits was the uneasiness of the editorial staff. Martin himself, on September 25, told Oliver Harvey that there was a great deal of pacifism among his readers.¹⁴ Though carefully dissociating itself from any idea of making peace on any or no terms - as implied by Bernard Shaw's article in the issue of October 7 -¹⁵ the paper argued that it would be most unwise to reject outright an expected offer which had not yet been received and whose nature was still unknown. The strong point of Shaw's article, the paper considered, was that the war had "changed into a different war since the Soviet Union entered Poland." No further commitments should be made until much more was known about the Soviet Union's policy and intentions, though "the object, whatever the method," remained that of freeing Europe and Germany of Nazism. The best and possibly the only chance was to talk with the German people rather than the Nazis.¹⁶

There were, however, other Left-wing opinions, notably those to be found in Tribune, the literary stronghold of the expelled Labour rebels Aneurin Bevan and Cripps. One difference between the New Statesman and Tribune may be noted immediately; the former was the vehicle of the intellectuals whereas the latter was run by politicians. As the conflict developed this difference became increasingly evident, and was eventually reflected in a major clash of opinion between the two groups. Tribune had had no hesitation in urging its readers to support the war from the beginning because, as a joint article by Bevan and Cripps emphasized, out of the war would come an opportunity for the working class of the world to do something effective to save themselves from fresh tragedies and suffering.¹⁷ Thus 'every good Socialist would do his utmost to

support the anti-Fascist forces' though there were other considerations. Foremost among these was the formulation of the peace terms which would either be imposed or negotiated when the war ended. Another peace like that of Versailles would only lead to another war. Significantly, Bevan and Cripps indicated in this first war-time issue of Tribune that there was a possibility of the war lasting a good deal longer than many people thought, and that a German revolt was less likely the longer the war did last. Their immediate reaction was to stress the need for a change in the British government. Bevan was to hammer at this theme throughout the war. For him, the revolution should begin at home. Cripps, according to Addison, took at once a 'Loftier and more personal view of the opportunities the war might bring.'¹⁸ As Mr Taylor has said, "there lurks in every politician an itch for Power."¹⁹ During the winter of 1939-40, Cripps was to visit India, China, Russia and the United States, seeing as many of the important men as would see him.²⁰ This was, no doubt, a useful preparation for **his** future career as a politician, but less so for a dissenter.

Other Tribune commentators clung to more theoretical paths. Konni Zilliacus described the situation as a class as well as an international war. Socialists should support it, however, because the moment the war ended with revolutions in the Fascist countries, reaction and plutocracy would no longer be able to cling to power in the West.²¹ The notion that the war would end in a German revolution was seconded by a refugee of German extraction, Heinrich Fraenkel. He assured Tribune's readers that Hitler had never had the majority of the people behind him.²² Julius Braunthal added they should not forget that when the mighty German people finally arose and shook off Hitler's mad grip the Germans would have fought "our battle" too.²³ This was a classic Left-wing view, which had been

widely held prior to the First World War., Its second non-realization was perhaps the greatest single ideological blow to the Left. Some of its theoreticians were subsequently to pin more of their hopes to the possibility of an accord with Stalinist Russia than might otherwise have been the case. Until the Russians actually entered the war, this was simply to resurrect the Labour policy of the 1930s. Given the Nazi-Soviet Agreement, the partition of Poland and then the Russian attack on Finland, it was not a propitious line for the Left to take.

Cripps, for a time, tried to have it both ways. Though there could be no compromise with Nazism, he wrote on September 15, this did not preclude negotiations with the German people and he hoped that the USSR would help when the time came for practical steps in peace making. In the future, territorial questions had to be given less consideration than economic ones. The era of civilization dominated by the profit motive had to be terminated.²⁴ Zilliacus remained adamant that there could be no question of ending the fighting until the German people had overthrown the Nazi régime. Yet, curiously enough, it was he who first stressed the necessity for a British peace offer which, when taken up and added to by other dissenters, was to bring down Keynes' wrath. What had prompted Zilliacus was his perception that the war could intensify to the point where it would be difficult to persuade people to distinguish between Germans and Nazis.²⁵ The paper's Foreign Affairs. Reporter insisted that the war could be shortened if friendly contact with the USSR was restored, and he denounced the popular Labour daily, the Daily Herald, and Walter Citrine, the General Secretary of the T.U.C., for their anti-Russian position.²⁶ Not to be outdone, Cripps - after the occupation of Poland - declared that the Russians had been driven to do what they had done for their own security and because neither the British, French nor Poles were capable of

protecting Poland from the Nazis. The Russians could not be blamed.²⁷

Shortly afterwards Cripps made one of those re-appraisals with which his political career is studded. He had become convinced that the chances of a German revolt had been over-estimated. If continued, the war would probably last much longer than three years and the British Empire and British capitalism would never stand the strain, even if they managed to survive as conquerors. Assuming that some peace offer would now come from Russia and Germany he urged that it should not be turned down. To do so would be to invite the maximum danger of being faced in the future with a joint German-Russian attack. Instead, Cripps suggested that Britain should herself present a set of proposals which would go much further than anything Russia and Germany would propose. The British proposals should be based on the abandonment of the British and all other imperialisms. At best, even if these proposals were not accepted, they would have detached Russia from Germany and, at the worst, would have put the British in the "right with the public-opinion of the world, especially the working-classes".²⁸ There was no point, he told the Commons on October 12, in continuing a war merely because one's opponents could not be trusted.²⁹ Cripps made it clear in Tribune that he was prepared to negotiate with Hitler if Russia could be induced to guarantee an agreement. The alternative was the worst war that civilization had ever known. Cripps had now voluntarily included himself in the target for Keynes' rebuke. But though his suggestions may sound suspiciously like a recipe for a Left-wing Munich, it must be emphasized that Cripps saw Russia as "the key to the whole situation."³⁰ His consistency in this regard - he maintained it during and after the Russian attack on Finland - was to prove ironic. If it was instrumental in advancing his political career-one of the Churchill government's first diplomatic acts was to appoint him Ambassador to the USSR -

it was also to terminate his dissenting one. He became a member of the War Cabinet before being re-admitted to the Labour Party, though he failed in his solo-bid to replace Churchill.³¹ In his case, the itch for power proved irresistible.

The dissenters forged on regardless. For a time the running was taken up by G.D.H. Cole. In a widely-read pamphlet,³² in November 1939, he attempted to reply directly to Keynes. Everyone stood condemned, Hitler, Stalin and the Labour Party. On the one hand, Hitler was a criminal lunatic with whom there could be no lasting peace. On the other, it could be no part of British plans for Gt. Britain, France and Germany to fight a war of mutual exhaustion until nothing remained of Western civilization except for the smile on Stalin's face. What Cole wanted was to build-up Socialist values on the existing ones and not to destroy them. It is clear that uppermost in Cole's mind was his abhorrence of the war being fought and thus he equally denounced the Labour Party for appearing to rest content with rallying behind the government in the name of national unity. Though he had no belief that there was any mass opposition in Germany to the Nazis, much less to Hitler, he still thought that most Germans did not want a war with Gt. Britain and France. The section that Cole would appeal to was "much the same elements ... who had controlled the Weimar Republic." This could be done by putting forth counter-proposals, presumably to Hitler, before either side launched a major attack in the West which would wipe out rationality and common sense. Essentially what Cole proposed was the creation of a federal system in Western and Central Europe, though he realized that this would not be to Stalin's liking.

Here, perhaps, was utopianism at its most extreme. It provoked a further blast from Keynes, and Cole did not sustain his argument for

long.³³ Yet the practical dilemma remained, for the Left and everyone else. As Kingsley Martin put it to Harold Nicolson, "we cannot possibly beat both Russia and Germany."³⁴ As well, many leftwingers suspected or feared that an attempt might be made to turn the phoney war into a real one- against the Soviet Union. Harold Laski, otherwise confident of the eventual inevitability of a clash between Russia and Germany, was to urge that Socialist purpose at home involved maintaining, even at great cost, a friendly attitude to the Soviet Union.³⁵ Long at personal odds with Cole,³⁶ Laski contented himself, in his November pamphlet, with the statement that Labour had to press for a peace which would involve not merely the defeat of Hitlerism, but also the removal of the causes of such forms of Fascism.³⁷ The New Statesman, also seeking to defend itself against Keynes and others, stated that its suggestion of a peace conference depended on the participation of the neutrals, "of whom the US was far the most important."³⁸

Cole changed his views before the end of November. No one, he said, could now prophesy what would happen. He rejected the world federalist notions of Sir Charles Trevelyn³⁹ on the grounds of their impossibility. Instead, Cole opted for a federation based mainly on Western Europe but which should also include the self-governing States of the British Empire and certain other countries.⁴⁰ 'Vigilans', on the other hand, the Tribune writer who succeeded Zilliacus,⁴¹ could see no alternative to a policy of support for the war and opposition to Chamberlain. He roundly condemned any suggestion that Britain should enter a peace conference while Hitler was still in power and in possession of Czechoslovakia and Poland. But while agreeing with the official Labour leadership that there should be no dictated peace, no revenge and that all nations should be parties to the peace, he interpreted this to mean "the repudiation of the whole idea of military victory".⁴²

The odd-man-out in all the fervent Left-wing discussion of foreign policy that preceded the Russian attack on Finland was Aneurin Bevan. His silence on the subject lends credence to his biographer's contention that he, at least, "never doubted the war would have to be fought."⁴³ His attitude was reflected in a Tribune editorial of November 10, which stated coolly that it was academic to talk of peace aims that a socialist should accept, since it was impossible to get the government to adopt them. Bevan's turn on foreign policy was to come later. In the meantime he concentrated on the domestic political situation, in which he wanted to see Labour's industrial wing more actively engaged. He also stressed the importance of keeping open the channel of parliamentary debate in war-time⁴⁴ - a sphere wherein he was to become Churchill's greatest antagonist. Towards the end of November, Bevan called for the ending of the political truce, at least at the by-election level. In all this Bevan was, perhaps unconsciously, putting a distance between himself and his former political ally and friend Cripps.⁴⁵

The difference was soon illuminated by their immediate reactions to the Russian attack on Finland, on November 30, which took the wind out of the sails of most of the non-communist as well as fellow-travelling Left. Cripps instantly sprang to Russia's defence; she had been forced to her present policy because her previous one had depended on Britain and France.⁴⁶ Bevan merely advised the Parliamentary Labour Party to seize the opportunity presented by the war to make gains upon the domestic front. These gains could be made whether the war was imperialist or anti-fascist.⁴⁷ The following week Tribune's Board and 'Vigilans' jointly deplored the Russian action, condemning it as a blunder, though the paper added that it was not because she was an aggressor that Russia was being attacked 'in certain quarters', but because she was Socialist. Tribune would oppose any war against the Soviet Union

and Bevan subsequently denounced any proposal to despatch British arms to Finland.⁴⁸ Both reactions, however, also illustrated something else; in so far as they were directed against the Labour hierarchy (which had mercilessly used the Russian action as a stick to chastise the extreme Left⁴⁹) rather than the Chamberlain government, they reflected the Left-wing's disarray. While the Russo-Finnish War and the Nazi-Soviet entente continued the Left was indeed sunk in gloom and despair, its revolutionary thesis all but in tatters.

The former policy of the Left-building up a peace bloc composed of the USSR and the Western democracies to resist Fascist aggression - Tribune conceded in early 1940, lacked almost all basis in reality. The most striking fact in the situation now was that of military stalemate and there was little chance the war would turn in Britain's favour if it were prolonged. It was far more probable that the Soviet Union would come in increasingly on the side of Germany than that the benevolent neutrality of the US would turn into an effective partnership with the Allies. Nor was there much prospect of any negotiated peace. The only hope was that, as the war dragged on, the German people would despair of either peace or victory and that a standing offer of a world settlement based on official Labour's Peace Aims⁵⁰ would operate more and more powerfully to disintegrate the moral cohesion of the Nazi régime. There only remained the necessity of opposing war with the Soviet Union for as long as possible and the need to insist on negotiations with Russia. The paper now agreed with 'Vigilans', who had suggested it earlier, that 'The starting point for Left foreign policy today is Anglo-French relations.'⁵¹ A week later the directors of Tribune, Bevan and G.R. Strauss, both now re-admitted to the Labour Party, announced the departure of the paper's editor, H.J. Hartshorn. It signified the parting of the ways between the fellow-travellers and the British Left. But one strand in the revolutionary approach was untouched; the

necessity for a radical change in the government, Bevan's pet subject.

The Left's eminence grise in the Party, Laski, thoroughly agreed with Bevan on this point, but had another priority. Official Labour had given additional clarification and emphasis to its policy of all-out support for a more vigorous prosecution of the war.⁵² Laski set himself the specific task of converting those who still hesitated for 'ideological' reasons. 'Is This An Imperialist War?' he provocatively asked in a pamphlet. Well yes, it was, but while Nazi imperialism was expanding that of Britain and France was contracting. Thus the risk to democracy involved by war was one that history compelled Socialists to take in order to avoid the greater danger of a Nazi victory.⁵³ And, before the Party's Conference - which took Labour into Churchill's coalition on the very day when Germany launched its attack on the West - Cole had come to agree with Laski, Ellen Wilkinson and others on the Left that the war would have to be fought and that Labour must play a vital part in winning it.⁵⁴ But they disagreed as to how this might be achieved; Cole did not want Labour to join the government, Wilkinson wanted the complete equality of Labour in the government, and Laski wanted a drastic change of government.⁵⁵ Raymond Postgate, Tribune's new editor, sounded a more optimistic note. The immense increase in the power of the working class was likely to continue and with it the industrial and political power of the movement. They must therefore not be afraid of responsibility, but must act with a double end in view - to win the war and in so doing change society so that capitalism did not survive it.⁵⁶

Hitler's attack on the West marked the final dividing-line between the trouble makers and communists. 'Are you A Traitor? Answer Now,' demanded Bevan in the Tribune of 24 May, 1940. He could find only two tiny sections of the people who now doubted what was their duty... the Extreme Right and the

Extreme Left, and he lambasted both. Moreover, the treachery he denounced was not only treachery to the State but also to the working class. It was either total victory or total defeat, he declared the following week. Laski pronounced that the objective facts of the situation make a victory over Hitler a victory for Socialism.⁵⁷ The new government, despite its retention of some of the leading 'Men of Munich' even received a cautious welcome from the Left at first. The Emergency Measures Act and Cripps' appointment contributed to the Left's initial reassurance.

The totally unexpected collapse of France, however, brought a change in mood. Although, as Postgate said, it was 'a time for courage', the Left saw it also as a time for new initiatives. Praising Churchill's great speech, Bevan added that 'what he did not do, and what he could not do was to summon the future to their aid, for Mr. Churchill was the spokesman of his order and of his class, and both were dying. That was why Mr. Churchill could enoble defeat and could rally the nation to make its stand in the British Isles. By the same token, he could not unfold the plans for victory because there was no other victory left in the order to which he belonged. The war could not be won without friends, and in order to find them the British had to show that they were finished with the old ways. Bevan suggested firstly, freedom for India and the extension of liberty and self-government in the other colonies - something which could be done in consultation with the US; secondly, a real effort to obtain the cooperation of the USSR. Finally, the British government had to receive a further radical reconstruction.⁵⁸ Bevan's reaction was formalised in a six-point manifesto, A Programme For You, by Tribune's editorial board on 5 July. Equally as the struggle had to be continued, so too the war had to become 'a war of liberation'.

For a few months, demands (with suggestions) for an official

statement of war aims became almost everyone's favourite parlour game. The Left took it up in earnest. On the 31 August, the New Statesman published a letter appealing for a declaration of the objects for which the country was fighting not so much in detail as for 'the general principles on acceptance of which the war could be brought to an end.' Though acceptance by whom remained an unanswered question, the letter's significance lay in its fairly diverse group of signatories; these included H.G. Wells, Noel-Buxton, Laski, R.H. Tawney, Noel Brailsford, Kingsley Martin, Lords Parmoor and Strabolgi, Leonard Woolf, Arthur Creech-Jones MP, and Wilfred Roberts MP. What concerned them was not merely the absence of war aims, but the absence of 'revolutionary' war aims. Laski in particular warmed to this theme. Only a European revolution could overthrow Hitler. The conflict, he insisted, was not only a struggle for world domination between old empires and new, it was also a declaration of bankruptcy on the part of capitalist civilization. Gt. Britain had to take the lead in the revolution. She could do this by demonstrating that a just and equal society could be built even in the midst of war. Indeed, a democracy that was to wage total war had to end economic and social privilege as the price of victory.⁵⁹ More concretely, Bevan urged the new government to use their new power to nationalize certain key industries - coal, railways, electricity - "to provide the State with a sort of public backbone"⁶⁰

There was, however, another angle to the fully-fledged emergence of the revolutionary thesis at this time. During the Coalition's first six months in office the Left was also haunted by the fear that a compromise peace might still be arranged. The demand for revolutionary war aims was accompanied by a growing onslaught against the Chamberlainites retained in the new government. Nor did Tribune take kindly to the appointment of Duff Cooper as Minister of Information. 'The waging of the ideological war,'

the paper warned, is left to the Tories. The material war is to be waged by Labour.⁶¹ Chamberlain's own resignation, in October, only slightly mollified the criticism. Expressing to the Commons that same month his disappointment at the non-declaration of war aims, Bevan insisted that they had now gone beyond the point of defense.⁶² It was in this period that Bevan emerged as the Left's leading parliamentary trouble maker, as Laski did outside the Commons.

What, momentarily, gave pause to the Left's strictures during the period of exalted patriotism was the onset of another debate, one in which all the Left's leading spokesmen became heavily engaged. It could be said to centre around one issue, Bevan wrote, '... are we fighting the German people or the Nazis?'⁶³ The Left had already given its answer: the problem of Germany was, in Kingsley Martin's words, 'part of the problem of Europe and of our whole sick society'.⁶⁴ And, despite the fact that 'the Left had frequently been sentimental on the subject' there was, his paper had insisted, a submerged Germany; the Germany of Goethe and Heine and Schiller; the Germany of Faulhauber and Niemoller, and a working-class Germany, which would yet have a vital part to play in a civilized Europe.⁶⁵

With the nightly arrival of German bombing planes over British skies the distinction between Nazis and Germans was becoming somewhat blurred in Labour eyes. For the Left, the issue was crucial: it could nullify the whole basis of their foreign policy proposals. In the course of an attack on Vansittart, the New Statesman warned that the desire of the present Polish leaders to revenge German cruelty would be one of the most difficult problems of peace-making.⁶⁶ It was not, however, only the Polish leaders that the Leftwingers were worried about.

Eden's appointment as Foreign Secretary, in December- 1940, came as

something of a relief. The Left permitted itself the hope that it foreshadowed the beginning of a new approach to foreign policy and, as usual, were not slow in proffering advice. For Tribune's diplomatic correspondent, the first thing that needed doing was to improve relations with the USSR. Britain should be prepared to recognize the present Western frontiers of Russia and although the question of the Baltic States was "somewhat different", Britain could not change what had happened except by war, which he ruled out. The best hope was that when Fascism had been crushed in Europe and a European Union on democratic and revolutionary lines had been built, the Russian Revolution would get a new lease on life and move in the direction of democracy and real autonomy for the component nationalities of the USSR. Secondly, British war aims should include a promise of immediate help to people who shook off Fascist tyranny. As well, the emigré governments in Britain had to be requested to support British war aims. All attempts to appease Franco should cease, and Hoare should be recalled. Finally, the writer urged that full support be given to General de Gaulle, as a trustee for a future French government.⁶⁷ But the New Statesman saw the biggest problem of the war as 'the task of rallying to our standard the peoples first of France and Italy and eventually of Austria and Germany'. If Eden was ready to confront this he would discover that he had everything to begin and much to undo.⁶⁸

One other difference in emphasis between the two Left-wing groups in 1940 may be noted. The New Statesman tended to take a more hopeful view of the prospect of future cooperation with the U.S.A. than did Tribune. The former paper, for instance, had hailed the Destroyers for Bases deal as an "imaginative agreement." It implied for three generations a parallelism in British and American foreign policy so close that one of us could hardly be

neutral, if the other were at wax'.⁶⁹ Laski, from the first, envisaged the peace as requiring the closest British cooperation with both the USSR and the USA, and during the war came to have the highest opinion of Roosevelt's role in maintaining that cooperation.⁷⁰ Bevan, on the other hand, while believing that there was not the slightest chance of even effective defense without American aid, warned that 'it would do irreparable damage to the future close cooperation of the two nations if it ever turned out that the price of American assistance were the slackening of social progress in Europe.'⁷¹

Considering what had gone before it is not surprising that the Left's enthusiasm at Russia's arrival in the war was somewhat qualified. Tribune, on the 27 June, 1941, argued that then was the time to negotiate a firm alliance, based on freedom for all, both in the Soviet Union and Britain. It was tempting to say of Stalin, the paper admitted, 'Serve the beggar right' but the Labour movement had to be realistic. It was now possible to envisage an agreement which would recognise Russia's present Western frontier provided Russia promised to restore Finland and Poland to their ethnographic frontiers at the Peace Conference and to apply fully the articles in the Soviet Constitution granting a wide measure of self-government and cultural freedom to all the nationalities included in the USSR. Politically, the Nazi attack on the USSR meant that the Russian Revolution had entered a new stage. An agreement should include the utmost economic and financial assistance, a synchronised offensive and defensive strategy and a pledge that both parties would not make a separate peace until Fascism was smashed in the East and West, and Europe and China were liberated. As early as August 1941, however, Tribune published letters critical of its own attitude to the question of Russo-Polish frontiers. One thing was sure, a correspondent noted, and that was that

the unsatisfactory and complicated boundaries set up in 1919-21 were gone forever and the Polish eastern frontier was one of the least defensible of them. Hence their Polish comrades should realise that it would be primarily the Anglo-American-Soviet war effort that would defeat Hitler and liberate Europe, and it would be those same three powers who would have the chief responsibility for making a stable and peaceful Europe afterwards.⁷² The paper's military correspondent had indicated on the 27 June that though the Nazis would concentrate for a 'drive that pierces', what for any other nation would be a disaster would, for the Russians, be merely an incident.

The ideological dilemma that the war's most portentous development posed for some members of the intellectual Left may be illustrated by reference to a book of Cole's, published in September 1941.⁷³ He could now envisage only two possible endings to the war—a Nazi-dominated Europe or a Socialist Europe. Speculating about the latter, Cole suggested that there might be two or even three forms of 'Socialism', represented in several groupings such as a 'liberal' Western Socialist Europe, a Central Socialist Europe and an Eastern Soviet Socialist Europe. One bloc, however, would be best and Great Britain should be in it. But then came the dilemma. On the one hand Cole preferred to see an unchanged Soviet Union dominant over all Europe rather than an attempt "to restore the prewar States to their futile and uncertain independences and their petty economic nationalism under capitalist domination." On the other, he personally had not "the smallest intention of proposing, or of working for, the all-European victory of Communism à la Russe." For he was not a Communist, but a West European liberal.⁷⁴ Even Laski, arguing in December, 1941, that a reasonable post-war peace could be achieved only by 'a supreme effort both from the British Labour movement and from the Government of the Soviet Union', added that

Russia would have to substitute 'cooperation for domination'.⁷⁵

The Atlantic Charter also received a mixed Left-wing reception. For the New Statesman it was the document's implications about future German policy which mattered most. To those ignorant people who talked as if Germany could somehow be erased from the face of Europe, the Eight Points would come as a severe reverse. At the end of the war the immediate needs would be food and reconstruction, not frontiers and plebiscites. It would be years, the paper now considered, before it would be worth talking about a Peace Settlement.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, a broadcast by Churchill so upset 'Critic', that he returned to the topic the following week. The Prime Minister had said that Germany must be disarmed but not economically ruined but that, protested 'Critic', was not to correct the mistakes of the last Peace but to repeat them. Apart from the folly of reparations, Mr. Churchill's proposals were in effect carried out in 1919. Did they again want to maintain a situation in which they spent their substance on armaments while Germany developed economically and, incidentally, built up the basis. of another war potential? There was no solution other than common European economic and political organizations.⁷⁷ Tribune found the Churchill-Roosevelt declaration "all blurred at the edges."⁷⁸ The best thing about it according to Cole., was that there would now clearly be no compromise with Hitler, no patched-up peace between British and American capitalism and the Nazis, no capitalist cum Fascist peace at the expense of the Soviet Union and of world Socialism.⁷⁹ Bevan took a dimmer view: there was, he stated, a growing suspicion that influential persons were engaged on a conspiracy to form an Anglo-Saxon bloc to rule the world after the war.⁸⁰ Cole, and others, were also concerned that Churchill's policy was limited to getting rid of the Nazis. Apart from that, the old order was to be restored which, Cole argued, was impossible.

None of the above, however, prevented the Left in January, 1942, from greeting the entry of the US into the war with a 'rejoicing as profound as its relief'.⁸¹ During the year, it was the military exigencies which counted for most and the Left threw all its weight behind the Second Front campaign. Inevitably, the spectacle of the Russian agony had its effect. Britain was urged to grant Russia in the post-war the Polish frontiers as when Hitler attacked, as well as the Baltic States and the parts of Finland and Bessarabia that Russia had incorporated. Tribune's argument was simple: if the Russians won they would anyway draw their own frontiers and the war had proved that the Russians regarded these frontiers as essential for their own security.⁸² The New Statesman was encouraged by the lack of any attempt to define frontiers in the Anglo-Soviet Treaty. If Germany won the small countries would undoubtedly be submerged, whereas otherwise the desires of the people in those countries would be taken into account. But this did not mean that the small States would again be able to claim a sovereignty which had only brought disaster on themselves. In particular, the States that lay alongside Russia's European frontiers would, strategically and politically, come within the Soviet security sphere. To pretend otherwise would be silly. The most important clause in the Treaty, though, might be the one in which both parties pledged themselves not to make peace or enter into negotiations with Hitlerite or any other Germany that had not renounced aggressive intentions. The New Statesman was satisfied that this implied there must be an emergent Germany with whom peace could be made. In the long run, Germans must administer Germany just as Englishmen must run England and Russians Russia.⁸³

Here, indeed, was the rub. The Left's realpolitik in regard to Russia was not matched by a similar attitude to Germany. In 1942 the German debate waxed fast and furious inside the Labour Party, and the Left were totally

conceited to it. There was an all-round increase in personal animosities. Eden, for instance, was now condemned⁸⁴ for a maladroit remark that what mattered in international affairs was not the form of internal government of any nation, but its international behaviour; the trouble with Hitler was not that he was a Nazi at home, but that he would not stay at home. He apologized in the Commons, through not in a manner calculated to appease the Left.⁸⁵ He was not fit, declared Tribune, to occupy his post; his was precisely the doctrine that had led to the mess.⁸⁶ The Poles were denounced as the most rabid of imperialists; they had made public plans for the post-war incorporation of East Prussia and a long Baltic coastline. Even Left Poles were displaying an increasing coldness to cooperation with German and Austria anti-Nazis.⁸⁷

In the general gloom, Churchill and Attlee were equally criticized; the Left lost confidence in the government.⁸⁸ Bevan doubted, towards the end of the year, whether the presence of Labour was any longer necessary for national unity though, if it was, he would continue to support it as the defeat of Hitler remained the most important priority.⁸⁹ It was not that the Left had not made scarifies, they had. Tribune had made an extraordinary reversal in its attitude to the Indian question, due to Cripps' involvement in it. The Indian leaders should certainly try to get the utmost concessions from the British government, the paper had said in April, but they should not insist on "crossing the T's and dotting the I's of proposals" which appeared to form a reasonable basis for complete Indian self-government. It was hoped that the Indian leaders would not play into the hands of the most reactionary elements in Britain by holding out for conditions that the war situation made it difficult if not impossible to give.⁹⁰ But Cripps disappointed: when still in high office he stated that broadly speaking those who join in the united effort from what is generally referred

to as the political Left cannot expect that in the present circumstances... the Government should introduce legislation merely for the purpose of bringing about a complete change in our political and economic structure'.⁹¹ That was what the Left did expect.

Laski was busy spelling it out. His Reflections on The Revolution of our Time⁹² did not appear until 1943 but, at the darkest moment of 1942, he published a bitter article⁹³ which found its way into the Prime Minister's personal file.⁹⁴ Much as William Pitt had fought to preserve the system then in being against a revolutionary idea which Napoleon symbolized, so Mr Churchill was fighting', Laski alleged, 'to preserve the system now in being against the counter-revolutionary idea embodied in Hitlerism. His anxiety is to win it with men and measures which do not touch the foundations of our society. If he can hold Hitler at bay until all the resources of America are fully mobilised, he can count on a victory which will make it unnecessary during the war to raise any of those controversial issues discussion of which might disturb the status-quo. The war is in essence merely a stage in an immense revolution in which the war of 1914, the Russian Revolution and the counter-revolution on the Continent are earlier phases'. Laski earned himself nothing but trouble for his various revolutionary pains and proposals during the year. He was called before the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party on several occasions and Churchill personally prevented him from accepting an invitation from Mrs Roosevelt to visit the US.⁹⁶ In any case, the moment of maximum political opportunity for the Left passed with the news of the initial British military successes in the North African desert.

For the first half of 1943, the Left was on the defensive. Kingsley Martin wrote that ... many English Socialists ... fail as politicians because they have never faced the necessity of a political analysis as ruthless as the

military appreciation that a commander-in-chief demands before a battle. They are fairly dubbed sentimentalists, for they assume, until the facts batter them over the head, -a number of propositions about the working classes, about capitalism, about society, which rest on no surer foundation than their own generous hope'.⁹⁷ The main campaign of 1942 had been lost: an essential part of that campaign had been that the second front could never be a purely military operation.

Tribune quickly disabused itself of the notion that the North African invasion would provide any real relief to the Russians.⁹⁸ Bevan, in March, reversed himself; Labour had to remain in the government after all. They had not come so far only to see the rewards of their sacrifices (on domestic issues) thrown away, but these were of lesser significance than defeating the Nazis and taking some of the burden off the Russians.⁹⁹ He reiterated that military policy was one thing, the considerations which lay behind that policy another.¹⁰⁰ Tribune, however, did not so much as mention the Unconditional Surrender policy until May, while the New Statesman, in February, had preferred to avoid any dogmatic response.¹⁰¹

The Left, however, revived in the late spring. One reason was that the Labour Party's debate over the German problem' was reaching a climax. Moreover, with the change in the military situation, it became clear that the question of foreign policy in general had assumed a more practical and urgent character. But did the Allies have a policy, or only Mr Churchill's intuition?¹⁰² Criticism, in the absence of any specific indications of the Government's policy, was under a handicap. The Darlan incident, though infuriating, had been over too quickly for the Left to make much of it. Yet the wider issue of the relationship between de Gaulle and the Allies remained. For Tribune, the very touchstone of Britain's future good relations with the

Continent was, significantly, France; the conduct of policy here had been handed over to the American State Department and the American military.¹⁰³

Then there was the handling of the Italian surrender; what was done there was surely a sample of what the Allies had in store for Europe?¹⁰⁴ Either they had no policy, or the British and Americans were bent on forestalling social and political change in Western Europe.¹⁰⁵ Everything conspired, it seemed, to raise the matter of a Socialist foreign policy once again.

At this juncture, the Left split: "... the rest of the Labour forces (ie, other than the leadership) are divided, " Bevan admitted in June, "whereas at the end of the last war they were united within the Labour Party and the trade unions."¹⁰⁶ The principal cause of the division was the attitude towards Russia. One faction, that associated with Bevan and his mouthpiece the Tribune, while not unappreciative of the Soviet war effort, could not rid itself of a cautious, detached and even suspicious outlook. Another, that connected with the New States-man and Laski, tended - albeit with variations - to a positive and optimistic estimate of the possibility, fundamental importance and necessity of good Anglo-Soviet relations. The difference between these approaches, and their implications, was to be most vividly seen in the réactions to the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers, later in 1943. It had, however, become apparent long before then. Laski had pushed, almost single-handedly, in the N.E.C. of the Labour Party from 1942 for the British Labour Movement to establish contact with the Soviet Authorities.¹⁰⁷ The New Statesman, in May 1943, had hailed Moscow's abolition of the Comintern as an event of world importance.'¹⁰⁸ Laski, in July, bluntly advanced the proposition that an enduring European peace and the main chance of an economics of expansion would. turn on the degree to which a defeated Germany looked for the source of its regeneration to Moscow rather than to the city of London and

Wall St.¹⁰⁹ Tribune would have none of this. Though the Soviet Union should share equally with Britain and America in the administration and guidance of the liberated territories of Europe, all three Powers should declare jointly and severally that the 'last word of every liberated territory would be spoken by its own people; and that in their choice of their form of Government, freely and democratically made 'there would be no hostile intervention from outside, Capitalist, Imperialist or Soviet.'¹¹⁰ Laski had, in fact, gone too far even for the New Statesman.

In October, Bevan's paper produced a most significant editorial. Of the Big Three, Britain was likely to be very definitely the weakest. Unless the Labour (sic) view on foreign policy prevailed, Britain would not be able to hold a balance as an equal between the USSR and the US. The effect of the war, enhanced by Mr Churchill's deliberate policy, had been to produce a dependence of Britain, strategic and economic, on the US. Moreover, in all probability America would not again scrap her armaments or retire into isolation. On the contrary, the most powerful and world connected interests in America would back a policy of foreign intervention, world-policing etc. Assuming that Germany and Japan were thoroughly defeated and disarmed, the central issue after the war would be the adjustment of relations between the three principal victors. And for that reason, schemes of a world organisation centering on an alliance for holding down Germany and Japan and preventing them from making war again were anachronistic.

Labour policy, therefore, ought to be aimed at avoiding or preventing a world polarisation between the US and USSR. It was not enough to air the traditional and customary phrases of international goodwill, be they voiced by Tories or Socialists. The interests of a free and democratic society in Western Europe called for the closest cooperation between

Britain, France, the Low Countries, Scandinavia and if possible, a democratic Spain, Italy and Germany. Together, they could stand as an equal to the other two Big powers, and also as a friend and aide to the Soviet Union while she built up what the war had destroyed.¹¹¹ This, in effect, was a Western Europe policy.

The Moscow Agreements thus received different Left-wing receptions. The New Statesman's response was almost euphoric; the partnership had now been converted into a working alliance.¹¹² Tribune limited its warmest approval to the Italian occupation arrangements; as regards Germany the paper underlined the absence of policy subsequent to occupation.¹¹³ Soon after, the paper became increasingly sceptical -that the Moscow or Teheran meetings had achieved anything significant. None of the Three Powers appeared to have a definable foreign policy. What was truly Utopian was to hope to preserve peace without any general principles or objectives.¹¹⁴

Nor did the New Statesman's enthusiasm last much longer. At first the paper agreed that German material and labour should be used to rebuild the ruins in Russia and elsewhere but, a week later, published an article by a "well-known economist" who threw considerable doubt on the proposal. And though this was accompanied by an editorial on "The Lessons of 1918-19" which implied that revolutionary change in Germany had not to be thwarted by the West, the paper now encountered criticism from, of all sources, Izvestia.¹¹⁵ By the end of the year a more chastened New Statesman had returned to its 'detached' style of comment of 1914 and 1939. There were more variables in the Teheran Declaration than the casual reader might suppose. Neither in the military nor political fields were the ends fully shaped.¹¹⁶ As regards Germany, the Soviet Union did have an interest in reparations, but the guiding

principle should be Churchill's(:), thorough disarmament but not impoverishment.¹¹⁷

So, in the end, the Left came back to the question of Germany. This was the rock on which all its hypotheses were fixed. It was a matter of principle on which the trouble makers would not compromise - neither with fellow Party members, nor with Russia nor with anyone who appeared to subscribe, directly or indirectly, to the 'guilty-nation' theory. 'If ... Russia means to force a "friendly" Government on Poland, ' Tribune warned in January, 1944, 'then she acts no better than any Imperialist Government...' Though agreeing with the Curzon line, the paper condemned the idea of 'compensating' Poland with German territory. If Russia's claim was just, where was the need to compensate Poland? Was Poland to get East Prussia, Silesia and Pomerania? If so, then 'the devil's broth is started to brew once more even before the old lot has ceased to, sizzle'.¹¹⁸ The New Statesman, somewhat reluctantly, agreed. 'Frontiers, migrations, symmetrical naps - why should such things interest us?' H.N. Brailsford plaintively asked. The amends that Germany should make to the Poles were machines, electrical equipment and fertilizers, not territory.¹¹⁹ The veteran of dissent was moved to produce yet another book.¹²⁰

With Aneurin Bevan in the lead, the trouble makers moved rapidly into a position of splendid isolation. Churchill had agreed with Stalin about giving East Prussia to Poland; Russia suddenly recognized the Italian government of King Victor and Marshal Badoglio. So far as Tribune was concerned, the Russians had lined up with Wall St., had gone conservative in their diplomacy - like the others. The paper concluded that "Labour in Europe and in this country must guard the full independence of its policy." To win their battles, they had to look to their own forces and their own principles.

The Labour Left, at least, would not bow to expediency. Bevan followed this with the most detailed analysis of Labour's European Policy' made by him during the war. Churchill and the Tories had extinguished all signs of a progressive foreign policy, but had not replaced this with one of their own. Because of the resulting vacuum in British foreign policy the initiative had passed to America and Russia. American policy was simply British nineteenth-century foreign policy in a modern medium. It obeyed, whether under a Republican or Democratic administration, the outward thrust of American capitalism, and would tend to become imperialistic to the extent that the American people were prepared to lend their bodies to it. Russian policy on the other hand, Bevan warned, was no guide for socialists. The latter ought not to be surprised if Russia still feared a revival of capitalist aggression more than she was reassured by the prospect of the emergence of socialist nations in Europe. In the past decade the weakness of the Socialist Movement had been Russia's danger and in these circumstances Russia viewed all attempts at an integration of Europe as a threat. Nevertheless, Bevan thought that a socialist integration of Europe would eventually be recognized by Russia as being in her best interests. He therefore urged, more positively than before, 'as a first stage - an organic confederation of the Western European nations, like France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, the Scandinavian nations along with a sane Germany and Austria and a progressive Britain.' This was the only formula that he could see as likely to assist in laying the foundation for peace and prosperity in Europe.¹²² What Eden could not do was to insist that Great Britain was a great power in any sense that included Russia and the United States.¹²³

Tribune subsequently also deplored the Labour Party's official statement on the post-war international settlement¹²⁴ along much the same lines as Bevan had criticized Churchill and Eden. The paper had a particular word of condemnation

for Labour's attitude towards Germany - which was echoed by the New Statesman¹²⁵ - and was astonished at the absence of any specific reference to France in the document.¹²⁶

Bevan pressed home his campaign in the Commons. In July, he addressed himself to the military conduct of a war which, he believed, had gone on too long. After Stalingrad a more imaginative approach should have been taken. The Mediterranean operations had been an unnecessary diversion of force. The generals, he charged, were continually being interfered with by the Foreign Office. Unconditional surrender was not the phrase of a statesman.¹²⁷ No doubt stung by Churchill's assertion, first in May - then repeated in August,¹²⁸ that the war had become less and less ideological in character, Bevan responded with a slashing persona" attack on the Prime Minister. Greece was now added to the detailed list of policy deficiencies. More generally, Bevan argued that the maintenance of Britain's own status, and the preservation of whatever contribution it might be able to make to the world, would depend on the extent to which they could organize around them all the other small nations, as well as some system of collective security, so as to try to reduce the importance of military forces. In order to save lives in Europe they had to state some of their terms. But to do that required a prime minister who was 'big enough to lift the eyes of humanity to a far more attractive vision...'¹²⁹

The leading trouble maker was himself in trouble in 1944, from all but one side of the political arena. "He and his kidney are mere barnacles, on the bottom of the 'ship of State', " the Permanent Under-Secretary of State noted in his diary. "In any decent country they'd be bumped off. To that extent am I 'Fascist' and proud of it,"¹³⁰ The Parliamentary Labour Party narrowly resisted an attempt to expel Bevan in

May. A joint meeting of the NEC and the Administrative committee of the PLP thereafter denounced him for flouting PLP decisions and causing disunity in its ranks. In July, the communist Daily Worker attacked him for his opposition to the unconditional surrender policy. A further joint meeting of the Labour hierarchy, this time including the general council of the TUC, again almost expelled him from the Labour Party. On the Left, however, his following grew; at the end of the year the constituency section of the Party elected him to the NEC itself.¹³¹

The final stages of the war, including the Yalta Conference, saw no essential changes in the Left's attitude, though there was a curious incident. During the Commons debate on the Yalta declaration, an amendment was proposed which regretted the decision to transfer to another power the territory of an ally ... and also the failure to ensure that the liberated nations had the right to choose their own governments... Bevan and other Left-wing MPs voted with the government, against the amendment. Such, perhaps, are the ways of politicians, even of the Left! They did not, however, support the government on the main motion, preferring to abstain. Germany remained the central issue for the Left and here, remarked the New Statesman, the Allies had little in the way of a policy, except for slogans about punishment. This was mainly due to Britain and the United States who feared to arouse Russian suspicious of Western tenderness to the Germans. But the Russians were realists; they wanted peace terms which would provide, above all, for Soviet security.¹³² Tribune on the other hand, was as doubtful of Russian realism as that of the West. The communists had, as it were, replaced the old watchword 'Workers of the World, Unite! ' by a new one, 'Workers of the World, divide into three zones!' But neither the working classes in Europe nor even perhaps the working class in Russia would benefit

from this in the long run. Revolution from above in Eastern Europe could well prove to be abortive. Tribune did not see why the interests of Western European Labour should be disregarded.¹³³ 'We began with a phoney war,' concluded the writer V. S. Pritchett, 'we return, to a phoney peace, or peace on the instalment plan!'¹³⁴ The peace that Labour's leftwingers had sought had not been achieved. They remained as unreconciled to the political results of the war as they had been to the foreign policy, or lack of one which had contributed to those results. Fascism had been eliminated but the dissenters had still lost. Even so, barnacles or trouble makers, they existed and therefore, if L may-come back to Mr Taylor, they deserve to be put on the record.

NOTES

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Hitler's Personal Security: Gaps and Contradictions

The world, certainly Europe, would look very different if on 8 November 1938 the Fuhrer and Reich Chancellor of Nazi Germany had been killed. Perhaps people would have regarded him as a Great German, as a noted colleague has speculated; more important, the suffering, destruction and division resulting from the Second World War might have been avoided. It is well known that attempts to do Hitler in were made repeatedly, though it is probably less well known how large the number was of such attacks. At last count, no fewer than fourteen individuals made documented attempts to murder Hitler during the years they made 1933 to 1945; they made at least thirty separate attempts. In the light of so much anti-Hitler energy, it seems reasonable and interesting to look at the circumstances in which Hitler survived all this hostility for so long. My interest in those circumstances grew out of a study of anti-Hitler activities, of the German Resistance and their efforts to do away with the Dictator. It soon became clear that the problems of Hitler's personal protection went far beyond those that modern leaders ordinarily have to live with, and that they had far greater implications, in that they had a bearing on the life and death of literally millions of people.

For source references please consult the author's The History of the German Resistance 1933-1945, M.I.T.Press, Cambridge, Mass. and Macdonald and Jene's, London 1977, esp. parts VI-VIII! and, Hitler's Personal Security, M.I. T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. and The Macmillan Press, London 1973 (German ed.: Die Sicherheit des Diktators, R. Piper & co., Munich, Zurich 1975)."

The obvious question was how Hitler survived the many attempts on his life. There were conflicting claims as to how easy or difficult it was for

a would-be assassin to get close enough to Hitler for a chance to kill him. Former members of Hitler's staff maintain it was very easy, while survivors of the Resistance say the opposite. A closer look at Hitler's personal security will reveal an unprecedented level of precautions, and at the same time, in view of the precautions, a very large number of attempts on the Fuhrer's life. It will also shed some light on Hitler's character, and on the internal situation in Nazi Germany.

I should like to begin by surveying briefly some of the attacks; then to look at some of the efforts to insure Hitler's security; and, in the process, to evaluate their effectiveness in relation to some of the known attacks.

Most of the early attempts were made by individuals who took it upon themselves to defend a category of people whom the Nazi regime considered enemies: Jews, Communists, political opponents in general. More often than not, a group of conspirators planned the attacks, but none of the plans originated in ordinary political or other non-clandestine organisations that had existed before Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933. The Communist and Socialist parties consistently rejected assassinations as acts of anarchism; they believed in mass action and agitations for bringing about political change. No plans are known to have originated in non-clandestine Jewish organisations, or in one of the two main Christian churches. Individuals, however, did act, at their own discretion, regardless of affiliation with political organisations. A handful of individual Communists in Königsberg who do not appear to have had the sanction of the Party were among the first to plan and prepare an assassination attack against Hitler after his appointment, during the Reichstag election campaign in March 1933. They were soon discovered and arrested. Other reports of assassination plans against Hitler

reached the police in every year of Hitler's reign. The assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou on 9 October 1934 seems' to 'have led to a rash of plans, rumours, and reports. In 1936 a Jewish student from Yugoslavia, Felix Frankfurter, who was studying medicine in Switzerland, wanted to kill Hitler, found, no opportunity, and instead killed the Nazi Landesgruppenleiter in Switzerland, Wilhelm Gustloff. Another Jewish would-be attacker, the student Helmut Hirsch, came from Prague with dark thoughts, and with explosives in his suitcase, but was arrested before he could act. A Swiss Catholic theology student, Maurice Bavaud, stalked Hitler for several days in November 1938, near Hitler's alpine retreat in the Berchtesgaden area, and in Munich where he managed to be on one of the reviewing stands for the annual parade commemorating the 1923 Beerhall Putsch. An unforeseen and minor obstacle prevented his attack: when Hitler and his party approached, the SA men lined up in front of the reviewing stands all raised their arms for the salute, and Bavaud could not get a clear range for a shot. In the same year, Georg Elser, a Swabian cabinet maker, and a Communist sympathiser, reconnitted the same scene for his 1939 bomb attack in Munich's Burgerbrau beerhall. Conservative opponents of Hitler in high places, in the Foreign Office, in the military intelligence service, and in the Army High Command, soon joined by the Socialists, trade-union leaders and even church leaders, now also began planning to murder Hitler as the only way to halt his disastrous course. In the short term, it appeared glorious, and thus psychological conditions were thought to be unfavourable. Support for attempts to do away with Hitler increased again in 1942; but some serious planning can be documented also for 1940 and 1941. A series of abortive attempt in 1943 and 1944 culminated on 20 July 1944.

From the days of his political beginnings, Hitler was usually

accompanied by one or more friends who were both, instant private audience and His driver for many years, Emil Maurice was a bodyguard, audience and friend on a certain level, and went to jail with Hitler after the 1923 putsch. Another, Ulrich Graf, stopped half-a-dozen bullets aimed at Hitler in the putsch by throwing himself before his leader. Maurice, Graf, Rudolf Hess and others were heroes of many an assembly-hall fight, and on public occasions, Hitler was protected by additional bodyguards. Still, it would be a mistake to see him as constantly surrounded by strong-arm characters, and shielded against any molesters. There were many occasions when he moved alone into hostile crowds, at times swinging the riding crop he liked to carry, and in one incident he rushed onto the speaker's rostrum to attack an antagonistic speaker. As much as he needed protection, he provoked dangers and attacks by the way he lived and behaved. This contradictory pattern continued throughout his career.

The body-guard was more formally organised in February 1932, when power seemed within reach. Eight men were selected from the SS, and two or three more on appropriate occasions, were always near Hitler, stationing themselves outside his apartment, restaurant, hotel room or wherever he visited, while he was inside. This was continued after 30 January 1933, although from then on a criminal-police detail was assigned to Hitler as to every chancellor. Hitler at first rejected their services while Lammers (State Secretary in the Reich Chancellery) and Himmler tried to press them on him. But in the course of the first year in power, Hitler gradually accepted these bodyguards, so that there were now two groups competing to protect the Fuhrer: the SS-Begleitkommando, commanded by Bruno Gesche, and consisting of a growing number of husky SS men, including the valets and personal-staff SS officers (Ordonnanz); and, the criminal-police detail, composed mainly of officers from the political-police forces of the provinces, and soon unified

administratively under commanded by Lammers and Himmler as the Reichssicherheitsdienst (RSD), commanded by Captain Rattonhuben. Usually half-a-dozen of each, SS-Begleitkommando and RSD, accompanied Hitler on every outing, be it to the Reichstag, to a railway station, to an opera house, to a cabaret or nightclub, or to a restaurant. All attempts by Hitler's lieutenants, particularly Himmler, to gain control of the security details failed. Consistently, and to the very end, Hitler reserved for himself all decisions on appointments and dismissals, insisting on personally swearing in all new members, and intervening even in salary decisions and the like. Personal loyalty and obligation were emphasized by elaborate swearing-in ceremonies, held always during the night of 819 November, in front of Munich's Feldherrnhalle

The SS-Begleitkommando of 1932 were trusted fighters for the cause. Although new members were not in every case also members of the NSDAP, their membership in the SS, an organisation of the NSDAP, was regarded as sufficient. Most, but not all RSD officers had NSDAP memberships. Up to 1 May 1937, only about half of some onehundred RSD officers were members. The total number of RSD officers grew from forty-five in 1935 to two-hundred in 1939, and about four-hundred by the end of 1944. Approximately the same figures hold-true for the SS-Begleitkommando.

Besides these two orpnisations, a military guard detachment was assigned as Hitler's personal escort for travel during the war: the Fuhrer-Begleit-Bataillon; it grew in time to regimental and brigade strength. Several less well formalised protection groups were in existence, too, such as one in the Reich Chancellery, and a construction workers' security group on Obersalzberg. Security seemed abundant.

But the SS-Begleitkommando could not even prevent the theft of

Hitler's Mercedes car in Munich in 1932 while he was in a café; two of the SS-Begleitkommando's commanders were drunkards: Gildisch was removed from command in 1934, and went on to become the murderer of Dr. Klausener during the Rohm massacre; Gesche, Gildisch's successor, managed to hang on until January 1945, with temporary suspensions for drunkenness, indiscipline, and shooting wildly in the Fuhrer's Headquarters. Emil Maurice, the driver and bodyguard of the 1920s, turned out, in 1935, to be of Jewish descent; but because of his services in the early years of the Struggle, Hitler ordered that Maurice must not be harmed and must be allowed to remain in the SS, against Himmler's strong objections. He received promotions, and survived the war. Another dubious leader of Hitler's personal SS guard, in 1945, was SS-Brigadefuhrer Mohnke who was reported to be a morphinist. Martin Bormann complained vigorously to Hitler that the SS guards were too old, and had achieved ranks too high to be effective as ordinary bodyguards, but Hitler replied he would never let any of them go, never mind effectiveness. The RSD and Fuhrer - Begleit-Bataillon were not plagued by individual corruption, and it is fair to say that the RSD did a professional job of preventive detection and protection. But here, too, Hitler himself often defeated security by disregarding simple precautions, and during his visits to the fronts he was usually in considerable danger. His military guard could not prevent his motor column from being shot at by snipers in Poland, and they were helpless in February 1943 when Hitler was in conference with Fieldmarshall von Manstein at Saporoshe (Army Group Don), while Russian tanks nearly overran the airfield where the Fuhrer's Condor was parked. In March 1943, near Smolensk, on a visit to Kluge's Army Group Centre HQ, a plot to shoot Hitler failed because he refused to take a suggested, prepared, and specially "guarded" path, where the "guards" were to shoot him.

Ambiguity of security measures is encountered also when one looks at means of transportation, and at public appearances. Hitler used heavy, armoured Mercedes Benz cars almost exclusively, and they bristled with bodyguards with pistols and machineguns. But almost always the cars were convertibles with the tops down. In the narrow streets of Nurnberg, a bomb or handgrenade might have been hurled into the car. During announced public appearances, the routes were lined with police, Gestapo, SS, SA and other guard units, houses were searched, roofs were manned with observers, parked cars were removed, manholes and sandboxes and construction sites were looked into, mailboxes, underpasses, sewage tunnels, telephone booths and public toilets were not forgotten. But only the occupation of all buildings and structures along Hitler's route could have provided good security; there is no evidence that this was ever done. Consequently the British Military Attaché in Berlin, who lived at no. 1 Sophienstrasse, could propose in 1939 the shooting of Hitler while he reviewed a parade from his customary reviewing stand, opposite the Institute of Technology. From the Attaché's bathroom window, one would have had a clear shot. But Whitehall turned down the unorthodox proposition.

Spontaneous, unannounced appearances held the advantage that secrecy, always stressed but difficult to enforce, could be maintained. But other factors became magnified: hasty and spotty security checks, or no checks at all, or a concentration of persons with reasons for an attack. In August 1944, Hitler visited Carlshof Field Hospital near "Wolfschanze", where some of those injured in the 20 July bomb attack were dying or recovering; as he drove in and out in his open convertible, several dozen war-wounded, some horribly maimed, crowded against the automobile, Hitler could not avoid contact with military men, and still conduct the war; but this visit exposed him to danger unnecessarily, for dare someone to try and kill him.

There were gaps and contradictions in regulations governing rail travel. Elaborate advance security was always necessary when Hitler used his special train. It had to be fitted into the schedule, stations had to be cleared, barriers had to be lowered at road crossings. Thousands of railway employees had to be informed of the impending passage of the special train, all railway installations had to be guarded closely and, depending on the distance to be travelled, thousands of railway police were deployed. During the war, elements of the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon were added. Points of particular sensitivity such as bridges and tunnels were occupied, generally an hour before passage of the train. All this necessarily destroyed secrecy, an indispensable element of all security. To preserve it against these odds, the special or a duplicate was sent down the line on ghost runs at irregular intervals, all the railroad men and railway police had to be on post, never knowing whether they protected a train carrying Hitler and his entourage, or an empty train. To try and make doubly certain, a locomotive carrying the respective regional chiefs of railway operations always preceded the Führersonderzug by ten minutes. The train itself included an armoured car with anti-aircraft batteries at the front and at the end. It is not known whether or not Hitler's pullman was armoured; it was blown up by German pioneers in May 1945. When the trains had to stop en route (to maintain safety distances to other trains, for example) or when Hitler was recognized while looking out of his window, the public often gathered at stations down the line, after someone had telephoned ahead. Such crowds, gathering spontaneously, were impossible to control without considerable advance warning; all stations would have had to be sealed off, or security cordons set up in them -- an almost impossible undertaking over hundreds of kilometres. Photographs taken by the court photographers show Hitler reaching down from his open window to accept

flowers, in June 1940 -- a bomb could have been hurled inside, or Hitler might have had his arm twisted out of its socket by an enthusiastic well-wisher.

On the whole, and for long-distance travel, Hitler preferred flying to other modes of transportation. Air travel offered better chances of maintaining secrecy; in those days very few people had to be informed when a plane was in the air, and there were no crowds, crossings, buildings, or hundreds of kilometres of railroad along which bombs might be planted; but the ordinary risks of air travel were not small. Many times Captain Baur, Hitler's pilot, was not sure he would manage to get the plane safely through fog, darkness, muddy airfields, loss of radio contact and orientation engine failure, lack of fuel, or other malfunctions. Once a wheel nearly caught fire with the brake accidentally jammed, and only an unusually short runway prevented a fatal accident in mid-air. During the war, the danger of enemy attack was added, and in fact Baur had a number of close calls even though Hitler was not on board at the time. Hitler's seat contained a parachute that he could put on by slipping into the straps in the back support of the seat, and in front of his seat in his Focke Wulf Condor 200 there was a steel trap door which could be dropped by pulling a red lever, so that Hitler could jump out. Aircraft used by Hitler were guarded day and night by special SS and Gestapo details. Before every one of Hitler's flights, his plane was taken up to a certain altitude for a ten-minute test flight to check all functions and to insure that no devices set to detonate en route had been planted. The prevailing thinking was that such devices would depend on pressure; still the test flight was no safeguard against a time bomb like that of Tresckow and Schlahrendor (13 March 1943)

During the war, most assassination plots with reasonable chances of

success were prepared by people who had or could hope for legitimate access to Hitler's personal presence. Security at Hitler's residences and in announced or planned public appearances was so tight that clandestine entry was nearly impossible -- except by accident, or under the perfect disguise of legitimate business. In 1942, a colonel got off the train a stop too soon and found himself inside "Wolfschanze", without being challenged at all; in 1943, a Polish woman wandered all the way from the east-end to the west-end of "Wolfschanze", and she was stopped only at the west gate. Checkpoints, passes and guards of course could not stop an assassin who was a legitimate "insider", unless and until he uncovered himself. The insider's advantages are obvious; he could stalk his victim inconspicuously. There was one attempt by an outsider, however, in the very first months of the war, that came within a hair's breadth of success. While Stauffenberg offers the best example for an insider's opportunities, Georg Elser, the Swabian cabinet maker, illustrated the advantages and disadvantages encountered by the outsider.

Elser was successful in defeating security, firstly, because it was lax. It was generally less perfected' than it became after his attack, and it had always been particularly poor at the site he chose. The Bürgerbräukeller was not guarded and secured according to the comprehensive methods developed in the 1930s for other places of public appearances, such as the building where the Reichstag met, or the Berlin Sportpalast. Unlike these and other places, the Bürgerbräukeller was not guarded and searched in advance by agents assigned to Hitler's personal-security forces. It was not guarded at all until only hours before an expected appearance by Hitler, and even then it was not thoroughly searched. When the question had been raised in the 1930s, Hitler had declared he needed no special security precautions when he was in the midst of his old fellow fighters to commemorate the 1923 putsch. Local Party

roughnecks, veterans of the early battles and of the Röhm massacre, particularly Christian Weber, were in charge of security in Munich, and their performance in security matters was most unprofessional. Rattenhuber did not have control of security at the Bürgerbräukeller until the minute Hitler arrived. Elser was thus able to spend as many as thirty-five nights in August, September and October 1939, hidden on the balcony inside the large beerhall, working away at a cavity in the pillar in front of which Hitler always stood for his speech. Night after night, he ate supper in the restaurant downstairs, wandered upstairs and disappeared until closing time, then he worked, dozed off for an hour or two, and left by the backyard exit, carrying a small suitcase with the debris from inside the pillar. His appearance -- he was short, grey, insignificant -- helped him. A few days before the event, Elser installed his bomb and two clocks set to detonate about an hour Esser through Hitler's speech which usually lasted over two hours. Elser got this far because security was, almost non-existent until hours before the event, and because he worked alone and -- a one-man conspiracy could hardly be infiltrated. Elser's isolation, a factor in his near-success, was also an important reason for his failure: he could not have known that Hitler wanted to be back in Berlin by next morning, that the pilot could not guarantee a flight because the heavy fog common at this time of year could not be expected to lift much before noon, and he could not know that Hitler had therefore decided to take his special train. The train was scheduled to leave Munich at 21.31; Hitler had to leave the Bürgerbraü about fifteen minutes earlier. He did leave the hall at 21.07, and Elser's bomb went off at 21.20, killing seven on the spot.

After 8 November 1939, security not only at the Bürgerbräukeller was vastly increased. There was a flurry of orders and recriminations, and finally

under the date of 9 March 1940, SS-Gruppenführer Heydrich as Chef der Sicherheitspolizei and des SD in RSHA issued new, comprehensive guidelines. RSD and Gestapo efforts at preventive detection were coordinated, with much greater authority going to Rattenbuber, the Bürgerbräukeller and all similar sites were put under year-round watch, and for weeks before Hitler's expected appearances, they were closely guarded, and searched thoroughly and repeatedly. Hitler continued to appear in public by surprise, and on such occasions an assassin who was prepared and happened to be there could have had an excellent chance. But it was a matter of chance. As Hitler spent most of his days in his military field headquarters or at his Obersalzberg retreat, and since he never followed any set routine (such as Heydrich's daily travels to and from his office in Prague in 1942), an outsider had no chance of preparing an assassination attack methodically. On the other hand, there was no protection against an attack by one of the many high-ranking military officers whom Hitler saw almost every day of the war, unless the wider nets thrown out by the Gestapo and SD-hauled him in beforehand by penetrating his conspiratorial circle before he was allowed into Hitler's presence.

Claus Graf Stauffenberg, a Colonel in July 1944 and Chief of Staff to General Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, was a leader of the military and civilian conspiracy against Hitler, and in his official capacity he had access to Hitler, beginning in June 1944. Stauffenberg saw Hitler face to face for the first time in his life in June 1944. Stauffenberg carried a briefcase no less than full of explosives into Hitler's presence on no less than three occasions: 11 July, also 15 July, and 20 July 1944. On 6 July 1944 he also had the explosives with him, in Hitler's "Berghof" Headquarters near Berchtesgaden; at that time he was perhaps still hoping that Generalmajor Stieff, Head of the General Staff Organisation Section in OKH and a co-

conspirator with access, might carry out the attempt. (Much was to be said for someone other than Stauffenberg making the attack: Stauffenberg was an invalid, one-eyed and with only one hand with three fingers; moreover, for a reasonably swift and smooth coup d'état, his presence in Berlin at the moment of attack would have been important, as later events showed.) On 11 July at the "Berghof" Stauffenberg did not set off his bomb because Caring and Himmler were not at the conference with Hitler; the: senior conspirators had insisted that these two must be killed at the same time-as-Hitler. On 15 July, Stauffenberg again attended conferences with Hitler, this time at "Wolfschanze", where the Headquarters had been moved on 14 July, and again the absence of Caring and Himmler was the obstacle. (Much could be said on this point; but in this context, only the security aspect can be considered.) On 20 July, Stauffenberg carried his briefcase full of explosives into Hitler's immediate presence for the third time, entirely unsuspected. This time he had decided to ignite the charge, regardless of whether Goring and Himmler were present. His material required that he have a few private moments with his aide just before going to Hitler's conference, he had to start the ten-minute chemical fuse. He managed, under a pretext, to be alone in a room with his aide just before the crucial conference. Stauffenberg bad brought with him two packages of two pounds each of plastic explosive; both were fitted with chemical delay fuses, one for a ten minutes delay, the other for a thirty minutes delay. If one exploded, the same flash would cause the other package to explode, presumably, assuming also that Stauffenberg had intended to use both packages (no other use for the other one is conceivable). While he was pressing the acid capsule of the ten minutes' fuse in the one package, an orderly came into the room and said Stauffenberg was to hurry up, the conference bad begun. In this moment, Stauffenberg must have thought himself

discovered, as the orderly remained standing at the door, looking in. No one knows what went through Stauffenberg's mind; but he did leave behind half of the explosive he had brought with him to Hitler's Headquarters, the second package, going off with only two pounds of explosive in his briefcase. He had no trouble taking this to the conference room, and leaving it there, under the great map table, withdrawing himself under a wounding pretext. The bomb exploded in due course and killed four, wounding Hitler slightly. The police experts of the commission investigating the circumstances of the attack believed everyone in the room would have been killed had four pounds been detonated instead of two. No planned security measures had prevented the success of the attack. In fact, security was so poor at this moment that Stauffenberg, against all odds, managed to pass through the two inner security cordons after the explosion, although in such a situation regulations required that everything be sealed tight. He too had the advantage of his appearance: he looked most impressive and inspired awe and respect, and so he could bluff his way out.

Security was again increased considerably. Identity checks were intensified, fewer persons were allowed into the Führerhauptquartier, those who came had to leave all weapons outside; a physician who had to come and treat Hitler for ear and throat complaints was forced to empty his satchel and pockets and to leave behind a number of medicine bottles and other items, the bulb of his otoscope was screwed out and inspected; for a while SS guards complemented the Führer-Begleit-Bataillon in the inner compound. Some of these new measures were soon relaxed, however; after all, the fieldmarshals could hardly be subjected to a search of their persons, and members of the inner circle, such as Albert Speer were never searched and could well have brought along plastic explosives, a knife, or even a revolver; x-ray detection devices

were discussed but not installed. Visitors from the fronts, or from headquarters departments only had to allow guards to examine their briefcases, and some stopped carrying them to avoid this indignity. The security gaps continued, but searches revealed bizarre gaps in some cases. A captain in Ribbentrop's staff had taken literally regulations saying that top secret documents must be destroyed when in danger of falling into unauthorized hands, and so he always carried in his briefcase, along with his papers, a bottle of gasoline and a handgrenade. One can well imagine the alarm the discovery caused the guards who, after 20 July 1944, examined the captain's briefcase; he was informed that he must never again take this kind of precaution when coming to the Fuhrerhauptquartier.

In the end, in the Reich Chancellery bunker in Berlin, Hitler directed the final phase of the struggle from this centre of danger, refusing to remove himself to safety. In March 1945, he paid a last visit to the eastern -front, now on the Oder river, and on 20 April he received a dozen or so young soldiers who were expected to defend Berlin to the last man. While they were dying in the streets of Berlin, Hitler took his own life down in the bunker.

A great deal of personal security can be offered to a head of government or head of state, but much depends on his own cooperation. Hitler himself believed that he owed his survival through the years to accidents, luck and Providence more than to the efforts of those concerned with his security; yet he permitted and caused the constant increase of security precautions. Although he often said there was no real protection against a fanatic, and although he always understood how much he depended upon popular support, he outlined to Speer plans for a new Reich Chancellery to be built as a fortress, in case he was "forced to take unpopular measures" which might

possibly lead to riots": the new Chancellery was also to be flanked by SS barracks. Then, on reflection, he decided to have the Army Guard Battalion billeted even closer than the SS Guards. He appeared unsure whom to distrust more, the Army or the SS.

A liberal state in-which human life is highest on the scale of values cannot provide the same degree of security measures for its leaders and prominent persons as a dictatorship and police state. But there are startling limits to the security that a police state can offer. In fact, Hitler rightly felt endangered, or, conversely, protected only by Providence, which amounted to the same thing. Hitler's dilemma, his indecision whether to rely more on the SS or on the Army for his personal security and the constant but useless intensifications security point up the most profound gap and contradiction of all -- one of which Hitler was very conscious: he was a destroyer of men, and the number of his enemies and potential assassins could only grow and grow, the more he killed. The quest for greater security also reached limits beyond as which security diminished: as when security was required as protection against potential dangers originating from the security forces themselves; and, when the ruler became so isolated from his people that he lost -- in the case of demagogues and tribunes like Hitler -- the very basis of his power to rule.

THE WILGRESS DESPATCHES FROM MOSCOW, 1943-1946

After the defeat of Germany, then what? This was the question that was on the minds of western diplomats everywhere and the great unknown in the international equation was unquestionably the Soviet Union. Thus for Canada's Ambassador in Moscow, educating the Canadian policy-makers about the Soviet Union was crucial. Basing their decisions largely upon Wilgress' perceptions of the Soviet Union, Canadian diplomats were to make important judgements about international affairs during the critical period of adjustment before the Cold War became a fixed reality with the Czech coup of 1948.

In October 1941 the Soviet Ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, asked Canada House whether the Canadian Government would be willing to receive one or two Russian Consular officers who could deal with problems arising from increased shipments from or via Canada to the USSR. In considering the request, the Department of External Affairs also looked at the possibility of establishing direct diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the only major ally with which Canada did not have direct diplomatic ties.

Apart from the convenience of having a Canadian diplomat in Russia for the handling of shipping problems, External Affairs hoped that such a representative would give Canada better information on matters of concern to Allied Governments, a contact with a powerful entity at the forthcoming peace conferences, an entry into a

seemingly vast and virtually untapped market and a further visible measure of Canadian independence. On the other side of the ledger was the concern for antagonizing Quebec by establishing direct links with the spokesmen of atheistic communism and the possible dissemination of propaganda by Russian diplomats. The Cabinet War Committee was prepared to overlook the domestic risk and approved the exchange of consular officials in January 1942 with a diplomatic exchange to follow. In October the first Canadian Minister to the Soviet Union was appointed. In the person of Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, Dana Wilgress, the Prime Minister had an excellent candidate since he was one of the few Canadians who had lived in Russia and equally important, with the demise of the Department of Trade and Commerce during the war, Wilgress was expendable.

External Affairs was under no illusions about the limits imposed upon diplomatic information gathering in Kuibyshev, the temporary war-time capital. "We realize", wrote the Prime Minister, "that you will have great difficulty in securing authentic information on Soviet policy, particularly on the trend of their future policy. We therefore do not expect you in many cases to be able to provide more than a rough estimate of the possibilities". The letter went on to suggest that, shortly after his arrival in Russia, it would be useful to have Wilgresses first impressions of life in that country and of methods of doing business with the Soviet Government. Once he had familiarised himself with his new surroundings, Wilgress was then to comment on such general questions as the role of Communism in the USSR, the Russian political system and socio-economic conditions in the Soviet Union. Specific areas of

interest to the Canadian Government included Soviet intentions vis-à-vis post-war settlement and the establishment of an international peace organization. Other issues to which the Minister might direct his attention were Russian policy towards China, France and the Ukraine, the nature of the link between the Comintern and the Communist Party in Canada and Russian policy towards international relief, international civil aviation and arctic development. It was a tall order given the sources available to foreign diplomats. But the letter of instruction concluded pessimistically, "We do not expect too much from you".¹

As expected, much of Wilgress' reporting was based on secondary sources. Interviews with Soviet officials were seldom permitted; private contacts with Soviet citizens were discouraged; and excursions within the USSR were rare. When a tour was arranged, as when the Canadian Ambassador and his wife visited Leningrad, the trip was burdened by the formalities of diplomacy. Soviet press reports and the official war communiqués along with information obtained from other diplomats became, of necessity, Wilgress' main source of information on domestic issues. To the western observer the uninspired format of the papers, coupled with the inevitable ideological outpourings, made reading the Soviet press a tedious affair. The monotony was overcome by speculating on the outcome of the highly orchestrated campaigns for one cause or another and the criticism that Soviet authorities encouraged when the object was efficiency.

Given Canada's interest in developing post-war trade links with the Soviet Union and Wilgress' own special expertise in this area, it was not surprising that so many of his despatches dealt with

the Soviet economy. Wilgress came on the scene just as the Soviet Union was beginning work on its most pressing goal of recovery and reconstruction. Only when this goal was met could it pursue the subsequent goal of equality with the West. As despatch after despatch flowed back to Ottawa with details of the five-year plans and new industrial and agricultural growth east of the Urals, there trailed the record of unreached production targets and uneven growth resulting in the inefficiencies that the Soviet press highlighted. Because of his Canadian experiences, Wilgress was able to read between the lines and accurately surmise that the lag in the development of transportation facilities was a formidable obstacle to Russian development. An overworked railway system could not forever carry the burden of inadequate road networks and inefficient water transportation.

Because of Canadian assistance to the Soviet Union through UNRRA, Wilgress paid particular attention to this situation where there also seemed to be more unsanitized information available than in other areas and where he could at least verify supplies and prices in Moscow. At the beginning of 1945 he happily reported that largely due to Canadian and American deliveries, the food shortages had been alleviated though much of the civilian population subsisted on a diet well below minimum western standards of nutrition. Collective farming in itself did not seem to hold the key to increased production. Wilgress noted the divergence between the production of an impressive kolkhoz that one of his staff had visited and the numerous dismal reports he read. He was particularly struck by the opportunities for graft and the payment of poor workers at the same level as good ones.

Incentives for honest hard work were lacking he reported, with mediocrity too often the result. However, when advances were made, he was constantly on the alert for possible Canadian applications such as the use of forest belts to increase crop yield and soil conservation.

Rather sadly he reported that there was very little possibility for substantially increased trade between Canada and the USSR in any area, including cattle which had once seemed so promising. Tariff concessions, as one means of encouraging trade, were not allowed by the Soviet Government. Nor was a trade agreement whereby the Soviet Union would annually undertake to purchase a designated value of Canadian goods very likely. In 1944 fantastically optimistic predictions were being ventilated about the possibilities for the sale of Canadian products to the Soviet Union but by 1946 these bore no resemblance to the realities of the situation. They failed to recognize the fact that Canada could not supply the specialized type of machinery and other industrial equipment which the Soviet Union most of all wished to import. For a few more years imported wheat and flour would be in demand but Canadian storage bins were now empty and the demands would cease just when Canadian production would be able to handle them. On the other side of the ledger, about the only things Canada could import in any considerable volume from the Soviet Union was anthracite coal.²

One appealing information gathering mandate involved Soviet Arctic developments. "I propose", Wilgress told Ottawa, "to leave no stone unturned in the effort to secure information on this subject which may be of interest to our Northwest Territories Council".³ On

receiving a detailed series of questions from Ottawa regarding Arctic development, the Canadian Ambassador worked clumsily through both official and unofficial channels to obtain the desired information. Because of the large scope of the questions and the peculiar difficulties of obtaining accurate detailed information on any Soviet developments, he proceeded very cautiously. Proceeding cautiously involved forwarding the questions, a few at a time, to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The Commissariat, however, warned Wilgress that the collection of this information was bound to take some time since the organizations which dealt with these matters were said to be virtually inoperative as a result of wartime priorities. To which the Ambassador added a note about the unduly reticent nature of Soviet officials in giving out even the most innocent information to the potential enemy.⁴

In assessing the Soviet economy, Wilgress was overawed by the exhaustion of a war-weary people who desperately needed peace and prosperity:

Anyone who has observed attempts to raise the standard of living of backward peoples knows what a painful and slow process this can be, but the Soviet Government possesses the means of rapidly lifting up the whole economy of the country, given two essential conditions, viz. (1) the maintenance of a durable peace internationally and (2) the willingness of the Soviet peoples to continue to be driven to work at high pressure... There is grave danger of a let-down after the war if the Soviet Government is not capable of applying the proper psychological methods required by the circumstances. Any suggestion of further five-year plans brings a shudder to the average Soviet citizen.⁵

But the relentless pace of socialist competition offered little respite from what seemed to him to be at times "almost unbearable toil and sweat" for very distant rewards. The human cost of this economic

growth was a major factor in assessing Russian stability and aggressiveness. However, Wilgress was conscious of the fact that life in the Soviet Union could not be judged by foreign standards. On one occasion he observed: "Any house or apartment in the occupancy of Russian families or of a Soviet institution is soon rendered permanently uninhabitable for those accustomed to foreign standards. It is incredible the devastation that can be wrought to sanitary fixtures through brief utilisation by the average Russian family".⁶

Wilgress was also very conscious of the metamorphosis that was taking place in Soviet society and the Communist Party. To the emerging generations, experience with Tsarist society, the revolution against it and the Civil War to consolidate the change was academic history. They had known no alternative to Communism and five-year plans. "All those under forty", he wrote, "have been so indoctrinated with Marxism-Leninism that they sincerely believe this is the only equitable system of society".⁷

Wilgress, however, was careful to draw a distinction between those who believed in Communism and those who actively furthered the Communist cause as Party members. No longer was the Party filled with workers and peasants. The old Bolsheviks had been replaced by plant managers, engineers, technicians, scientists, professors and senior military officers. In fact, a 'privileged class' was gradually emerging within Soviet society. Influential positions were accompanied by rewards which took the form not of monetary benefits but of the right to better housing, to purchase rare consumer commodities, to attend cultural events at reduced prices, to own an automobile and to attend higher institutions of learning.

The influence of this new class was responsible for the revival within the Soviet Union of traditional values and customs with governmental approval and encouragement. Enthusiasm for many achievements of the Russian past and an increasing interest in European culture and its relation to Russian culture were systematically exploited by home propaganda. One indication of the respect for pre-revolutionary customs and traditions that he noted, was the extension of uniforms and ranking systems to certain branches of the public service as well as to the armed forces. Another example of the turning-away from Marxist-Leninist practices that he observed was the change of "Council of Peoples Commissar's of the USSR" to read "Council of Ministers of the USSR" and the replacement of the phrase "People's Commissar" by "Minister" in Government titles. Ironically the term "People's Commissar" had been chosen by Lenin because "it smells of revolution". Obviously the smell had become stale.

Wilgress was pleased to report in Christmas 1943 that this winter Santa Claus returned prominently to the Soviet Union and that the Christmas tree re-emerged as the ubiquitous symbol and centre of holiday festivities. The significance of such lay in the fact that both used to be sternly banned as opiate devices of bourgeois reaction. Furthermore as Wilgress observed in a popular Soviet phrase, "behind the back of Santa Claus hide the Priest and the Kulak".⁸

The Soviet regime had previously labelled organized religion as an enemy of the people. In Marxism-Leninism philosophy, the church tended to defer men's hopes to the next world thereby decreasing the

masses efforts to seek improvement in the real world. During the war, however, the Church had rallied to the national cause, and the State had in turn, softened its attitude. However, in considering the marked change in Church-State relations, the Canadian Ambassador was not unmindful that there were several political motives involved. Having now obtained virtually complete control over all aspects of Soviet life, the Communist Party no longer viewed the Church as a rival and the Church had unquestionably demonstrated its loyalty to the regime during the war. Furthermore, since many people in Russia were still influenced by the Church, Wilgress felt that by coming to terms with the Church the regime had been able to call upon a useful additional source of internal strength. The Russian Orthodox Church, moreover, still had power and prestige in other countries, which made it a potential channel of influence for Soviet foreign policy in those countries.⁹ Since there were several officers in External who saw religion as the ultimate means of reaching the Russian masses with its message of brotherhood, love, peace and cooperation, Wilgress was encouraged by Ottawa to pay close attention to evidences of this softening attitude.

A return to certain traditional values was also marked by the rising tide of nationalism, which in Wilgress view became "the most potent sentiment in the Soviet Union today" outranking interest in Marxist philosophy, the Communist ethic or material achievements. As a result of the wartime experience the populace had great pride in their system of government, society and economy that had evolved as the "best system" for meeting the country's problems:

There can be no gainsaying the enthusiasm of the people. Nor

can there be any doubt that the great majority of them sincerely believe all that is told them about this regime being one for and of the people. We have to recognize that the great mass of the Soviet peoples are behind Stalin just as most of the Germans were behind Hitler. To do otherwise is only to delude ourselves by succumbing to wishful thinking.¹⁰

Wilgress, like the Russians he met, was under no illusions about Stalin's all pervading power as the great national leader. "What he personally desires", he concluded, "is the most powerful single factor determining the course of Soviet policy".¹¹ Among the factors contributing to this, Wilgress acknowledged Stalin's remarkable talent for pairing off his associates to his advantage. On the speculative subject of Stalin's successor, Wilgress advised Ottawa that no matter what happens in an interregnum it would not be long before the unquestioned rule of one man would be restored because such a system most accords with Russia's traditional father-ruler image that required blind subservience and reverence. Historical tradition, which Wilgress was well versed in, would triumph over communist ideology in preserving the state power structure. As Wilgress observed: "Dictators like American tycoons do not abdicate nor do they wither away".¹²

Since the dictators were bound to be around for a long time it was important to learn and understand what their foreign policies were or would likely become.

In his reporting, Wilgress identified six major objectives in Soviet foreign policy: 1) a strong Soviet Union with 'strategic frontiers'; 2) a period of peace in which to reconstruct and rebuild after the ravages of war; 3) a free hand in Eastern Europe; 4) avoidance of an anti-Soviet alliance in Western Europe; 5)

establishment of an Anglo-Soviet Alliance; 6) and the permanent weakening of Germany as a military power.¹³

At the time of the 1945 Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in London, Wilgress described his function in Moscow:

It is my duty to endeavor to interpret Soviet actions and their point of view and that is what I shall try to do ... This is not an easy task. On the contrary it is a most difficult and thankless one, but it is a task that must be faced if anything constructive is to be gained from an analysis of Soviet policy. It is so much easier and so much more productive of cheap applause to condemn the Soviet Government out of hand and to attribute the worst motives to all their actions. But this sort of approach gets us nowhere.¹⁴

The Minister had limited resources for fulfilling his duty. Access to the suspicious foreign policy élite was rare and discussions with Alexander Lozovsky, Vice-Commisar for Foreign Affairs never got below superficialities except in areas such as supplies and a second front where the Russians wanted something. Wilgress had none of the high level contacts cultivated by his British or American counterparts; therefore, he relied heavily upon the diplomatic corps in Moscow - the Czechs for a Soviet point of view, the British for information and certain Americans for interpretation, while retaining a healthy scepticism of all three.

The subject that attracted most of Wilgress' attention was Poland. As early as July 1943 Wilgress was predicting that the chief danger of a clash between the Soviet Union and the United States would be over the composition of the Polish Government rather than the frontier as it was often assumed. Early in 1944 it became quite clear to Wilgress that continued Western support for the London Poles would be detrimental to great power accommodation. He favoured

Polish acceptance of Soviet demands:

This may seem to be equivalent to forming a government under foreign compulsion but times are unusual and since cooperation with the Soviet Union is the only policy which will assure their continuance as a government, it is not asking too much that a Polish government in London be formed capable of carrying out such a policy. Moreover this is essential in the interests of future world peace and of continued cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies after the war. The world has suffered already too much from the past actions of reactionary Polish governments and in a war of this magnitude we all have a right to demand that the government of any participant be representative of the ideals for which we are fighting.¹⁵

Although his view of this issue remained consistent, his attitude towards the Soviet Union hardened in August 1944 when the Soviet Union in callous indifference refused to assist the gallant Warsaw underground and what was even worse, to accommodate United States bombers who wanted to. When Mikolajczyk visited Moscow, Wilgress himself tried to persuade him to make a compromise with the Lublin Poles but to no avail. In chronicling the further break-up of the wartime Allies over the Polish question he continued to blame the spineless British and Americans for their surrender to the impractical demands of the London Poles, more than the Soviets for the problem:

It should have been clear from the Battle of Stalingrad on that the Soviet Government were determined on two objectives - a frontier on the Curzon Line and a Polish Government that would not pursue an anti-Soviet policy. Both of these objectives should have been recognized as reasonable from the point of view of a country that had prevented the Germans from permanently retaining control over Eastern Europe. Who now, would venture to affirm that without the Red Army we could have beaten the Germans?¹⁶

Wilgress regarded Poland as the test case on the future of Eastern Europe and felt that other states could only follow the Polish demise.

With the common enemy about to be liquidated the long-standing Russian suspicion of the West resurfaced only to be fanned by Truman's 'get tough' policy. On October 9, 1945 Wilgress warned: "The results of this narrow policy of toughness, untempered with consistent efforts to understand the other fellow's point of view, are now all too apparent. Europe is still more definitely divided into zones of influence and a deadlock has been reached from which it will be very difficult to find an escape". Whatever the West and its press thought, Wilgress felt that the American tough school was responsible for the breakdown of the London Council of Foreign Ministers called to discuss post-war settlement problems. The ostensible breakup of the Council over procedures was merely a ruse. "I believe", Wilgress reported:

the most important [causé) was the determined United States attack, supported actively by the United Kingdom and sympathetically acquiesced in by France and China, against the Soviet-sponsored regimes in Roumania and Bulgaria. The advisers in the State Department who are now dominant are mostly men with understandably strong views against the establishment of police regimes in European countries and they are convinced of the intention of the Soviet Government to spread Communism throughout Eastern Europe. They hold to the view that the only means of averting this trend is to talk and act tough with Soviet representatives.¹⁷

When the ultimate point at stake was Russia's conceptions of her national security interests, only intransigence could be expected from Moscow, a point that in 1945 he could never quite get across to his American colleague George Kennan and other Americans who had cashed in on Roosevelt's soft touch. "Those now occupying positions of influence in the Soviet Union", Wilgress wrote, "still are obsessed with the conviction that influential circles in the western democracies are hostile to them. They believe that these circles are

constantly plotting and intriguing to undermine the power of the Soviet Union of some of its gains in the war and to discredit them and their system of government".¹⁸ Thus British and American involvement in the affairs of Eastern Europe and the Balkans -- an area which the Kremlin saw as their domain -- was viewed with great apprehension in Moscow. Wilgress argued that the diplomatic counter-offensives waged by the USSR on post-war settlements in the Far East, Iran and Europe, were merely a response to the Western threat. Therefore further American and British initiatives in the Balkans and Eastern Europe would only provoke further Soviet counter-offensives. And the Russians, he pointed out, had almost infinite capacity for making trouble in the defence of their own 'interests'. Soviet leaders simply had no trust in the 'good' intentions of the West and Wilgress constantly tried to get Ottawa to see it from both sides. "The Western world", he pointed out on one occasion:

is living in dread that the Soviet Union is out to spread Communism throughout the world. Do they ever stop to think that the Soviet Union also is living in dread that the Western world is out to restore capitalism to the Soviet Union? If we could succeed in removing these two obsessions cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Western world would become operative without the friction now so obvious.¹⁹

Thus any talk of a Western bloc merely jeopardized the chances of cooperation with the Soviet Union though he was careful to draw a distinction between a bloc and Walter Lippman's "Atlantic alliance". He thought Western efforts would be better placed if directed toward reaching a working accommodation and constructive dialogue in the United Nations on a scheme of economic cooperation that would restore the shattered economies of Europe. This did not mean following the

appeasement route advocated by some westerners. Wooing the Soviet Union back into the comity of nations by promises of money and atomic secrets, he argued, would simply be taken by the Soviets as an invitation to press on into new lands. The "newcomer" on the international scene had to be accepted for what it was, while a firm but flexible Western stance would determine its acceptable limits of action in the international community.

Although Wilgress consistently described Soviet foreign policy as defensive in nature there was one exception, Iran. Here was a case of outright Soviet aggression to obtain an unencumbered foothold on the Persian Gulf and oil. Soviet troops did eventually pull back but not before Soviet sympathizers had been well entrenched. In May 1946, a saddened Wilgress wrote of the Iranian case as being the direction of Soviet post-war foreign policy. Furthermore it removed whatever faith the West could have in the Soviets good intentions.. That this should follow so closely on Churchill's famous Fulton Missouri speech which was reprinted in full in Soviet newspapers seemed to place both sides irrevocably at odds without the spirit' required for cooperative accommodation. Wilgress did not disagree with Churchill's message, only the time and place of its delivery.²⁰

Canadians were also making the Soviet press. In June 1946 Wilgress reported that George Drew had replaced Prime Minister Mackenzie King as the Canadian bête noire in the eyes of the Soviet press. Drew's statements regarding the Soviet Union were discounted as defensive tactics to cover up his political failures.²¹ Then there was the Gouzenko Affair that was carefully hidden from the

Soviet public but used to destroy Wilgress' usefulness in Moscow. On the surface the Soviet authorities made only one formal protest but the Soviet guards around the Embassy doubled and Wilgress wrote in June 1946:

We could sense a distinct cooling off in relations. During the war I had felt myself at the very top in Soviet esteem, ranking just after the British and American ambassadors. Now, I had fallen to the very bottom. No longer was I singled out at official receptions for special attention. The British and American ambassadors had also fallen, but not to the same extent. The most marked attention was now reserved for the representatives of the other Communist countries and there was a reserved attitude adopted towards representatives of the countries that had been allied with the Soviet Union during the war. All of this made attendance at social functions much less pleasant than formerly. I could feel that my days of usefulness as Ambassador to the Soviet Union were over and I was anxiously awaiting the next move from Ottawa.²²

Wilgress' reports from Moscow stood out in marked contrast with those emanating from the American embassy. America's Russian expert in Moscow, George Kennan, was never given much credence in Washington until the emergence of the tough line school under the Truman administration. At the request of the State Department there existed a special arrangement with the Canadian Embassy in Washington for the exchange of the Kennan-Wilgress despatches as a check on each other. While Wilgress could never command total acceptance in Ottawa, his dispatches were certainly given more credence than Kennan's. In Wilgress' view, Kennan was a victim of pre-war foreign conditioning on Soviet development. Although Kennan was better equipped to feel the pulse of the Soviet Union, both had a remarkably similar view of Soviet activities given their divergent means of reacting to them. Wilgress maintained that the Soviet leadership "was more concerned with protecting their positions from external menace than with

extending their power and privileges by aggressive actions against other countries",²³ whereas Kennan's loathing for communist ideology made him cast Soviet foreign policy in an aggressive offensive mold.²⁴ For Wilgress, however, international communism was just a current expression of traditional Russian nationalism. Otherwise, why would Soviet leaders have missed the opportunity of fomenting full-scale communist revolution in countries liberated by the Red Army? But united they stood on a firm but fair policy towards the Soviet Union, if not on the actual means of containment. At least in their despatches, Wilgress seems to have come to this conclusion before Kennan did. The former always had a sympathetic audience at home while the latter acquired one only late in his tenure of office in Moscow.

At the very end of his tenure as ambassador, Wilgress had much to say about the deterioration of Western-Soviet relations but always in a spirit of hope. Despite the discouraging signs of the time he remained convinced that the Soviet Union would not press on to war if met by firm resistance. Adventurist policies were not in keeping with Soviet concerns about economic and psychological reconstruction. The dynamic energy unleashed during the war would subside as the Soviet Union entered yet another period in its history. In the final analysis he had convinced External and presented to the Prime Minister a hopeful prospect:

In spite of all that has taken place, I am not discouraged with the outlook for the future. Material resources and skill are on our side and, once equilibrium between the two worlds has been obtained, a basis will be found for the co-existence of these two worlds and then we shall have to exercise that patience and forbearance which is necessary in order to bring the Soviet Union around to a policy making for stability. In

the meantime, I see no alternative other than to meet force with force and to resist with firmness and determination all Soviet efforts to provoke disunity and discord and to extend the sphere in which their interests predominate.²⁵

Throughout his tenure as Minister in Moscow, Wilgress had brought a fairness and appreciation to his reporting that can only be described as remarkable given the circumstances under which he worked. On one occasion he wrote to the Under-Secretary:

It may be of interest to you to have some insight into how the secret Police work in shadowing members of the Diplomatic Corps. We have known for some time that our servants are called regularly to an N.K.V.D. station and are questioned about our activities. For this purpose maids are chiefly questioned, cooks not having access to living quarters are left alone. The chief spy, however, in each mission usually is the translatress. We have just dispensed with the services of our translatress, a young lady whom we found impossible to train. By her constant snooping she made it pretty obvious that she was reporting to the police. In her place we have put in the former governess... She is acceptable to the authorities otherwise she never would have been able to enter our employ as a governess. Olga (Mrs. Wilgress) has gained her confidence and she tells all she knows. When she was governess she was called on by N.K.V.D. officers and asked various questions, mostly about our other Russian employees. It was obvious to us that they were using her to check on the reports they were receiving from the other servants. She commenced work in the office as translatress only last Saturday, but already she has been visited twice at her home by N.K.V.D. officers. The first visit concerned Mayrand. It is natural that they should be inquisitive about him as a new arrival and a French-Canadian. They told her they understood Mayrand had expressed the wish to meet Russian girls so he could practice the language and they intimated they would like her help in placing him in touch with a girl of their choosing. All I have been able to do in this case is to let Mayrand know that all Russian girls who are allowed to associate with foreigners are agents of the police. The second visit she received concerned Okulitch. They told her to report immediately whenever Okulitch ordered theatre tickets for himself and his wife. It is obvious they intend to plant agents on either side of the Okulitches to overhear their conversation when they are in the theatre. It is this sort of thing that makes life here both interesting and at times depressing.²⁶

Although constantly under the surveillance of the N.K.V.D. Wilgress managed not to let his personal frustrations colour his reporting and

recommendations. He tried so hard to make Ottawa understand the Soviet Union, to see their point of view and consider Soviet reactions to Western activities.

His opinions reached the top of External and the Prime Minister because of his status and the simple fact that Ottawa had no other means of assessing Soviet activities. Thus his views became the basis on which the Department was to justify North American defence planning at the close of the war and to study in 1947 the impending Cold War.²⁷ His unrivalled knowledge of the Soviet Union among the Canadian diplomatic corps explains why he was called from Moscow to attend the San Francisco Conference, the Paris Peace Conference and the First Session of the United Nations at which the Soviet Union was to play such a vital role. "I hope I shall be able to avoid succumbing to the great temptation of the attractive but dangerous speculation about the future of this country" he had written from Moscow in 1945, for "no country had more often belied prophecies or shattered the reputation of foreign authorities who have ventured to be dogmatic about what is so very much an enigma".²⁸ Without Wilgress in Moscow, that would have been how External Affairs saw it and its diplomatic posture towards the Soviet Union would have been quite different during those years when a new international order was being forged. The Wilgress despatches provided a foundation for Canada's policy of attempting to forge a reconciliation between American and Soviet proposals at the United Nations and in other international forums.

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THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE FREE FRENCH: PERCEPTIONS AND CONSTRAINTS, 1940-1944¹
(J.F. Hilliker, Historical Division, Department of External Affairs)

The fall of France in the summer of 1940 was an event of much significance for the Canadian Government, not only for military but also for political reasons. Mackenzie King, when the country went to war in 1939, had based his appeal for national unity on the traditions of "the two great races of which this country is so largely composed";² if there were no French presence on the Allied side - or worse, if France became an enemy - his approach obviously would be undermined and the danger of division would increase. It followed that Canada had a special interest in the restoration of France as a strong and independent nation on the side of the Allies and, because of the nature of its own population, it might claim a unique role in bringing about such an achievement. There was much to welcome, therefore, in the establishment of the Free French movement in London under General de Gaulle: unlike Marshal Petain's government of unoccupied France at Vichy, it was clearly committed to the Allied war effort and, as it grew stronger and forged links with the Resistance, it offered a potential basis for stable administration in liberated France. The movement, moreover, developed substantial support among English Canadians and attracted the sympathy of politicians and civil servants, not least among the latter being Georges Vanier, Minister in France at the time of the collapse and later Canada's representative in dealing with de Gaulle's headquarters. Vanier's reports doubtless helped sustain the support of Canadian ministers and officials, which in any case did not undergo the strain experienced in Britain as a result of frequent arguments with de Gaulle. But the Canadian government's relationship with the Free French was determined less by perceptions of the strength and value of the movement than by concern over its impact on domestic tensions and its relations with the major allies, particularly the United States. Both these considerations dictated a more cautious policy than might otherwise have been expected.

The Department of External Affairs did not regularly monitor opinion in Quebec, but did make occasional attempts to keep in touch with attitudes towards French questions there. What those attempts indicated

was that, although there may have been some moderation in early sympathy with Petain's regime, there was little sustained interest in de Gaulle until after D-Day.³ While an effort might have been made to promote support for the Free French, two serious risks were involved: anti-Vichy sentiment in English Canada might be directed against Quebec as well, and failure to convince French Canadians of the Free French case could amount to a victory for the friends of Vichy and so weaken rather than strengthen support for the war. In a number of ways, Britain and the United States compounded these difficulties. After diplomatic relations between Britain and Vichy came to an end in July 1940, the Canadian government had to meet persistent criticism of its continued reception of a French minister and consular officers; the British, however, anxious to maintain a link with Vichy, encouraged Canada to make no change until early in 1942. When British policy altered, the situation only became more awkward, for the United States continued to favour the status quo until relations finally were broken in November 1942. Anglo-American differences, which continued to bedevil policy towards France until the recognition of the provisional government in October 1944, brought conflicting pressures on Canada, and they also produced intermittent negotiations, which this country often knew little or nothing about, between the two major powers. As a result, Canada suffered a double risk: on the one hand, it might be embarrassed by decisions taken by Britain and the United States without its knowledge; on the other, unilateral Canadian action might disrupt delicate negotiations between those powers, or even be repudiated by them. Thus in developing policy towards the Free French, the Canadian government was seriously constrained by its appreciation of conditions both at home and abroad. If it pursued a policy that caused internal dissension, there was a risk that criticism from Britain, the United States or both would make the situation worse; at the same time, it could not rely on united domestic support for actions it might wish its allies to follow.

During the latter half of 1940, Canadian policy towards France was dominated by the shock administered during the summer. Vanier had been slow to realise the weakness of France,⁴ and in Ottawa the cabinet itself was taken by surprise. On June 14, the day the Germans entered Paris and the government moved to Bordeaux, Mackenzie King noted that "the news

seemed to stun the members [of cabinet] who never seem to believe that the things I am telling them can possibly be true".⁵ In Quebec, an observer recalled later, there was a sense of "being suddenly isolated on this continent", which created sympathy for the Vichy government, a mood which its reputation for conservative social and religious policies helped sustain.⁶ The bitter reaction against Pétain in the rest of the country was in marked contrast, and caused King deep anxiety about revival of "the old conflict in Canada between Orangemen and Catholics";⁷ in one dark and partisan moment, he suspected "Toronto Tories" of wanting "to destroy the French in Canada as they sought to do in the last war" and of being likely to welcome conflict between Britain and France as a means to that end.⁸ In response to these differences, the Prime Minister sought to provide a common ground of soothing generalisation. Canada, he reminded the House of Commons on June 14, had gone to war as much in support of France as of Britain; a few days later, after France had sought an armistice, he expressed sympathy for her plight, confidence in her future and admiration for her contributions to Canada; and on St. Jean Baptiste Day he addressed himself specifically to French Canada as the guardian of French tradition.⁹ These statements, of course, were consistent with King's position at the beginning of the war, but they also reflected an attitude common among the friends of France at the time. Vanier, himself a firm believer in the durability of French virtues, observed when he reached England after the closure of his legation that "intelligent Englishmen" made a distinction between Pétain's government, which they deplored, and the people, who received their sympathy.¹⁰ Evidence that the British government was influenced by this attitude might be found in its response to the French desire to seek an armistice: "Our agreement forbidding separate negotiations, whether for an armistice or a peace, was made with the French Republic and not with any particular French administration".¹¹

The idea that the French people and their republic would revive to fight another day was soon put to use by the Canadian authorities, in working out relations with the government at Vichy. Domestic circumstances were deemed to require some sort of continued relationship, although it was recognized that the return of Vanier to France would be unpopular in much of Canada.¹² The Vichy regime itself, which did not declare war,

wanted to maintain relations,¹³ and there was no government in exile which might claim recognition instead. The British were interested in retaining some contact with Vichy and, despite the rapid deterioration in their own relations with the regime there, agreed to keep an open mind on the Canadian position.¹⁴ The United States, concerned about the French fleet and the danger of a hostile presence in the colonies, sought to keep Vichy friendly.¹⁵ In these circumstances, Canada was able to work out a compromise: Vanier retained his title but was called home; Pierre Dupuy was left in London as Chargé d'Affaires of the legation in France; and the French legation and consulates in Canada remained open. This arrangement, the Prime Minister could point out, did not involve approval of Pétain's regime, but merely the maintenance of relations with the only government that France possessed; at the same time, it might enable Canada to play an important role in re-establishing contact between France and her former allies.¹⁶ That role, however, was approached gingerly, for the government was more concerned to avoid public discussion of its relations with France. Thus when, late in 1940, the British requested that Dupuy be authorised to visit France to make contact with the government at Vichy and report on conditions there, the response was lukewarm. Particularly alarming was a press leak about the visit, and the government instructed that Dupuy's report, when circulated to Commonwealth governments, not be attributed to a Canadian representative.¹⁷

When the British, on June 28, 1940, acknowledged de Gaulle as "leader of all free Frenchmen" who supported the Allied cause, they made it clear that he was not recognised as the organiser of an alternative government.¹⁸ Ever so, Canada did not follow suit; to have done so, of course, would have risked public discussion of the relative merits of Vichy and the Free French, and expressions of disapproval by the former. In the months that followed, de Gaulle's supporters in Canada did not give much reason for change of heart, although they began to form private organisations to raise funds, they proved to be divided amongst themselves and ineffectual in developing support in Quebec.¹⁹ King, who preferred to await developments until de Gaulle's status became clearer,²⁰ concurred in the view of Ernest Lapointe, his Minister of Justice and principal adviser on Quebec politics, that official association with the General's

supporters would be unwise: "...I certainly disagree [sic]," wrote Lapointe,

with the suggestion that there should be under governmental auspices some kind of a committee to further General de Gaulle's aims in Canada. this would be a great mistake and nothing would be more dangerous than to start a controversy in Quebec as between Petain and de Gaulle.²¹

The Cabinet War Committee as a whole was persuaded of this view, and decided on October 1 to avoid direct involvement with Gaullist organisations. 'The government, it concluded, "should neither assist nor interfere with" the collection of funds for de Gaulle; the "Canadian de Gaulle Committee" should not be treated differently from other organisations; and the government should not take the initiative in issuing special instructions to the Foreign Exchange Control Board to permit the General's supporters to purchase sterling, The War Committee did accede to requests from de Gaulle's headquarters to train Free French airmen, but only if they were sponsored by Britain and incorporated in the Royal Air Force.²² At the end of the year, a request that Canada receive a discreet visit from a Free French representative was turned down on the simple ground that it would not be advisable,²³ About the same time, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, O. D. Skelton, explained the government's position to a member of parliament:

You enquire whether there is any reason for our Government holding aloof from aid to the de Gaulle movement. I do not see any reason either for holding aloof from the de Gaulle movement or for official support of the movement. However we may admire General de Gaulle individually, the question of official relations between the Canadian Government and the Free French movement does not appear to arise under present circumstances.²⁴

Skelton's letter went on to comment disapprovingly on the unsuccessful Free French operation against Dakar, which he and the Prime Minister had resented because there had been no prior consultation with Canada,²⁵ and which King had feared might lead to a declaration of war by Vichy. Of even greater concern were British and Free French plans for the colony closest to Canada, St. Pierre and Miquelon. As early as July 5, 1940, King learned of American sensitivity about interference in the islands, and his government was quick to ensure that the United States was kept informed of plans affecting their future, and to give assurance that

there would be no tampering with French sovereignty.²⁶ When the British raised the possibility of a pro-de Gaulle movement in the islands, Skelton dismissed it as neither necessary nor advisable.²⁷ British concern about the activities of ships based in the colony likewise failed to produce action, for King, Lapointe and Skelton all feared that Canadian interference would be seen as a warlike act.²⁸

The careful policy followed after the fall of France became increasingly difficult during 1941, as evidence mounted of Vichy's commitment to the enemy cause. Not only did the government have to deal with the regime's unpopularity in English Canada, it also had to contemplate the possibility that South Africa (the only other Commonwealth country to receive a Vichy representative) and even the United States might make its position more embarrassing by breaking relations,²⁹ The consequences of a tolerant policy towards Vichy, moreover, were directly felt, as short-wave broadcasts from France and French consuls in Quebec came under suspicion as vehicles of "la propagande allemande conduite sous le couvert de Vichy".³⁰ In cabinet, King encountered impatience with his policy, particularly from his Minister of Finance, J.L. Ilsley.³¹ Lapointe's influence was removed by death in November, but before then he too began to show interest in a change, perhaps in response to indications that support for Vichy was moderating in Quebec.³² But it was in the Department of External Affairs that opposition to Vichy was strongest. Skelton died in January 1941 and his successor, Norman Robertson, was, as King found, less inclined to caution.³³ In matters relating to France, Robertson was under pressure from his department, where there was, Lester Pearson noted on his return from London, "scant respect" for Vichy and "complete sympathy and support" for the Free French.³⁴ While he did not always respond to that pressure, Robertson did recognise the value of the Free French to Canada if the conduct of Vichy should become completely intolerable. At the end of the year, he told the United States Minister, Pierrepont Moffat, "that if Vichy took another step toward closer collaboration with the Nazis then we should all have to think about recognizing General de Gaulle and the Free French Movement as an alternative to being forced into war with France"³⁵

Disenchantment with Vichy led to Vanier's resignation in May 1941 as

titular Minister to France, and to three separate proposals - in May, August and November - to terminate relations altogether. By accenting British advice not to make the break - first to enable Dupuy to continue visiting France and, in November, because of the Libyan campaign - the Canadian government accepted restriction on its freedom to adjust policy to changes in internal circumstances. King was able, however, to answer his critics by making; it public that he was acting in deference to Churchill's wishes rather than from respect for Vichy.³⁶ At the same time, the government gave various indications of a warmer attitude towards the Free French. In February 1941, the government agreed to receive a visit from two representatives of de Gaulle, Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu (Provincial of the Carmelite Order in a naval and a naval lieutenant-commander) and Lieutenant Alain Savary, on condition that they refrain from public speeches and propaganda.³⁷ Their visit was a success, for d'Argenlieu helped generate support for de Gaulle in Quebec and favourably impressed the Prime Minister.³⁸ Afterwards, Canada accepted a permanent representative of de Gaulle, Colonel Philippe-Henri Pierrené (non de guerre of Colonel J.E. Martin-Prevel). With the approval of Lapointe and the War Committee, Pierrené was permitted for a time to retain a federal government appointment (with the Department of Munitions and Supply) while he worked for the Free French., The government allowed the Free French to maintain an information office and the person in charge, Elisabeth de Miribel, received same assistance from the Office of Public Information in starting her work.³⁹ Canada also permitted the issuance of identity cards to supporters of de Gaulle and agreed to recognise passports issued or renewed by the Free French offices in. London and Brazzaville.⁴⁰ The Department of External Affairs, moreover, encouraged co-operation in enabling Frenchmen to masquerade as Canadians in order to escape fan their country and join de Gaulle' s forces.⁴¹ Later, Free French representation and activity in Canada expanded, with the appointment of a naval liaison officer in Halifax, whose responsibilities included recruitment.⁴²

So well received were the Free French in Ottawa in 1941 that, it has been remarked, an uninformed observer might :have thought they were true representatives of their country.⁴³ That impression, however, would have been incorrect, for three reasons: Robertson wanted to avoid precise

definition of the relationship with the Free French SO as to be able to adapt to changes in the "general French position";⁴⁴ the Prime Minister was still concerned about internal strains;⁴⁵ and there was general awareness that close relations with the Free French were likely to be a cause of "some anxiety" to the United States, despite its own intermittent annoyance with Vichy.⁴⁶ As a result, Canada was careful in its diplomatic relations with Vichy: Vanier's resignation was not formally acknowledge, and the government did not act on a British suggestion that it might show displeasure by withdrawing bag and cypher privileges from the French legation in Ottawa.⁴⁷ There was no public endorsement of de Gaulle, such as the British had given in 1940, nor any implication of official recognition in the correspondence about the Free French appointments in Ottawa and Halifax. Then the French Minister, René Ristelhueber, complained about Elisabeth de Miribel's apparent association with the Office of public Information, King made it clear that, while he did not want to give the impression of acceding to Vichy pressure, she should be removed quickly,⁴⁸ Pierre was warned, as Ristelhueber had been before him,⁴⁹ against "getting, -mixed up with domestic political activities", particularly in respect of the various Free French organisations.⁵⁰ Those organisations were a continuing cause of worry, not only because of their chronic rivalry but also because any form of official recognition, such as Dominion incorporation, "would be likely to precipitate further debate about the continued reception of the French Minister in Ottawa and force a premature definition of the status in Canada of General de Gaulle and the Free French Movement".⁵¹

By the time the United States entered the war at the end of 1941, Robertson, as he indicated to Moffat, was caning to the conclusion that the time was near for defining de Gaulle's status. Any chance of doing so, however, was obviated by the Free French seizure, on December 24, of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The island had caused a good deal of concern during 1941, particularly after the discovery there of a powerful short-wave transmitter which, it was feared, might be used to aid the enemy.⁵² Mackenzie King favoured measures, such as the establishment of a consulate, to secure better information an the islands, but determinedly opposed pressure for Canadian intervention.⁵³ He was particularly alarmed by a proposal by External Affairs, considered by the War Committee or.

December 1, that a group of Canadians be despatched to St. Pierre to take over the wireless station, supported if necessary by a landing party.⁵⁴ The Prime Minister succeeded in persuading his colleagues not to act without the approval of Britain and the United States, but the experience made him feel keenly the loss of Lapointe, and shook his confidence in Robertson:

In these situations I am terribly handicapped having no French colleague at my side. This is a matter that peculiarly affects the province of Quebec. I am even more disturbed at finding Robertson taking up these matters with other Ministers without discussing all their implications with me first. His judgment is not anything comparable to what Skelton's was in matters of the kind.⁵⁵

King's intervention in the 'Jar Committee effectively ended plans for Canadian action, for no agreed course was worked out with the United States and Britain before the Free French coup.⁵⁶ Once that had taken place, the Prime Minister had to admit that "Canadian feeling was relieved and pleased with the de Gaulle achievement"; consequently, he was adamant that the former pro-Vichy administration should not be restored.⁵⁷ He did not, however, repent of his earlier caution; rather, the sharpness of the United States' objection to the action, and the public suggestion of the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, that Canada should restore the status quo,⁵⁸ convinced him that he had been right. Nor was the War Committee entirely reassured by the fact that the response in Quebec was at least as enthusiastic as in English Canada: if - as could happen if the United States disregarded Canada's advice - the Free French were displaced, the result would be "to undo all that has been accomplished in solidifying opinion towards the war in French Canada" by creating a situation that could be exploited by anti war propagandists.⁵⁹ Thus the result of the episode was to reinforce nervousness about the dangers, both external and domestic, of an active policy on French matters; the Prime Minister, moreover, harboured a lingering distrust of advice from the Department of External Affairs, which lasted until at least April 1942.⁶⁰

In the months that followed the crisis over St. Pierre and Miquelon, the Canadian government's difficulties in formulating a policy towards France increased, as a result of conflicting pressures both at home and abroad. The appointment of Pierre Laval as Prime Minister of France in April was, as King recognised, very unpopular in English Canada because of his identification with

pro-German policies.⁶¹ In Quebec, on the other hand, interest in de Gaulle subsided after St. Pierre was no longer news and Vichy propaganda was cause for concern prior to the conscription plebiscite of April 27, 1942.⁶² Canada's allies only complicated the situation. The United States urged Canada not to break off with Vichy, even as it increased the government's difficulty by withdrawing its own ambassador.⁶³ King and Robertson tried to get out of the dilemma by persuading Ristelhueber to resign, in return for Canadian citizenship, but he refused.⁶⁴ The British then compounded the problem. On the one hand, stung by anti-British statements by Laval, they recommended that Canada now break off with Vichy; on the other, they indicated support for continued American relations, even to the extent of considering a simultaneous statement with the United States government.⁶⁵ As Robertson pointed out to the War Committee on May 8, Canada would be in a "strange position" if the proposed statements coincided with dismissal of Ristelhueber. The solution, announced on May 19 and 20, was to compromise by closing the consulates but leaving the legation open.⁶⁶ In announcing the decision, King made clear his disapproval of Pétain's government and his hope that it would soon disappear. But, under continued United States pressure and nervous about the mood of Quebec after the conscription plebiscite,⁶⁷ he did not reconsider the maintenance of diplomatic relations, even in response to reports of a Franco-German exchange of congratulations after the Dieppe raid.⁶⁸

The Canadian government did not get much help from the Free French in dealing with its difficulties in 1942. Factional rivalry among de Gaulle's supporters, particularly in Montreal, continued to be a problem and, except for Elisabeth de Miribel's office, the Free French representatives in Canada proved to be ineffective in getting across their point of View.⁶⁹ Robertson, who thought an effective Free French voice would be useful to the war effort in Quebec, wanted Pierrené (now designated Delegate of the French National Committee⁷⁰) to be replaced by a soldier who could "symbolize continued French resistance". Instead, the Free French named Léon Marchal, a civilian who had unfortunately recent connections with Vichy's embassy in Washington. Marchal withdrew when unfounded rumours that he had close associations with Germany led to strong public opposition, but the episode obviously did nothing for the credibility of

the Free French.⁷¹ In these circumstances, it was perhaps not surprising that Canada did not follow suit - and thereby risk provoking domestic discussion of relations with France - when the United States, in July, established an office in London to deal with the French National Committee on matters related to the war.

Canada's difficulties over Vichy were at last resolved in November 1942, when the United States' relations were terminated at the time of the Allied landing in North Africa. Shortly before, Robertson, sensitive as always to the danger for Canada of a declaration of war by France, had recommended that a break with Vichy be followed immediately by recognition of de Gaulle and the French National Committee as "the true leaders of the French nation". It was, he told the Prime Minister, especially important for Canada that there should be "no interregnum in which France would be unrepresented in our [Allied] councils", and he pointed to a recent poll showing 45 per cent of Quebecers questioned to consider de Gaulle the greatest living Frenchmen, against 47 per cent for Pétain.⁷² But when Canada broke off with Vichy on November 9 - in terms intended to suggest that, if the regime there declared war it would do so as a German puppet and not as a legal government - it did not extend recognition to a successor. Once again the government was guided by a combination of domestic and external considerations. Louis St. Laurent, Lapointe's successor as Minister of Justice and King's chief adviser on Quebec, considered the formula of November 9 to be acceptable and did not recommend recognition of de Gaulle;⁷³ the General was not a participant in the invasion; its first consequence was to bring Admiral Jean Darlan to power in North Africa; and Vichy, although it came under closer German control, did not declare war. Canada did have a representative to deal with the French National Committee in London - Vanier, recently appointed minister to the Allied governments established there - but only after a delay of some days and on terms, similar to those of the Americans appointed earlier, which did not imply diplomatic recognition.⁷⁴

The withdrawal of recognition from Vichy removed the worst embarrassment in Canadian policy towards France. The situation remained difficult, however, because of the unsettled situation in North Africa, arising first from Darlan's activities and, after his assassination on

December 24, from the rivalry between de Gaulle and General Henri Giraud, who had the backing of the United States.⁷⁵ The result was what Robertson had feared before the break with Vichy, an interregnum during which there was no single French authority which might be used to encourage support for the war in Quebec. Rather, susceptibility to "the Fascist school of thought", at least among "the so-called intellectuals or university people" in Montreal continued to cause concern,⁷⁶ as did new divisions between the supporters of de Gaulle and Giraud.⁷⁷ At the same time, awareness of the United States' sensitivity to interference in French affairs prevented the government from taking action which might have helped the domestic situation. First, plans for a statement clarifying the Canadian attitude towards Darlan - implying "that we would not recognize Darlan as even the head of a provisional French Government" - were abandoned;⁷⁸ later, the government drew back from supporting British proposals for the establishment of a single authority in North Africa.⁷⁹ Such caution affected relations with de Gaulle, who was told that, if he visited North America, he would be welcome in Canada, but was not - in deference to the position of the United States - invited in the name of the government.⁸⁰ So long as he remained at odds with Giraud, de Gaulle was a possible source of difficulty in domestic politics as well as in relations with the United States; it was suggested, therefore, that if he came to Canada he should confine his public appearances to Ottawa.⁸¹

De Gaulle's postponement of his visit to North America removed the possibility of embarrassment, and his "token reconciliation" with Giraud at Casablanca in January 1943 seems to have had a welcome effect on opinion in Canada, for by "March there was less concern about differences in Quebec."⁸² The government, however, was not confident of the permanence of the improvement, and so the long period of negotiation between de Gaulle and Giraud was a time of considerable anxiety.⁸³ Even before the two generals, on June 3, finally announced formation of the French Committee of National Liberation, Robertson recommended that, when agreement came, "it should be very -warmly welcomed in Canada, perhaps above all other places".⁸⁴ On June 9, Vanier added reinforcement:

... It would appear proper, as largest French speaking community outside of France is to be found in our country, that Canada should be among the first, if not the first, to appoint representative /to

the French Committee of National Liberation in Algiers. Remembering the confused thought in Quebec following collapse of France, such decision without delay would appear particularly desirable as French Committee of National Liberation represents all Frenchmen outside of France and I believe overwhelmingly those in France as well. I feel that any delay in making appointment would be very disappointing to all Canadians.⁸⁵

The next day he reported plans of the Allied governments in London to extend recognition and appoint representatives, and the Committee's hope that "Canada's recognition might be received to be included in the first release to press";⁸⁶

on June 11, the Free French delegate in Ottawa, Gabriel Bonneau, formally requested recognition of the Committee as "l'organisme qualifié pour assurer la conduite de l'effort français dans la guerre et la coopération de la France avec ses alliés ainsi que la gestion et la défense de tous les intérêts français".⁸⁷ A week later, on the third anniversary of de Gaulle's first radio broadcast from London, the Prime Minister praised the agreement in the House of Commons, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation broadcast speeches by Bonneau and Ristelhueber, thus furthering the impression of French unity.⁸⁸ But continuing confusion in .Algiers, where de Gaulle was maneuvering for supremacy in the Committee of National Liberation, led the government to withhold recognition pending "clarification of the situation" and co-ordination with Britain and the United States.⁸⁹ That meant waiting on the latter, for Britain indicated willingness to recognise but the United States, suspicious of de Gaulle's intentions,⁹⁰ did not.

During the rest of June and throughout July, the Canadian government received worrisome reports about the consequences of continued failure to recognise the Committee. Both Vanier and the British thought non-recognition might well cause the Committee to break up and leave de Gaulle in power; Vanier, moreover, predicted growing resentment in North Africa, which could encourage susceptibility to overtures from the Soviet Union.⁹¹ If these predictions came true, the situation would be even more awkward for Canada, for difficulties with the United States would increase and opinion would be disturbed in Quebec.⁹² "This was", Robertson told the War Committee on July 21, "a question in which Canada had an important interest and responsibility"; his recommendation, which the ministers

accepted, was that Canada press for common action with Britain and *the* United States "to assist in strengthening the French Committee by at least qualified recognition".⁹³ The legation in Washington was instructed to leave an aide mémoire with the State Department supporting British plans for such recognition. Among the oral arguments in support of the aide mémoire was to be a discreet reminder of Canada's peculiar difficulty: "While we have not wished to emphasize in the aide memoire...the particular domestic interest of Canada in French questions, you will not be unmindful of the paramount importance to Canada of the consolidation and unity of the French forces resisting the enemy and of the maintenance of cordial and confident relations between the French people and their Allies".⁹⁴

At first, the United States response to the Canadian approach was encouraging,⁹⁵ but then the British, following further bilateral discussion, proposed a new draft formula for joint Anglo-American recognition, with no provision for the adherence of other countries. Canada, threatened with exclusion, then proposed to go ahead on its own.⁹⁶ But that course too was blocked when the British, citing anxiety to concert action not only with the United States but with the Soviet Union and other countries as well, asked urgently that nothing be done until King and Churchill could meet during the first Quebec Conference.⁹⁷ Put in the position of appearing "churlish" if not downright irresponsible if he acted otherwise,⁹⁸ King agreed.

At Quebec, Canadian cabinet ministers resisted a suggestion by Churchill that de Gaulle might be invited, for fear he would have a "disturbing effect on the local population."⁹⁹ At the same time, there was continued Canadian pressure for resolution of the question of recognition, for reasons which Robertson emphasised to Cordell Hull:

The American landings in North Africa and the collapse of the Vichy regime and its representation abroad had undoubtedly cleared the air in French Canada. People here were not much interested in the personalities or the doctrinal differences which divided the French movement of resistance. They did, however, regard the new Committee in North Africa as in some way a trustee for French interests which they were anxious should not be neglectedThey hoped that we would work with it and give it enough recognition to enable it to mobilize French interests and resources overseas so that Frenchmen could feel they were making some direct contribution to the liberation of France.

But Canada, Robertson made clear, did not want to "tag along behind a joint U.S.-U.K. declaration"; rather, it preferred to issue one of its own, in co-operation with the other two countries.¹⁰⁰ Anglo-American differences made negotiations at Quebec trying, but, since they prevented development of a single text, they did at least ensure that Canada, when agreement to announce recognition (August 26) finally was reached, was able to do so in its own terms.¹⁰¹ On the assumption that the Committee would operate on the basis of collective responsibility and that France would freely choose its post-war government, the government of Canada, Bonneau was told,

recognizes the French Committee of National Liberation as administering the French overseas territories which acknowledge its authority, and as the body qualified to ensure the conduct of the French effort in the war within the framework of inter-Allied cooperation. It notes with sympathy the desire of the Committee to be recognized as the body qualified to ensure the administration and defence of all French interests. It is the intention of the Canadian Government to give effect to this request as far as possible while reserving the right to consider in consultation with the Committee the practical application of this principle in particular cases as they arise.¹⁰²

At the end of the year, Vanier was transferred to Algiers as Representative of Canada to the French Committee of National Liberation. Soon afterwards, in conformity with United States and British practice, he was given the personal rank of ambassador.¹⁰³

One of the most urgent questions for Vanier and the other Allied representatives in Algiers was the role of the French Committee of National Liberation in the future administration of France. To Vanier, the answer was obvious:

At the present time /he told Edwin Wilson, the United States representative, there was only one body with any authority with the French people - the real people, those resisting in France - namely: the Committee of National Liberation and more particularly its President, General de Gaulle Our one hope of avoiding the gravest disorder in France, was to give the French Committee as much authority as possible....¹⁰⁴

In Canada, where the government's attitude towards the Committee had been well received in both the French- and the English-language press,¹⁰⁵ there was good reason to support Vanier's view. The United States government, on the other hand, was reluctant to consider a significant role for the French Committee because of Roosevelt's dislike of de Gaulle, and made matters more difficult by

overlooking Canada in discussions with Britain and Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ Of particular concern to Canada was a proposed directive from the President to the Supreme Allied Commander (General Eisenhower) which, although permitting him to consult with the Committee on the administration of liberated areas, made clear that he need not deal exclusively with it and was not to recognise it as even a provisional government.¹⁰⁷ Robertson did not go so far as one member of his department, who thought that Canada should announce its intention to recognise the French Committee of National Liberation as a provisional government,¹⁰⁸ but he did think the time had come to intervene, starting with the British. The proposed directive, he pointed out, ignored plans being developed in Algiers "for establishing in a thoroughly democratic way a republican government in Liberated France" while offering no alternative; Eisenhower, therefore, would have to rely on the Committee and the resistance movements, but "in a left-handed way". Canada was affected for two reasons: there was a danger that the French government which ultimately emerged would be hostile not only to the United States but to all Commonwealth countries, and the policy enunciated was contrary to the commitments which Canada had made when it recognised the Committee in August 1943. The "realistic attitude", Robertson concluded, was "to maintain Eisenhower's ultimate responsibility intact during the period of active operations, but to recognise in advance (and preferably at once) that as military control is relaxed, the French Committee is responsible for establishing civilian administration, and for arranging elections and taking the other steps essential to the convocation of a representative constituent assembly".¹⁰⁹ With the approval of the Prime Minister, these views were made known to the British,¹¹⁰ who received them well. On April 9, however, Cordell Hull made a speech indicating willingness to see the French Committee take responsibility for civil administration, which the British supported.. Although the British were agreeable to a Canadian approach to the President, none was made, Canada, Robertson told an officer of the British High Commission, was "quite happy about Mr. Hull's speech & disposed to accept it as the authoritative exposition of U.S. policy".¹¹¹

Robertson did not record his reasons for deciding against an approach to the United States, but he may have believed that goodwill towards the French

Committee was¹¹² insufficiently well established in Washington to tolerate pressure from outside. Certainly there was concern in Ottawa about the effect in the United States of the Committee's decision, on May 16, to accept the recommendation of the Consultative Assembly that it take the name "Provisional Government of the French Republic".¹¹³ "I am nervous lest there should be a rather violent reaction in the White House", wrote Hume Wrong the next day,¹¹⁴ He therefore warned Bonneau that the Committee would be "very ill-advised" to seek recognition as a provisional government, and had Vanier instructed to make no change in official correspondence.¹¹⁵ Nor would Canada respond to the Committee's request for help in negotiations with the British and the Americans at the time of the Normandy landings: "While we would be very glad to see agreement reached between United States and United Kingdom Governments and French Committee ...we are not in a position to interveneQuestions of administration inside France are being dealt with personally between President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill and any action we might take would be unlikely to influence result".¹¹⁶ For similar reasons, Vanier's suggestion that he inform the Committee of the Canadian position as expressed to the British in April, and that it be made public in Ottawa, was turned down; the result would be to "provide a new source of controversy rather than assist toward a solution".¹¹⁷

Despite the restraint imposed by deference to Britain and the United States, Robertson still hoped "that we may be able to help bring about friendlier relations than now exist between France and our other Allies"; consequently, he welcomed news that de Gaulle would visit the United States and recommended that he be invited to Canada as well.¹¹⁸ But once again Roosevelt's attitude caused difficulties, for de Gaulle was reluctant to make the trip without some assurance of an understanding with the United States, which the President still declined to give. In Algiers, Vanier urged de Gaulle to go anyway in the hope of forcing the issue, but he got no support in the form of an early invitation to Canada. The concern in Ottawa was that a "prompt and cordial invitation", which would underscore the unforthcoming attitude of the United States, would be seen in Washington as a deliberate attempt to cause embarrassment, and might therefore hinder rather than help a solution.¹¹⁹ As a result, Vanier was not authorised to extend an invitation until July 2, when it was certain

that the General would in fact be going to the United States.¹²⁰ Perhaps in deference to de Gaulle's sensibilities, the Department of External Affairs did however make a small step closer to recognition of the Provisional Government before his arrival, by removing the word "Committee" from official communication: Bonneau became the "French Delegate, Ottawa," and Vanier "Canadian Representative, Algiers".¹²¹

Before embarking on his visit to North America, de Gaulle indicated willingness to wait upon events in the matter of recognition, confident that his popularity in France would make it clear to the United States and other powers that there was no alternative to the Provisional Government.¹²² His cordial reception in the United States - culminating in Roosevelt's agreement (announced after de Gaulle's departure) to accent the provisional government as the sole authority administering liberated France - seemed to bear out this judgment, and he did not make difficulties about recognition when he was in Canada. But for Canada there were important benefits to be gained from full recognition of the provisional government. Even before the visit, an analysis of the press in Quebec had revealed widespread support for de Gaulle, as a result of his presence in Normandy after the Allied landings, but "some difficulty" in understanding the United States' attitude.¹²³ The enthusiastic reception which de Gaulle received in Montreal can only have reinforced this impression and doubtless implied that early recognition would encourage support for the war effort.¹²⁴ The time, moreover, seemed right, in view of the more cooperative attitudes displayed by both Roosevelt and de Gaulle. At the suggestion of Robertson, he raised the matter in his telegram reporting to Churchill on de Gaulle's visit:

Our acceptance of the Committee's new title might ... have a helpful psychological effect. ... The question would now seem to be no more than that of the name by which we call the French authority. Their retention of the qualifying adjective "Provisional" should give all the safeguards we need or are likely to get, and the Allies, including the United States, are in fact treating the Committee as a provisional government. Furthermore, we are unlikely to be able to continue to call the French authority by a name which it has formally abolished....¹²⁵

But once again a Canadian initiative proved abortive, this time because of the choice of words: Churchill apparently took "our" to refer to Canada alone, whereas the intention was to suggest joint action with other

countries concerned. Alarmed that independent Canadian action might cause difficulties with the United States, Churchill warned that it was still dangerous to "go beyond the President's words".¹²⁶ King, who had thought Robertson's idea to be "unnecessary butting into a dangerous and delicate situation" was pleased to agree to concerted action, and nothing further was done.¹²⁷

As at the time of the St. Pierre and Miquelon crisis, Vanier's response to the unhappy exchange with Churchill was to question the wisdom of Robertson and his associates in French matters. The episode, he thought, might be a "helpful lesson": 'lie had been so persistent about it [the telegram] being sent that I did not like to rule it out and I had the distinct feeling that it might serve to let him see in the end what my judgment was in these matters compared with that of some of the advisers in the department - the so-called official view".¹²⁸ Perhaps for that reason there were no more Canadian initiatives, despite persistent pressure from Vanier: Canada, he told, intended to keep in step with Britain and the United States and in fact was doing so, by virtue of the terms of its recognition of the Committee in August 1943.¹²⁹ But if Vanier's masters in Ottawa had given up hope of forcing the pace of recognition they had not forgotten the importance of the fact itself to Canada. Recalling previous Canadian embarrassment by lack of consultation, Robertson, early in October warned the Prime Minister that "a very difficult position" would result if the same thing happened when Britain and the United States finally recognised the Provisional Government, now located in Paris.¹³⁰ In this matter Canada was successful, obtaining assurance that it would be notified when those countries decided to grant recognition.¹³¹ When that happened, Canada's special interest in France was fully recognised. Vanier was the only representative of a smaller power to be associated with the Big Three - Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States - when, on October 23, they extended recognition to the Provisional Government. On the same day, he received agrément as his country's first ambassador to France.¹³²

Recognition of the provisional government ended four years of anxiety and frustration in Canadian relations with France. For most of that time, the Free French had been a source of potential division rather than of

united commitment to the war effort and Canada, despite the composition of its population, had been unable to play a leading role in the restoration of France to its former international position. In part, the difficulty arose from incomplete information, particularly about negotiations between Britain and the United States. But more serious was Canada's weakness, not only as a small power but also as one deeply concerned about internal dissension over relations with France; the latter danger was a source of forceful argument against taking strong public positions when they might seem likely to force issues with the major Allies. Given the constraints on the formation of policy towards the Free French, the results perhaps were not too disappointing from the government's point of view. Relations with France did not in fact become an issue dividing the population.; the provisional government finally was recognised; Canada's special interest in the future of France was acknowledged; and Canada got at least one benefit from being a small power, for it did not share in the blame for the delay, which de Gaulle attributed to Britain and the United States.¹³³ A more forward position in support of de Gaulle and his supporters might have gained Canada substantial future benefits in relations with France. Those benefits and much more, however, would have been lost if such a position had brought about the internal divisions which the government was so anxious to avoid.

* * *

Notes

¹ The views expressed in this paper are mine and not necessarily those of the Department of External Affairs. I am grateful to F.J. McEvoy for assistance with research.

² House of Commons Debates, September 8, 1939, n. 19. See also Robert MacGregor Dawson, Canada in World Affairs: Two Years of War, 1939-1941 (Toronto, 1943), pp. 11-12.

³ This was particularly true of the mass of the population, who seem to have had little interest in French affairs, leaving debate about the relative merits of Pétain and de Gaulle to factions of the elite. Charlotte Girard, "The Diplomatic Relations between France and Canada from 1939 to 1945" (B.A. graduating essay, University of British Columbia, 1958), pp. 201-204; Mason Wade, The French Canadians, 1760-1967 (rev. edn., Toronto, 1968) Volume II, p. 936; memorandum, "Quebec and the Present War: A Study of Public Opinion", July 1942, file 54-B (s); Wartime Information Board to Acting Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs (Hume Wrong), September 23, 1942, file 1989-40. All External Affairs files were consulted in the Department; other documentary collections referred to are in the Public Archives of Canada.

⁴ Robert Speaight, Vanier, Soldier, Diplomat and Governor General: A Biography (Toronto, 1970), pp. 195-196; Minister in France to Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA), May 20, 1940, telegram 86, Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 7: 1939-1941, Part I, ed. David R. Murray (Ottawa, 1974), p.278

⁵ King Diary, June 14, 1940.

⁶ Claude Melançon (Deputy Director of Public Information) to T.C. Davis (Deputy Minister of National War Services), March 15, 1942, King papers, series J4, vol. 358. Melançon, concerned to counteract Vichy propaganda, was not a particularly sympathetic observer. Cf. Elizabeth H. Armstrong, French Canadian Opinion on the War, January, 1940-June, 1941 (Toronto, 1942), pp. 8-10; Wade, French Canadians, Vol. II, p. 932.

⁷ King Diary, August 21, 1940.

⁸ Ibid., November 4, 1940.

⁹ House of Commons Debates, June 14, 1940, pp. 778-779, and June 18, 1940, p. 853; Dawson, Canada in World Affairs, pp. 40-42.

¹⁰ Speaight, Vanier, pp. 217-218; Minister in France to SSEA, July 9, 1940, telegram 409, Documents on Canadian External Relations, Volume 8: X939-1941, Part II, ed. David R. Murray (Ottawa, 1976), pp. 543-544.

¹¹ Dominions Secretary to High Commissioner of Great Britain in Canada, June 16, 1940, telegram, Documents, Vol. 7, p. 312.

¹² SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain, August 22, 1940, telegram 1314, Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 558-559; SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain, August 29, 1940, telegram 1357, *ibid.*, n. 560. Vanier himself doubted the wisdom of his returning to France. Speaight, Vanier, pp. 219-222.

¹³ See e.g., Minister in France to SSEA, July 17, 1940, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 554.

¹⁴ High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, June 24, 1940, telegram 952, *ibid.*, p. 534; High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, August 28, 1940, telegram 1455, *ibid.*, pp. 559-560.

¹⁵ Charlotte Girard, "The Effects of Western Hemispheric Issues upon Franco-American Relations During the Second World War" (Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1967), pp. 13-45.

¹⁶ Prime Minister to Leader of the Opposition (R.B. Hanson), September 17, 1940, file 3618-40; House of Commons Debates, November 12, 1940, p. 60; Dawson, Canada in World Affairs, p. 263.

¹⁷ Prime Minister to High Commissioner of Great Britain, December 28, 1940, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 643; Vincent Massey, What's Past Is Prologue: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey (Toronto, 1963), nn. 334-335. See also Pierre Dupuy, "mission à Vichy: novembre 1940", International Journal, Vol. XXII (Summer 1967), pp. 395-401.

¹⁸ Dominions Secretary to SSEA, June 28, 1940, telegram circ. C.53, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 592; Dominions Secretary to SSEA, July 4, 1940, telegram circ. D.306, *ibid.*, pp. 592-593.

¹⁹ Wade, French Canadians, Vol. II, pp. 936-937; USSEA to Under-Secretary of State, September 29, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 619; memorandum, "The Free French Movement in Canada" [December 12, 194f], file 712-C-40. See also Speaight, Vanier, pp. 226-227.

²⁰ King Diary, June 24 and November 1, 1940.

²¹ Lapointe to J.L. Ralston (Minister of National Defence), September 30, 1940, King Papers, series J1, vol. 290. King agreed with "every word". King to Lapointe, October 2, 1940, *ibid.*

²² Cabinet War Committee minutes, October 1, 1940, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 431. Canada did not agree to accept Free French airmen without the British umbrella until July 1943.

²³ USSEA to High Commission of Great Britain, December 6, 1940, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 605. Earlier, however, a member of de Gaulle's staff, Elisabeth de Miribel, had come to Canada to explain the aims and purposes of his movement. Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", p. 149.

²⁴ USSEA to A.W. Neill, December 12, 1940, file 712-C-40.

²⁵ SSEA to Dominions Secretary, September 17, 1940, telegram 167,

Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 623-624; USSEA to Prime Minister, September 26, 1940, ibid., p. 628; King Diary, September 16 and 25, 1940.

²⁶ Girard, "Effects of Western Hemispheric Issues", p. 116, n. 25; SSEA to Governor of Newfoundland, July 12, 1940, telegram 27, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 730; SSEA to Minister in United States, July 19, 1940, telegram 144, ibid., p. 735.

²⁷ High Commissioner of Great Britain to USSEA, September 12, 1940, and enclosure, ibid., pp. 770-771; USSEA to High Commissioner of Great Britain, October 11, 1940, ibid., pp. 777-778.

²⁸ USSEA to Prime Minister, October 18 and 21, 1940, ibid., pp. 784-785, 789-790; Prime Minister to High Commissioner of Great Britain, October 24, 1940, ibid., pp. 793-795; J.W. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, Volume I: 1939-1944 (Toronto, 1960), p. 147.

²⁹ Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 585-590.

³⁰ Melancon to Lapointe, November 10, 1941, Lapointe Papers, vol. 24; also memorandum, "French Propaganda in Canada: Visit of Mr. Claude Melançon", November 17, 1941, file 3618-40. French propaganda was "very ably contradicted" by the C.A.C. Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", p. 198

³¹ King Diary, March 19, 1941.

³² In June and July, a poll of Quebec Power Company employees, showing 98.3% in favour of de Gaulle, came to the notice of Ralston, Lapointe and the Department of External Affairs. Ralston to Lapointe, June 4, 1941, Lapointe Papers, vol. 24; clipping from Montreal Gazette, July 4, 1941, file 1989-40. See also USSEA to Prime Minister, December 3, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 590-591; memorandum, "The Free French Movement in Canada", December 12, 1941, file 712-C-40; C. Cecil Lingard and Reginald G. Trotter, Canada in World Affairs, September 1941 to May 1944 (Toronto, 1950), pp. 19-20.

³³ King Diary, December 1, 1941.

³⁴ Lester B. Pearson, Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson, Volume I: 1897-1948 (Toronto, 1972), p. 200.

³⁵ USSEA to Prime Minister, December 15, 1941, file 702-40.

³⁶ Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 568-591; King Diary, August 23, 1941; Montreal Gazette, September 8, 1941. After the United States entered the war, Churchill, supported by Roosevelt, again urged the continuation of Canada's relations with Vichy. Pickersgill, Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, p. 322.

³⁷ High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, February 18, 1941, telegram 295, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 605; SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain February 18, 1941, telegram 239, ibid., p. 606. The idea of avoiding publicity originated with the Free French.

³⁸ Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", pp. 151, 197; King Diary, March 20, 1941.

³⁹ USSEA to Prime Minister, September 25, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 617-618. Pierrené was one of a group of French scientists, engineers and technicians attached to Munitions and Supply; they had come to Canada from England after fleeing from France. Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", pp. 149-150.

⁴⁰ Acting USSEA (Robertson) to d'Argenlieu, June 2, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 613; SSEA to Dominions Secretary, July 18, 1941, telegram 126, ibid., p. 615. Recognition later was extended to all Free French passports wherever issued.

⁴¹ Acting USSEA to Director of Immigration, May 28, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 612.

⁴² High Commission of Great Britain to USSEA, October 1, 1941, ibid., pp. 620-621; USSEA to High Commission of Great Britain, October 18, 1941, ibid., p. 622. Lapointe considered this appointment "essentials" Senator Cairine Wilson to Lapointe, September 8, 1941, Lapointe Papers, vol. 24.

⁴³ Lingard and Trotter, Canada in World Affairs, p. 123; G.P. de T. Glazebrook, A History of Canadian External Relations (Toronto, 1950), p. 425.

⁴⁴ Memorandum of May 19, 1941, quoted in memorandum, "The Free French Movement in Canada" [December 12, 1941, file 712-C-40.

⁴⁵ King Diary, May 22, 1941.

⁴⁶ Pearson, Mike, Vol. I, p. 200.

⁴⁷ Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 571-580. The privileges were withdrawn from the consulates. On Vanier's resignation, cf. Speaight, Vanier, pp. 227-229.

⁴⁸ Note (September 27, 1941) on USSEA to Prime Minister, September 25, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 617, n.

⁴⁹ King Diary, August 21, 1940.

⁵⁰ USSEA, memorandum, October 16, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 621.

⁵¹ USSEA to Under-Secretary of State, September 29, 1941, ibid., pp. 619-620. Requests for incorporation were turned down on the ground that it was against federal government policy during the war to grant letters patent to organisations which appealed to specific racial groups. Loc. cit.; Acting Under-Secretary of State to USSEA, August 6, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, pp. 615-616; Under-Secretary of State to USSEA, October 6, 1941, file 2532-40.

⁵² The existence of the station was revealed by Inspector Oscar La

Rivière of the RCMP, who visited the islands from May 26 to June 11, ostensibly to investigate the smuggling of liquor into Prince Edward Island. Douglas G. Anglin, The St. Pierre and Miquelon Affaire of 1941: A Study in the Diplomacy of the North Atlantic T angle (Toronto, 1966), pp. 53-54.

⁵³ King Diary, May 16, 1941; Cabinet War Committee minutes, May 27, 1941, Documents, Vol. 8, p. 814.

⁵⁴ USSEA to Cabinet War Committee, November 29, 1941, ibid., pp. 854-856.

⁵⁵ King Diary, December 1, 1941; also ibid., December 3, 1941. Cf. The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat, 1919-1943, ed. Nancy Harvison Hooker (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 372-373.

⁵⁶ Cabinet War Committee minutes, December 19, 1941, Privy Council Records.

⁵⁷ Pickersgill, Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1, pp. 321-322.

⁵⁸ King Diary, December 24 and 25, 1941.

⁵⁹ Cabinet War Committee minutes, January 14, 1942, Privy Council Records; Minister-Counsellor (Hume Wrong) to Minister in United States (Leighton McCarthy), January 15, 1942, file 2984-40. The problem of course did not arise, since the Free French remained in the islands. On this episode, see also Anglin, St. Pierre and Miquelon Affaire, and Girard, "Effects of Western Hemispheric Issues", pp. 111-138.

⁶⁰ King Diary, December 26 and 27, 1941 and April 29, 1942.

⁶¹ Ibid., April 22, 1942.

⁶² L.B. Pearson (Assistant USSEA) to USSEA, March 4, 1942, file 2861-40. See also memorandum, "Quebec and the Conscription Issue", May 6, 1940, file 1989-40; memorandum, "Quebec and the Present War: A Study of Public Opinion", July 1942, file 54-B (s). Reports about Propaganda activities of the French consul in Quebec City, which caused the Leader of the opposition to complain to the Prime Minister, resulted in his withdrawal. USSEA to Prime Minister, March 8, 1942, King Papers, series J4, vol. 275.

⁶³ SSEA to Dominions Secretary, April 19, 1942, telegram 115, file 3618-40; Minister in United States to SSEA, May 12, 1942, teletype WA-939, Skelton-Robertson Papers (External Affairs Records, Public Archives), vol. 778. In addition, South Africa broke relations with Vichy at this time.

⁶⁴ King Diary, April 22, 1942; Pickersgill, Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, p. 424.

⁶⁵ Dominions Secretary to SSEA, April 29, 1942, telegram circ. D.225,

King Papers, series J1, vol. 333.

⁶⁶ Cabinet War Committee minutes, May 8, 1942, Privy Council Records; House of Commons Debates, May 19, 1942, p. 2453, and May 20, 1942, p. 2598. The reason for making two separate announcements is not clear. Cf. Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", pp. 143-145. See also H. Gordon Skilling, Canadian Representation Abroad: From Agency to Embassy (Toronto, 1945), pp. 288-289.

⁶⁷ Pickersgill, Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, pp. 416, 423.

⁶⁸ Memorandum for USSEA, September 24, 1942, file 3618-40. The memorandum was shown to the Prime Minister. Hume Wrong (Assistant USSEA) to USSEA, and note by USSEA, September 24, 1942, ibid.

⁶⁹ SSEA to Minister in United States, August 7, 1942, teletype EX-1777, file 712-B-40.

⁷⁰ A "rudimentary cabinet", the French National Committee had been created in September 1941. Milton Viorst, Hostile Allies: FDR and Charles de Gaulle (New York, 1965), p. 76. Pierrené, hitherto personal representative of de Gaulle, was accorded his new title on June 1, 1942.

⁷¹ SSEA to Minister in United States, August 7, 1942, teletype EX-1777, file 712-B-40; USSEA to Prime Minister, August 21, 1942, ibid.; Wrong (?) to Prime Minister, September 5, 1942, ibid. A replacement for Pierrené, Commandant Gabriel Bonneau, was appointed in December.

⁷² USSEA to Prime Minister, October 30, 1942, file 1-D (s).

⁷³ King Diary, November 9, 1942. On the termination of relations with Vichy, see Pickersgill, Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, pp. 425-426.

⁷⁴ SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain, November 30, 1942, telegram 2213, file 4600-J-40; SSEA to Minister to Allied Governments, February 22, 1943, despatch 4, file 4900-C-40.

⁷⁵ On the United States and Giraud, see Girard, "Effect of Western Hemispheric Issues", pp. 149-244, 252-253.

⁷⁶ Minister of Fisheries (Ernest Bertrand) to Prime Minister, n.d. (January 1943), King Papers, series J4, vol. 275.

⁷⁷ Wrong, note for file, March 22, 1943, file 4923-40.

⁷⁸ SSEA to Minister in United States, December 9, 1942, teletype EX-3183, file 1-A (s); Minister in United States to SSEA, December 14, 1942, teletype WA-3848, ibid.

⁷⁹ USSEA to Prime Minister, January 8, 1943, and notes by Prime Minister (January 10, 1943), ibid.; SSEA to Dominions Secretary, January 11, 1943, telegram 5 ibid.

⁸⁰ SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain, December 19, 1942,

telegram 2361, file 1-E (s). See also Massey, What's Past, p. 337.

⁸¹ Wrong to USSEA, January 15, 1943, file 1-E (s). Wrong added that he might modify this opinion if de Gaulle came "after a successful visit to Giraud which had resulted in the reunion of Frenchmen opposed to the Axis".

⁸² wrong, note for file, March 22, 1943. On the Casablanca meeting, see Girard, "Effect of Western Hemispheric Issues", p. 217.

⁸³ See, e.g., SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain, April 27, 1943, telegram 665, file 5385-40.

⁸⁴ USSEA to Prime Minister, May 29, 1943, file 1-A (s).

⁸⁵ High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, June 9, 1943, telegram 1271, file 1-F (s).

⁸⁶ High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, June 10, 1943, telegram 1296, file 1-A (s).

⁸⁷ Delegate of French National Committee to USSEA, June 11, 1943, ibid.

⁸⁸ House of Commons Debate, June 18, 1943, p. 3773; SSEA to High Commissioner in Great Britain, June 19, 1943, telegram 1056, file 3618-A-40. Ristelhueber had been permitted to remain in Canada after closure of his legation. Also in honour of the occasion, Ristelhueber and senior officers of the Department of External Affairs attended a reception given by Bonneau. See Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", pp. 174-175.

⁸⁹ SSEA to Dominions Secretary, June 17, 1943, telegram 106, file 1-A (s); Girard, "Effect of Western Hemispheric Issues", p. 234.

⁹⁰ Wrong (?) to USSEA, July 14, 1943, file 1-A (s).

⁹¹ High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, June 28, 1943, telegram 1445, ibid.; Minister to Allied Governments to SSEA, June 29, 1943, despatch French 19, ibid.; High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, July 17, 1943, telegram 1641, ibid.; Cabinet War Committee minutes, July 21, 1943, Privy Council Records; Speaight, Vanier, pp. 254-255.

⁹² On sensitivity in Quebec to de Gaulle's acceptance of Communist associates, see Girard, "Diplomatic Relations", p. 197.

⁹³ Cabinet War Committee minutes, July 21, 1943, Privy Council Records.

⁹⁴ SSEA to Minister in United States, July 21, 1943, teletype FX-2862, file 1-A (s).

⁹⁵ Minister in United States to SSEA, July 23, 1943,, teletype WA-3709, Skelton-Robertson Papers, vol. 800.

⁹⁶ SSEA to Dominions Secretary, August 5, 1943, telegram 134, file 1-A (s). The change was suggested by Roosevelt; Robertson thought it probably never occurred to Churchill that it would be embarrassing to Canada and other countries. USSEA to Prime Minister, August 6, 1943, ibid.

⁹⁷ High Commissioner of Great Britain to Prime Minister, August 6, 1943, and enclosure, ibid. On August 3, Roosevelt had requested Churchill that nothing be done about recognition "until we have an opportunity to talk it over together". Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, Volume II (Washington, 1964), p. 182.

⁹⁸ USSEA to High Commissioner of Great Britain, August 6, 1943, file 1-A (s); Wrong to High Commissioner in Great Britain, August 31, 1943, file 3618-A-40.

⁹⁹ Cabinet War Committee minutes, August 11, 1943, Privy Council Records. Giraud had just made a visit which ministers from Quebec considered to have been "very successful". USSEA to Acting USSEA (Wrong), August 11, 1943, telegram H-27, file 1-A (s).

¹⁰⁰ USSEA to Prime Minister, August 24, 1943, file 1-A (s).

¹⁰¹ On the discussion of France at Quebec, see Pickersgill, Mackenzie King Record, Vol. I, pp. 536, 541-543, 551-554; King Diary, August 10, 11, 15 and 21, 1943.

¹⁰² SSEA to Representative of French Committee of National Liberation (FCNL), August 26, 1943, file 3618-A-40.

¹⁰³ Late in 1943, Canada decided to raise its legations to embassy status and in due course it expected to appoint an ambassador to France. Wrong to Prime Minister, January 8, 1944, file 5858-J-40. Meanwhile, of course, Vanier's personal rank did not imply recognition of the Committee as a government. See also Skilling, Canadian Representation Abroad, p. 290.

¹⁰⁴ Representative to FCNL to SSEA, despatch French 1, January 6, 1944, file 1-P (s). Wilson indicated agreement with Vanier. On Vanier and the Resistance, see also Speaight, Vanier, pp. 272-275.

¹⁰⁵ Wartime Information Board to Department of External Affairs, August 28 and 30, 1943, file 3618-A-40.

¹⁰⁶ USSEA to Representative to FCNL, January 27, 1944, file 1-A (s); USSEA to Prime Minister, February 4, 1944, file 1-P (s); also High Commissioner in Great Britain to SSEA, February 22, 1944, despatch A78, ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ambassador in United States to SSFA, March 18, 1944, teletype WA 1706, ibid.

¹⁰⁸ G. de T. Glazebrook (Special Wartime Assistant to USSEA) to Wrong, March 24, 1944, ibid.

- 109 USSEA to Prime Minister, March 28, 1944, ibid.
- 110 High Commissioner of Great Britain to Dominions Secretary, April 6, 1944, telegram 1063, ibid.
- 111 High Commission of Great Britain to USSEA, April 22, 1944, and note by USSEA, ibid.
- 112 See, e.g., Acting USSEA (Wrong) to Representative to FCNL, April 28, 1944, file 1-A (s); also Girard, "Effects of Western Hemispheric Issues", p. 345.
- 113 The Assembly, formed in October 1943, was not a governing body, but was intended to be "a source of ideas and a symbol of unity" for the Committee. Viorst, Hostile Allies, p. 182.
- 114 Acting USSEA to Acting SSEA (St. Laurent), May 18, 1944, file 1-A (s).
- 115 SSEA to Representative to FCNL, May 18, 1944, telegram 73, ibid.; USSEA to Prime Minister, May 24, 1944, ibid.
- 116 SSEA to Representative to FCNL, June 7, 1944, telegram 79, ibid.
- 117 SSEA to Representative to FCNL, June 9, 1944, telegram 81, file 1-P (s).
- 118 USSEA to Prime Minister, June 9, 1944, file 1-E (s).
- 119 Representative to FCNL to SSEA, June 21, 1944, telegram 187, ibid.; SSRA to Representative to FCNL, June 25, 1944, King Papers, series J1, vol. 375. The United States had reminded Canada on June 16 that it would not recognize a provisional government. USSEA to Prime Minister, June 16, 1944, file 1-A (s). See also Speaight, Vanier, p. 291.
- 120 USSEA to Prime Minister, July 1, 1944, file 1-E (s); SSEA to Representative to FCNL, July 2, 1944, telegram 101, ibid.
- 121 USSEA to Deputy Minister of National War Services, July 5, 1944, file 3618-A-40.
- 122 Representative to FCNL to SSEA, June 27, 1944, despatch 91, file 1-A (s).
- 123 SSEA to Representative to FCNL, despatch 73, June 28, 1944 file 1989-40.
- 124 On de Gaulle's visit to Canada, see J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, The Mackenzie King Record, Volume II: 1944-1945 (Toronto, 1968), pp. 47-53; and Charles de Gaulle, War Memoirs, Volume II: Unity, 1942-1944, tr. Reginald Howard (London, 1956), pp. 244-246.
- 125 SSEA to Dominions Secretary, July 18, 1944, telegram 120, file 1-

A (s). See also Speaight, Vanier, p. 292.

126 Dominions Secretary to SSEA, July 27, 1944, telegram 108, file 1-A (s); USSEA to Prime Minister, July 28, 1944, ibid.

127 SSEA to Dominions Secretary, July 28, 1944, telegram 126, ibid; Dominions Secretary to SSEA, August 4, 1944, telegram 111, ibid; King Diary, July 28, 1944.

128 King Diary, July 28, 1944.

129 USSEA to Representative to FCNL, August 24, 1944, file 1-A (s); Wrong to Representative to FCNL August 24, 1944, ibid.

130 USSEA to Prime Minister, October 2, 1944, ibid.

131 Ambassador in Soviet Union to SSEA, October 18, 1944, telegram 325, file 1-A (s).

132 Representative in France to SSEA, October 23, 1944, telegram 373, ibid. See also F.H. Soward, Canada in World Affairs: From Normandy to Paris, 1944-1946 (Toronto, 1950) , p. 312.

133 Representative in France to SSEA, October 11, 1944, telegram 343, file 1-A (s). De Gaulle did, however, object to reference, in the Canadian note signifying recognition, to agreement with the Supreme Allied Commander for 'transfer to the French administration of full responsibility for the Government of the larger part of France, including Paris'. His contention was that the provisional government had exercised full sovereignty over liberated territory from the moment of its arrival in France. Representative in Paris to SSEA, October 26, 1944, telegram 387, ibid.

THE SOLDIERS CANADA DIDN'T WANT:
HER CHINESE AND JAPANESE CITIZENS
By Patricia Roy

The efforts of the Mackenzie King government to avoid conscription have been well documented. Yet, during most of the Second World War, some patriotic, able-bodied and enthusiastic Canadians were denied the opportunity to serve their native land merely because of their racial origin. The number of such Chinese and Japanese Canadians who were otherwise eligible for military service was small¹ but Canada's reluctance to recruit them until late in the war -- and then under special circumstances -- demonstrates the King government's fear of exacerbating racial tensions in British Columbia and in the army whose members were drawn from the entire country. While military morale was an important consideration, the decision not to enlist Asians was fundamentally a political one conditioned by British Columbia's long tradition of racial intolerance and by sympathy for those beliefs in the highest political body in the land, the federal cabinet. Military service is the ultimate test of citizenship. By allowing Chinese and Japanese Canadians to serve in the armed forces, Canada would concede them a claim for equality and for all privileges of citizenship including the franchise. Because they realized this, some young Chinese and many Nisei (Canadian-born Japanese) were especially anxious to serve their country, Canada.

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After the outbreak of war in September, 1939, a few Asians joined the army in provinces east of the Rockies. In British Columbia, commanding officers of most regiments rejected them. Then, in September 1940, some twenty-one year old Asians were summoned for medical examinations, the first stage in the general call up for compulsory training for home defence under the National Resources Mobilization

Act. (N.R.M.A.) British Columbia politicians immediately pressed Ottawa not to proceed further. Expressing their ill-founded, but nonetheless sincere, concern about security, they referred to Japanese expansion in Asia during the previous decade and to the recent Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. Recalling traditional British Columbian fears that strategically located Japanese fishermen, lumber workers and farmers were waiting for an opportunity to help invaders from Japan, they argued it would be foolish to train Japanese in Canadian methods of drill and command. As the outspoken anti-Japanese agitator, Alderman Halford D. Wilson of Vancouver, tersely explained, "the establishment along Canada's Pacific Coast of large numbers of highly trained soldiers who are Japanese is to court eventual trouble and possible disaster."² These ill-founded arguments were at least plausible against the Japanese; they had no validity in respect to the Chinese whose ancestral land had been fighting Japan since 1931.

Attorney-General Gordon Wismer succinctly outlined the fundamental reason for political opposition to Asians in the armed forces when he told Colonel L.R. LaFleche, Associate Deputy Minister of National War Services, "if these men are called upon to perform the duties of citizens and bear arms for Canada, it will be impossible to resist the argument that they are entitled to the franchise."³ In a trite and greatly exaggerated fashion he suggested to Defence Minister J.L. Ralston, "the oriental vote would be the deciding factor in a great many constituencies and you would face the possibility of having Orientals in Parliament."⁴ In urging the prime minister to countermand any orders to call up Chinese or Japanese for compulsory military training, Premier T.D. Pattullo declared that British Columbia could "never tolerate" a demand for the franchise.⁵

The franchise argument was based on precedent. During the First World War at least one hundred and sixty-six Japanese (most of whom were not Canadian-

born) managed, with difficulty, to enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. After returning to British Columbia, the survivors persevered in a campaign for the right to vote. (Ironically, one of their champions was Ian Mackenzie, then a Vancouver M.L.A. and head of the Vancouver branch of the Great War Veterans Association.) In 1931, by a one vote margin, the provincial legislature enfranchised approximately eighty Japanese veterans who still lived in the province. Thus, military service was the "thin edge of the wedge" leading to enfranchisement and ultimately, as many British Columbians feared, to the Oriental domination of the province. Mayor V.H. Harrison of Nanaimo vividly expressed this notion when he asked, "what white Canadian would like to contemplate that in the next war one 'Ichi Moto' will be the Minister of National Defence?"⁶

Prime Minister King, whose advisers had been warning of possible riots against the Japanese in British Columbia since at least 1938, was prepared for such entreaties. Three days after Pattullo and Wismer wrote to King and to Ralston, respectively, the Cabinet War Committee considered Asian enlistments. Despite some concern about the difficulty in discriminating "in favour of or against racial groups who possessed Canadian citizenship," the Committee accepted King's argument that "the danger of the whole Oriental problem in British Columbia" made it essential to give every consideration to the wishes and judgment of the provincial government and the British Columbia Members of Parliament. As an interim measure, the Committee agreed to omit Chinese and Japanese from the first call in British Columbia and to ask Colonel LaFleche to discuss the matter with Wismer.⁷ The Asian Canadians who had passed the N.R.M.A. medical examination heard no more from the Registrar of National War Services.

On October 1, 1940, the War Committee confirmed its decision not to call up Asians for military training. In doing so it rejected the advice of H.L.

Keenleyside, the Department of External Affairs specialist on the situation in his native province. Keenleyside, who sympathized with Nisei ambitions to serve Canada, warned that by not calling up Asians, the cabinet would confirm "local politicians in their belief that the anti-oriental business will still pay dividends" and possibly discourage and embitter "the intelligent and educated second generation (oriental) Canadians who are doing their utmost to act as good citizens."⁸ Although it rejected his advice, the War Committee appointed Keenleyside to a Special Committee on Orientals composed of himself and representatives from the Department of National Defence (Col. A.W. Sparling) and the R.C.M.P. (Assistant Commissioner F.J. Mead).

The Special Committee did not confine itself to military training but also examined "the general problem of Japanese and Chinese in British Columbia from the point of view of internal security." Unlike the Board of Review (Immigration), which held well-publicized meetings while investigating allegations of illegal Japanese immigration in 1938, the Special Committee proceeded "in a strictly private and informal way" lest knowledge of its existence add to public nervousness.⁹ Despite the secrecy of its investigations,¹⁰ the Committee published its recommendations early in 1941. Most of its suggestions, such as compulsory registration of Japanese in British Columbia, concerned the broad issue of internal security. It warned that any provocative acts committed by Japan might arouse action against Japanese in British Columbia generally and "if there were Canadians of Japanese race serving at the time in the armed forces of Canada, they also might be in danger of attack by the less responsible elements among their comrades."¹¹ The validity of this conclusion is impossible to assess, but it parallels the government's concern about riots in the civilian population. Racist ideas, as much as security concerns, underlay policy. Although the report

dismissed the Chinese as being relatively unimportant, it recommended that neither they nor Japanese should be called upon for military service.¹² It also suggested letting the University of British Columbia decide if Chinese and Japanese students should continue Canadian Officers' Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) training. Drawing on the committee's advice, Prime Minister King announced on January 9, 1941 that Canadians of Oriental origin would not be called for compulsory military service. The university, however, decided that all able-bodied male students should take military training.

Except for one anonymous reference to the stereotype of the near-sighted Japanese,¹³ military officials had not questioned the fighting effectiveness of the Chinese or the Japanese nor had they doubted their loyalty. The army, however, had not been anxious to enlist Asians lest their presence have a harmful effect on the morale of white soldiers. Although no military officer publicly agreed with A.W. Neill M.P. (Independent, Comox-Alberni) that white soldiers might riot if forced to drill with Japanese or possibly under one, Brigadier C.V. Stockwell, Commanding Officer of Military District No. 11 which included all of British Columbia, warned, "it would be very lowering to the prestige of the white race if they were to become the menials of the coloured races." Nevertheless, he conceded that the presence of a few Orientals in each camp would not be a problem.¹⁴

ii

King's announcement that Canadians of Asian origin would not be called for military service distressed many Nisei who believed military service would offer "convincing proof to the most sceptical of critics that our exclusion from the right to vote is a manifest absurdity."¹⁵ Yet, in an attempt to appease those who saw military service as tantamount to receiving the franchise, Nisei spokesmen agreed to waive their claim to the franchise until after the war.¹⁶

The Nisei community was not united. Some, disturbed by the anti-Japanese propaganda of such people as Alderman Wilson, were reluctant to volunteer. Others, especially the articulate members of the Japanese Canadian Citizens League, could not agree on how they might serve. They debated whether they should follow the First World

War precedent of forming their own battalions or seek to enlist as individuals. At the Fifth Annual Convention of the Japanese Canadian Citizens League in November 1940, some Nisei claimed segregated units would be "simply another form of discrimination" and would arouse suspicions in the minds of white Canadians while integrated "compulsory training offered to the Nisei the undoubted advantage of very close and intimate association with hundreds of fellow Canadians. Through living together, working together, playing together, . . . the Nisei would be able to prove to their comrades that the mere fact of racial ancestry is evidence neither of un-Canadianism nor of disloyalty."¹⁷ The debate, of course, was academic.

Despite these divisions of opinion, members of the J.C.C.L. reaffirmed their loyalty to Canada shortly before publication of the final report of the Special Committee in February 1941. They renewed their request for the "same treatment in regard to military training and service as Canadians of occidental origin." Such equality, The New Canadian, their newspaper, explained, meant "the right to march

shoulder to shoulder with their fellow citizens in the defence of the ideal which means even more to us because we have not yet achieved it."¹⁸ In reply, the Department of External Affairs referred to the prime minister's recent pronouncement that, given the state of public opinion, "unfortunate incidents" might occur if Canadians of Oriental racial origin were to be called upon for

compulsory military service.¹⁹

Referring to the army's recruiting problems, The New Canadian, noted the unreasonableness and inexpediency of shutting off what is enthusiastically described as a "reservoir of manpower."²⁰ It reported the frustrations of individual Nisei who tried to enlist. One example was Yoshiaki Sato, a twenty-five year old Canadian-born Fraser River fisherman. Sato appeared to be an excellent candidate for military service: he was in good health, he was experienced in working with diesel engines and he had served five years in the Westminster Regiment. At the beginning of the war in 1939, members of his militia company were discharged and told they would soon be called to active service. His call never came. When a white commissioned officer suggested he reapply, since men familiar with diesel engines were badly needed, Sato approached the Vancouver recruiting office which referred his application to Ottawa. The Provincial Police interviewed him and indicated he had a good chance of being accepted. Eventually, the Officer Commanding Military District No. 11 rejected his application but did not give a reason.²¹ Such rebuffs, some unpleasant encounters between would-be Nisei recruits and commanding officers, and the rejection of applications from Nisei students who wished to complete C.O.T.C. training by attending summer camp led some Nisei to conclude that if their services were ever wanted, the army would have to drag them in.²²

Other Nisei persisted in their attempts to join the army and a handful succeeded. In July, 1941, Shigeo Elliot Kato became the first Nisei to join the army in British Columbia when his year-old application to join the Forestry Corps was accepted. Later that year, two Nisei from northern British Columbia and a Chinese-Canadian from Prince Rupert joined the Active Army. These isolated enlistments and a few in other provinces gave the Nisei community some hope of

their services being accepted despite official government pronouncements.²³

Thus, some Nisei continued to seek to change the government's policy of "no Oriental need apply." In October 1941, four members of the community led by Tommy Shoyama, the editor of The New Canadian, interviewed Col. Sparling and Col. B.R. Mullaly of Pacific Command. Shoyama asserted that the United States was drafting all of its male citizens, that at least three Nisei were serving in the Canadian army without incident, that the visible presence of Nisei in uniform might influence public opinion for the good and that the Nisei were willing to serve as a distinct unit. These were sound arguments but the Nisei delegation came away convinced of the army's genuine fear of incidents arising from contact between relatively undisciplined conscripts and Japanese in training camps. The Nisei correctly concluded that their exclusion from active service seemed "to be less a matter of military policy, [and] more a matter of provincial politics exercising an influence upon recruiting and commanding officers who have the authority to accept any man into these units."²⁴

Shoyama's reminder that enlistment was an inalienable right of citizenship whose denial would be resented by young Nisei impressed Col. Mullaly who proved to be an unexpected ally. Mullaly believed admitting Japanese to the armed forces would encourage greater loyalty among them and might benefit overall recruiting by demonstrating the government's determination "to spread the burden of service equally over all sections of the community and to draw upon all available sources of manpower."²⁵ His suggestions may well have led the Joint Service Committee, Pacific Command, to reconsider the question of Nisei enlistments. On December 5, 1941 it recommended that Canada follow the American example²⁶ and allow a limited number of Nisei to join the Army and Air Force.²⁷

The Committee had privately ascertained that Premier Pattullo would not object to

Japanese recruits provided they were quickly sent out of the province and the franchise question deferred until after the war. The wishes of provincial politicians and the franchise question soon ceased to be dominant considerations. On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

iii

Canada's declaration of war on Japan did not immediately clarify the situation for potential Asian soldiers. In light of the changed circumstances and the condition of public opinion in British Columbia, the Joint Service Committee postponed all steps towards enlisting Canadian-born Japanese. Less than two weeks after Pearl Harbor, representatives of the Department of National Defence, National War Services, and External Affairs and of the R.C.M.P. met. They recommended reversing the cabinet policy of October 1940 by calling up Canadians of Chinese, Japanese and East Indian ancestry at the same time as others in their age group. They believed this would prevent a sense of racial discrimination among Asian-Canadians and forestall any white Canadian jealousy of relief from military obligations. They also hoped to ease public fears by putting young Japanese males under military discipline.

The proposed policy had one important qualification. While declaring in principle that no service or rank should be closed to *any* Canadian simply because of his race or colour, officials recognized practical difficulties in mixing races. "Neither fighting efficiency nor civilian morale," they declared, should "be sacrificed to the principle of racial equality." Commanding officers could reject recruits on grounds of race but would be required to inform them of alternative lines of service.²⁸ Such an ambivalent policy would have done credit to Prime Minister King himself. His public servants had come out in favour of racial equality without committing anyone to it.²⁹

These civil servants continued to press for equality but the politicians ultimately overruled them. Early in January, representatives of the departments concerned met in Ottawa under the chairmanship of Ian Mackenzie, Minister of Pensions and National Health and a Vancouver M.P. Also present were the Ministers of Fisheries and of National War Services, the British Columbia Minister of Labour, members of the Standing Committee on Orientals³⁰ and representatives of the British Columbia Provincial Police. The official secret report of this meeting recommended encouraging Japanese Canadians to enlist in the army and calling them up for N.R.M.A. service. In both cases, service would be outside British Columbia. The published account of the meeting made no reference to military service.³¹

Mackenzie had advised King that the meeting was "rather lukewarm" about the proposal, that the Standing Committee opposed it, and that public opinion in British Columbia would object. King agreed.³² In mid-February, the Cabinet War Committee confirmed its policy of racial separation. It approved the principle of compulsory military service for all Canadian residents but, it specifically excluded, along with enemy aliens, persons of Oriental race.³³

The army whose spokesmen had earlier accepted the principle of Japanese enlistments now concurred with the politicians. Circumstances had changed. The government had ordered the evacuation of all Japanese from the protected areas of British Columbia, the Canadian army understood the United States army was no longer enlisting Japanese and the insecurity felt by British Columbia's civilian population had affected the army.³⁴ The Chief of the General Staff concluded:

While' Canadian born persons of Japanese origin may appear to be good Canadian citizens, they do, however, bear the appearance and characteristics of another race, which immediately sets them apart from the average Canadian. In the course of a war with Japan, events are bound to occur which inflame racial hatreds and lead to unfortunate incidents which would make army life miserable for a soldier of Japanese origin.³⁵

He suggested any Japanese already in the army (there were none in the R.C.A.F. or the Navy³⁶) should be discharged. Ralston observed the presence of Japanese in the armed forces would be "inconsistent with the government policy of evacuating persons of Japanese origin from coastal areas."³⁷ The Cabinet War Committee agreed but, apparently beginning to realize some broader implications of its Japanese policies, suggested the Army discharge them on "other than racial grounds."³⁸

There is no evidence of such dismissals but the Department of National Defence forbade the enlistment of additional Japanese. It did not, however, make its policy public. Nisei as far east as Nova Scotia complained when they tried to enlist they were denied a clear statement of acceptance or rejection. The Department's ambiguous policy respecting Japanese enlistments remained secret until after the end of the Pacific war.³⁹

iv

The potential manpower contribution of the Chinese in British Columbia was much less than that of the Japanese but there was no question of their loyalty or of incidents in the Pacific theatre leading directly to hostility against them in British Columbia. A few Chinese were able to volunteer⁴⁰ and some became officers⁴¹ but they were not recognized as full Canadian citizens. Even though many potential Chinese recruits were Canadian-born, Pacific Command sought the advice of the Chinese consul in Vancouver about recruiting possibilities.⁴² Nevertheless, they were not called out under the N.R.M.A. because of the small numbers involved, their differences in language and customs and an unexplained fear that China might retaliate by conscripting Canadians.⁴³ Over them too had hung the twin shadows of British Columbian opposition to all Asians and fears of Chinese demanding the franchise in return for military service.

Then, in the summer of 1944, Pacific Command headquarters received

orders to call up Chinese in British Columbia. According to "reliable sources" in Ottawa, this order follows war workers' complaints of being subjected to the draft while Chinese were not.⁴⁴ British Columbians retained their objections to Oriental economic competition but they recognized the Chinese were not the same threat the Japanese had appeared to be. China, an ally, was fighting Japan; the Chinese population of the province was declining; and the Chinese, unlike the Japanese, had made no organized demand for the franchise. Many Chinese expected the franchise would be a fair reward for military service.⁴⁵

Once the government called up the Chinese, army officials were of two minds about training them. The Chinese themselves wanted to be kept together as much as possible.⁴⁶ This desire corresponded with the wishes of Major-General G.R. Pearkes, General Officer, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command who sought to obviate "difficulties arising from racial characteristics and language" and to promote esprit de corps.⁴⁷ Thus, he keenly supported the secret training camp on Okanagan Lake where Chinese members of Secret Force 136 learned demolition and commando techniques before going to Asia to do sabotage and reconnaissance work behind Japanese lines. On the other hand, the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General J.C. Murchie decided to deal with the Chinese "in the normal way in basic training so that from the very beginning they will be treated as Canadian soldiers and not set apart as a special class. From the National standpoint it should be a good thing to mix them with their fellow Canadians and from the start of their military life wean them from any peculiar habits or customs they may have." Murchie also argued their small numbers did not justify a special Basic Training Centre.⁴⁸ Thus, special camps were established only for special and secret training. Whether they were loaned to British Security Co-ordination in India and Australia or whether they served with regular Canadian

forces, the Chinese were "members of the Canadian Army enjoying all the rights and privileges accruing to them as such."⁴⁹

v

The decision to treat the Chinese like other Canadian soldiers suggests exigencies of war can help reduce racial sensitivities. Nevertheless, the army continued to refuse Canadian born Japanese. When the United States in 1943 enlisted loyal Japanese for special combat units, the British Columbia Security Commission (B.C.S.C.), the agency in charge of the evacuees, asked the army to enlist Japanese as a means of improving Nisei morale.⁵⁰ The army had once cited American practice as a reason for not recruiting Japanese⁵¹ but it did not automatically follow American precedents. The Department of National Defence still feared "Army men of other nationalities" might create "a row with the Canadians of Japanese racial descent." Its only concession was to consider voluntary enlistment of Japanese for special duties as interpreters.⁵² A year later, the Department of External Affairs, trying to satisfy some Members of Parliament by distinguishing between the loyal and the disloyal Japanese, expressed a desire to have the armed forces accept a few reliable Nisei. The Department of National Defence showed no enthusiasm for this request.⁵³

Only when the Australian Army and the British South East Asian Command requested interpreters, translators and specialists for psychological warfare in India did military authorities and the cabinet seriously consider recruiting Japanese. Despite continuing reservations about training Nisei with white recruits,⁵⁴ the army agreed to enlist and train specially selected Japanese. Nevertheless, it urged their direct enlistment in the Australian army or, in the case of India, their discharge from the Canadian army on arrival and re-enlistment in the Indian army.⁵⁵ The Cabinet War Committee would not even go that far

towards accepting the Nisei as Canadians. After several discussions, it decided Nisei could not enlist in the Canadian army but might be recruited for service in the forces of other United Nations if such service did not affect their position in Canada.⁵⁶ To the Nisei who had been campaigning for the right to serve their country, this was a backward step.

In the spring of 1944, some members of the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy (J.C.C.D.) in Toronto began urging "a vigorous approach" for permission to enlist.⁵⁷ Their immediate concern was Bill 135, the War Services Election Bill which proposed to disenfranchise all Japanese including those who had been able to vote in provinces other than British Columbia. The only exceptions would be those who served with the Canadian armed forces in either World War. As the J.C.C.D. pointed out in its brief to Parliament, the bill did not recognize that many Canadian Japanese had vainly sought to enlist.⁵⁸ Nisei were especially anxious to demonstrate te their loyalty in light of Prime Minister King's August 1944 announcement of a plan to establish a commission "to examine the background, loyalties, and attitudes of all persons of Japanese race in Canada to ascertain those who are not fit persons to be allowed to remain here."⁵⁹

In the summer of 1944, the Department of National Defence had quietly begun interviewing prospective Nisei recruits and having them complete "History Forms" designed to ascertain their loyalty. These forms recorded their desire for enlistment in case of a change in government policy but placed neither the Nisei nor the army under any obligation.⁶⁰ Recruiting officers approached the Nisei "on the grounds of applications for general enlistment" and made "no suggestion of special duties."⁶¹ Despite the resentment of some Nisei who had earlier been rejected as volunteers and the "discriminatory and unfair" nature of the History Forms, many Nisei responded. When they realized the proposed terms of service

would not guarantee their return to Canada after the war, the first three recruits withdrew their offers to serve.⁶² This forced the issue. Realizing the Japanese would not serve unless they were certain of being able to return to Canada after the war, the Cabinet War Committee accepted the suggestion of the Minister of National Defence to take up to one hundred Nisei secretly into the Canadian army. They would not be issued with uniforms and would immediately be loaned to Australia.⁶³ As Canadian soldiers, however, they would be guaranteed the right to return to Canada.

Nisei such as Thomas Shoyama, who had sought to enlist before Pearl Harbor and who were still anxious to prove their loyalty to Canada, provided an initial core of well-educated recruits.⁶⁴ Many Nisei, however, were reluctant to serve. Some were justifiably bitter about their treatment at the hands of the Canadian government. Others, though anxious to prove their loyalty or to seek adventure, were unwilling to override parental objections to their enlistment, to subject their families to hard feelings from other Japanese or to leave dislocated families and property whose fate was uncertain. Some feared having to fight Japanese soldiers, suspected the voluntary system or expected discrimination from white Canadian soldiers.⁶⁵ The J.C.C.D. informed Prime Minister King that "continued racist propaganda" was hindering enlistment and called for the rescinding of censorship.⁶⁶ The army blamed an "unexpectedly poor" response from the Nisei on the secrecy of their recruitment which made them doubt the government's good faith and on the activities of the "Loyalty Commission"⁶⁷ then surveying Japanese about their desire to return to Japan. For whatever reasons, the army could recruit only half its authorized quota of Japanese.⁶⁸

Fear of hostile public opinion more than strategic considerations explained the secrecy surrounding the enlistment of the Japanese. When Angus

MacInnis (C.C.F., Vancouver East) asked in April 1945 if the British government had requested the services of Canadian Japanese, the prime minister only admitted that British requests would be honoured "in so far as qualified individuals can be found."⁶⁹ The Nisei press, however, frequently referred to the enlistment of Japanese. But, only after the end of the war with Japan in August 1945 and the cessation of recruiting did the government yield to pressure from the J.C.C.D. and the B.C.S.C. to make Nisei enlistments general public knowledge.

The cabinet decision of January 17, 1945 to recruit one hundred Nisei had marked a major change in policy. Yet, the numbers were limited (the maximum was raised to 250 in July 1945) and the circumstances of service were special. The army issued contradictory orders about the treatment of the Nisei. It stressed they should be treated as normal volunteers but it insisted their training should be carried on without publicity and they should be trained in one or more distinct groups. While the establishment of distinct Japanese units may have had racial connotations, its immediate motivation was practical. The Japanese were being recruited for special duties as translators and interpreters. All were supposed to have "adequate knowledge" of spoken or written Japanese; most were so integrated into Canadian society they had limited Japanese language skills. Thus, after completing eight weeks of basic training in M.D. 1 or 2 (London and Toronto, Ontario, respectively) those who had not been sent to England for training were required to attend the Japanese Language School established by the army in 1943 to train selected white recruits. Because the language school, S-20, depended on civilian instructors resident in Vancouver, the Nisei were required to return to the Pacific coast from which all Japanese had been evacuated four years earlier.

Not only the cabinet but police and military authorities feared hostile public opinion in British Columbia. The superintendent of the R.C.M.P. in

Vancouver warned the presence of Japanese soldiers in Vancouver might encourage local Chinese and white residents to create incidents.⁷⁰ The commander of the Language School insisted that an "adequate fence" separate the Nisei and the students of the adjacent Vancouver Technical High School.⁷¹ He also cautioned his Nisei students against making themselves conspicuous by taking part in any public gathering other than religious services.⁷² Yet, one Nisei language student reported his colleagues' surprise at "the indifference with which we are accepted by the people on the Streets."⁷³

vi

Military service gave the Japanese veterans few privileges after the war. They received no special consideration in seeking the return of their property or compensation for material losses suffered as a result of the evacuation.⁷⁴ As long as Japanese were forbidden to return to the coast, Japanese veterans of both world wars were required to stay away although travel restrictions outside the restricted areas were lifted earlier for them and their dependents than for other Japanese. They were officially discouraged from taking up land under the Veterans' Land Act anywhere in the province. Indeed, Ian Mackenzie, now Minister of Veteran's Affairs, had campaigned in the 1945 election with a slogan of "no Japanese from the Rockies to the sea."⁷⁵ As minister he claimed that "hostile public opinion" would prevent a Japanese veteran from "successfully rehabilitating himself through the establishment of a farm or business in British Columbia," since he would be ostracized and "might very well be the victim of violence." Despite pressure from Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour, the Citizens' Rehabilitation Council of Vancouver, the Canadian Legion and Cecil Merritt, a war hero and Conservative M.P. for Vancouver-Burrard, Mackenzie, who claimed the support of British Columbia's Liberal M.P.'s, would not alter his

stand.⁷⁶ Similarly, he refused to recommend the issuance of fishing licenses to Japanese veterans.⁷⁷ As long as Ian Mackenzie with his atavistic ideas was in the cabinet, there was little hope for Japanese veterans who might want to settle on the Pacific Coast.

In the matter of the franchise, military service had the results the antagonists had predicted in 1940. Early in 1945, the provincial government enfranchised all those, including Chinese and Japanese, who had served in the Canadian armed forces in either World War.⁷⁸ The legislation passed almost without comment. Although only a few hundred individuals were so enfranchised, British Columbians were obviously less fearful of the "thin edge of the wedge."⁷⁹ Most British Columbians were willing to accept military service as the supreme test of loyalty and citizenship.

Military service alone was not responsible for this change in British Columbia attitudes. The dispersal of the Japanese, the defeat of the Japanese Empire and the natural decline in the Chinese population relieved much anti-Asian tension. Over the next few years both the provincial and federal governments dismantled their anti-Asian legislation. The ideas which lay behind those laws, however, had influenced the policies and practices of the Canadian army by denying it recruits with enthusiasm and special skills. Writing of the Nisei, and he might well have included the Chinese, MajorGeneral F.F. Worthington, former General Officer Commanding, Pacific Command, reported in 1946:

They] have amply fulfilled the expectations of those who had for so long urged their enlistment in the Canadian Army as Specialist Japanese-Language personnel and there is no doubt that they would have made a valuable contribution to the Allied war-effort against Japan had large numbers of them been enlisted sooner.⁸⁰

The tragedy was that racial prejudice, the politicians' support of it, and the army's fear of it, had prevented their earlier service.

¹There were approximately 2,300 single Japanese males or widowers without dependents between the ages of 19 and 45 and approximately 8,000 Chinese. Most of the Chinese, however, were Chinese nationals and near the upper age limit. (Special Committee on Orientals in British Columbia, Report and Recommendations, December, 1940 (Ottawa King's Printer, 1941), p. 9).

Before Pearl Harbor, four Japanese enlisted in B.C.; 23 in other provinces and one, in England. Another seven Japanese enlisted between Pearl Harbor and 30 November 1944.

"Persons of Japanese Racial Origin, compiled in Directorate of Records, National Defence Headquarters, December 1944," Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Department of National Defence Records (hereafter DNDR), RG 24, vol. 2640).

The Army estimated the total Japanese enlistment during the Second World War was 134. It could not reach a completely accurate figure since attestation forms did not inquire about racial origin. (Col. G.S., Director of Military Intelligence, to Commissioner, RCMP, 18 April 1947, PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2642.)

²H.D. Wilson to Chairman and Members, Finance Committee, Vancouver City Council, 24 September 1940, Provincial Archives of British Columbia (hereafter PABC), Halford D. Wilson Papers.

³G.S. Wismer to Col. L.R. LaFleche, 8 October 1940, PAC, Department of External Affairs Records (hereafter DEAR), RG 25 G1, File 263-38.

⁴Wismer to J.L. Ralston, 23 September 1940, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1, File 263-38.

According to the 1931 census, there were no federal constituencies in which the Japanese formed even as much as ten per cent of the population of voting age. See table in PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1, vol. 1868.

⁵T.D. Pattullo to W.L.M. King, 23 September 1940, PAC, Records of the Cabinet War Committee (hereafter CWC), RG 2 7C vol. 2.

⁶V.H. Harrison to J.L. Ralston, 3 October 1940, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 D1 vol. 92.

⁷26 September 1940, PAC, CWC, RG 2 7C, vol. 2; W.L.M. King, Diary, 26 September 1940, PAC, King Papers.

⁸As early as September 1939, Keenleyside had noted "The time may come when we will be very glad of the 1,500 or 2,000 young men that may be available as recruits from the Japanese community." He urged his superiors to ask the Department of National Defence and particularly the Officer Commanding Military District No. 11 to reconsider its apparent policy of refusing to enlist Canadian born Japanese. (HLK, Memo for Dr. Skelton, 20 September 1939, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1 File 882-39.) He repeated these sentiments in his memo of 28 September 1940. (PAC, DEAR, RG 25 D1, Vol. 92, file 573). Dr. Skelton agreed with Keenleyside that "with careful handling the Canadian-born Japanese could be an asset." (O.D.S., Memo for the Prime Minister, 30 September 1940, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 D1, vol. 92.)

Keenleyside, in his 1940 memo, noted that the British Columbia press,

especially the Vancouver Province was recognizing that an increasing number of the Asians in the province were Canadian citizens by birth. Shortly after he wrote his report, the Vancouver Sun which had never displayed a particularly tolerant attitude towards Asians, suggested military service would be a good test of loyalty and "a salutary thing in the lives of these young Canadian-born Orientals to call upon them to make some sacrifice for their native country." (5 October 1940). On the other hand, the Vancouver News-Herald presented a more traditional and popular view by observing the presence of Japanese in the armed forces would embarrass "us" and "we have no right to ask them to bear arms when we are not prepared to extend them privileges of citizenship." (2 October 1940).

⁹W.L.M. King to T.D. Pattullo, 25 October 1940, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1 File 263-38. King specifically requested Pattullo "to avoid any action which would be likely to add to public nervousness and apprehension."

¹⁰Before convening in Vancouver and Victoria during the first week of November 1940, committee members studied existing reports on the situation in British Columbia. In the coastal cities they interviewed a number of Japanese and other residents who had knowledge, experience or opinions on the Oriental situation.

¹¹Special Committee on Orientals, Report, p. 12.

¹²The committee was not unanimous in this recommendation. Sir George Sansom who acted as a special advisor argued that Canada's failure to give Japanese "the right and duty to receive military training was contrary to a policy of promoting assimilation by creating equality and could only be justified if military authorities were convinced of the need of exclusion. (Sansom to Keenleyside, 22 November 1940, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1, File 263-38.)

¹³Unsigned Memo, "The Japanese Problem in British Columbia," 23 June 1941, in Department of National Defence, Directorate of History (hereafter D.Hist.), File 181.009 (D5546).

¹⁴A.W. Neill to J.L. Ralston, 3 October 1940, PAC, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 24; C.V. Stockwell to Secretary, Department of National Defence, 10 October 1940, D. Hist., File 169.012 (D2); "Memo of meeting of 1 October 1940 called by the Attorney General of British Columbia to discuss Certain Aspects of Civil Security Insofar as They Apply to the Japanese in Canada and British Columbia Particularly." Copy in Vancouver City Archives, Mayor's Correspondence, 1940.

¹⁵The New Canadian, 6 December 1940.

¹⁶H. Nagonobu, president, and K.T. Shoyama, Japanese Canadian Citizens' League to Ernest Lapointe, 9 October 1940, PAC, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 24; Vancouver Daily Province, 30 September 1940; The New Canadian, 29 November 1940.

¹⁷The New Canadian, 22 November 1940.

¹⁸Dr. G.A. Ishiwara, Secretary, Japanese Canadian Citizens League to W.L.M. King, 15 January 1941, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1, File 212-39C; The New Canadian, 17 January 1941.

¹⁹The New Canadian, 31 January 1941; W.L.M. King, Diary, 8 January 1941; Vancouver Daily Province, 9 January 1941.

²⁰The New Canadian, 25 April 1941.

²¹The New Canadian, 14 March 1941.

²²Tom Shoyama, "Niseis in Canadian Khaki," The New Canadian, 21 December 1946.

²³The New Canadian, 5 September 1941; 7 November 1941; 14 November 1941; 20 December 1941; 25 December 1941.

Within the Nisei community in Vancouver there was some discussion of following the precedent of the First World War and organizing a Nisei company which would then press for entry into the Active Army as a group. The idea attracted little support (The New Canadian, 19 June 1941) possibly because some Nisei desired to integrate with the white community. When T.K. Shoyama raised the possibility with army officials in October 1941, Colonel Sparling told him a separate and distinct Nisei unit would be "too expensive and complicated." (Tom Shoyama, "Niseis in Canadian Khaki," The New Canadian, 11 January 1947.)

²⁴The New Canadian, 10 October 1941.

²⁵Memorandum of an Interview between Colonel B.R. Mullaly attached, Pacific Command, and Representatives of the Japanese Community in British Columbia, 4 October 1941, "PAC, King Papers, MG 26 J 4 vol. 361; The New Canadian 10 October 1941; Tom Shoyama, "Niseis in Canadian Khaki," The New Canadian, 18 January 1947.

²⁶The United States drafted Nisei under Selective Service until June 1942. At that time it transferred Nisei already in the army (over five thousand) out of Western Defence Command, gave some honorable discharges and assigned the others to noncombatant duty. Before Pearl Harbor it had started a small Japanese Language School in San Francisco; it was moved to Minnesota later.

In January 1943 the Army organized a special unit of Nisei volunteers to serve in Europe. One reason for allowing Nisei to volunteer was to counteract Axis propaganda suggesting that the United States was fighting a racial war. Early in 1944 the American government began subjecting Japanese-Americans to normal selective service procedures.

The United States Navy, however, refused Nisei except as language teachers and very few served in the air force. This account is based on Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, The Great Betrayal: The Evacuation of the Japanese-Americans During World War II (London, Macmillan, 1969), chapter ten.

There are two significant differences between the American and the Canadian situations. The most important was the franchise. American Nisei had the right to vote; Canadian Nisei, at least in British Columbia where most of them resided, did not. Second, the number of American Nisei was sufficiently large to justify the creation of separate and distinct all-Japanese fighting units.

²⁷Joint Service Committee, Pacific Coast, 5 December, C.S.C. Misc. Memoranda, vol. 2, D. Hist., File 193.009 (D3).

On 16 October 1941 the Vancouver Sun suggested conscripting all trustworthy foreign-born residents for military training and home defence.

Although the Sun did not specifically mention Asians, The New Canadian (17 October 1941) endorsed the idea and urged its application to second generation Asians.

²⁸Not until 14 January 1942 did the government announce its intention to form a Civilian Corps of Canadian Japanese who would be expected to volunteer for employment "on projects of value to the national cause." (Memorandum on Progress with Relation to the Japanese Problem in British Columbia," n.d. [c. 27 January 1942] Copy in PAC, King Papers, MG 26 J4 vol. 361). The civil servants concerned with the Japanese problem suggested that Col. Mullaly should head the corps and that pay and allowances should be only slightly lower than those paid by the army. The British Columbia Members of Parliament, however, favoured payment at relief rates. Despite these conflicts and questions of federal or provincial jurisdiction, the Corps was authorized by Order in Council on 17 February 1942. On the advice of the British Columbia Security Commission, the agency responsible for the evacuated Japanese, its formation was postponed indefinitely by Order in Council of 31 March 1942. The available evidence indicates plans for the Corps were never advanced very far.

²⁹"Memo [of meeting of representatives of the Departments of National Defence, National Defence (Air), National War Services, R.C.M.P. and External Affairs, 17 December 1941] re Military Service for Canadians of Oriental Race," in PAC, CWCR, 19 December 1941, RG 2 7C, vol. 2.

³⁰This committee, composed of representative British Columbian chosen by the federal government, was established early in 1941.

³¹On January 7, 1942 the University of British Columbia announced that Japanese-Canadians had been struck off strength from Basic and C.O.T.C. training. The numbers involved were 43 and six respectively. See Elaine Bernard, "A University at War: Japanese Canadians at U.B.C. During World War II." BC Studies, No.35 (Autumn 1977), pp. 31-55.

³²Mackenzie to King, 10 January 1942, PAC, Mackenzie Papers, vol. 32.

³³13 February 1942, PAC, CWCR, RG 2 7C, vol. 8.

³⁴As early as 30 December 1941, Maj.-Gen. R.O. Alexander, General Officer Commanding, Pacific Command, favoured the removal from the coast and internment of all Japanese males between the ages of 18 and 45. By so doing, he hoped to prevent inter-racial riots. (Alexander to Chief of the General Staff, Department of National Defence, 30 December 1941, extract in PAC, Mackenzie Papers, vol. 32). On 13 February 1942, the Joint Service Committee, Pacific Command noted "the continued presence of enemy aliens and persons of Japanese racial origin in the Protected Area constitutes a serious danger and prejudices the effective defence of the Pacific Coast of Canada" but the Committee recommended the removal of all Japanese males only from certain specified areas namely: Ucluelet/Tofino, Prince Rupert, the Skeena River (to and including Terrace), the Queen Charlotte Islands and Quatsino Sound. A week later, however, the Committee recommended the removal from the protected area of all enemy aliens and all Japanese irrespective of age or sex. The available

contemporary evidence does not reveal precisely what led the Committee to change its mind. In his memoirs, Soldiers and Politicians (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1962), Lt.-Gen. Maurice A. Pope suggests the British Columbians who had been pressing for the evacuation of the Japanese "must have got busy on the telephone." (p. 178)

³⁵Memo of 30 April 1942 concurred in by the chief of the General Staff, Adjutant-General, Master General of the Ordnance, Quartermaster General." Copy in PAC, CWCR, 16 May 1942, RG 2 7C, vol. 2.

Noting that the United States Army was not enlisting Japanese, the memo observed: "Apart from considerations of Canadian security it would appear unwise to enlist persons of Japanese origin in the Canadian Army, as such would ultimately lead to an unfortunate situation in places where Canadian and United States troops are in close contact."

³⁶Prior to an amendment in 1942, Royal Canadian Navy regulations stated a recruit was to be "of the white race" and a British subject. Under Naval Order 2653 (3 April 1943) "any male British subject of any racial origin may be entered for the period of hostilities in the Canadian Naval Forces."

According to the official history [G. N. Tucker, The Naval Service of Canada (Ottawa, King's Printer, 1952), vol. II, p. 269] the navy employed no Canadian-born Japanese during the war but probably would have recruited Nisei for special duties if Pacific operations had not ended so abruptly.

In 1940, David L. Tsubota, the English-born son of a Japanese veteran of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, joined the RCN. He was released after three months because of his racial origin and joined the Black Watch (RHR). He was captured at Dieppe and not released from a German Prisoner of War camp until early 1945. (The New Canadian, 10 March 1945).

³⁷PAC, CWCR, 16 May 1942.

³⁸PAC, CWCR, 22 May 1942.

³⁹See Angus MacInnis in Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates, 2 July 1945, p. 3878.

⁴⁰At least one Chinese volunteer, Private Wing Hay of Port Alberni, later distinguished himself by taking half a dozen prisoners near Caen. (Vancouver Sun, 21 July 1944).

⁴¹One such Chinese officer was 2nd Lieutenant Frank Ho Lem who trained at Gordon Head near Victoria. Lem suggested the army create a Chinese Canadian unit. Since the army had already considered this idea when W.B.T. Seto, a member of the C.O.T.C. at U.B.C. proposed it, it had a ready answer, there was insufficient manpower available to make it feasible. (Frank Ho Lem to General G.R. Pearkes, 6 December 1942; J.E. Lyon, Brigadier, General Staff, Pacific Command to Ho Lem, 14 December 1942, D. Hist., File 322.009 (D478).) The General Staff had also expressed concern about language difficulties.

⁴²See correspondence between Maj.-Gen. R.O. Alexander and Dr. C.Y. Hsie, Consul-General for China in Vancouver, April 1942 in D. Hist. File 322.009 (D814).

⁴³Memo from the Department of National Defence to the Minister, 29 April 1943 in PAC, CWCR, 29 April 1943.

⁴⁴Victoria Daily Times, 22 August 1944.

⁴⁵Vancouver Sun, 15 August 1944; Frank Ho Lem to General Pearkes, 21 August 1944, D. Hist., File 322.009 (D478); Vancouver Province, 22 August 1944. Carol F. Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement: Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia," BC Studies, no. 30 (Summer 1976), pp. 56-57.

⁴⁶Frank Ho Lem to General Pearkes, 20 September 1944, D. Hist., File 322.009 (D478).

⁴⁷Pearkes to Brig. R.B. Gibson, D.C.G.S. (A.), National Defence Headquarters, 4 September 1944, D. Hist. 322.009 (D478).

⁴⁸J.C. Murchie, Lt.-Gen., Chief of the General Staff to Pearkes, 23 September 1944, ibid.

⁴⁹A.C. Spencer, Brigadier, Acting Adjutant-General to Pearkes, 12 October 1944, D. Hist., File 112.352 D09 (D191).

⁵⁰A. Macnamara to F.J. Mead, 19 April 1943 and A. Macnamara to Col. G.S. Currie, Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence (Army), 11 August 1943, PAC, Department of Labour Records, (hereafter DLR), RG 27, vol. 177.

⁵¹See above, no. 35.

⁵²H.F.O. Letson to Minister of National Defence, 29 April 1943, PAC, CWCR, RG 2 7C, vol. 12; A. Macnamara to H.T. Pammett and A.H. Brown, 6 April 1943, PAC, DLR, RG 27, vol. 177.

⁵³"NAV" [Norman A. Robertson], Memo for the Primer Minister, 22 June 1944, PAC, King Papers, MG 26 J4 vol. 361; Memo for the Minister of National Defence, 1 July 1944, PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2641.

⁵⁴Some army officers were willing to enlist Nisei into such nonsensitive areas as the infantry and the artillery. Brigadier P. Earnshaw, DCGS (C), Memo, 10 July 1944 and Minute by J.C. Murchie, PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2641.

⁵⁵Cabinet War Committee, 5 July 1944, PAC, CWCR, RG 2 7C.

⁵⁶Cabinet War Committee, 11 October 1944, PAC, CWCR, RG 2 7C. Curiously, some Nisei soldiers believed the Cabinet insisted that the Nisei should go to war as Canadians. [Barry Broadfoot, Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame: The Story of the Japanese Canadians in World War II (Toronto, Doubleday, 1977), pp. 301, 307].

⁵⁷Tom Shoyama, "Nisei in Canadian Khaki," The New Canadian, 25 January 1947.

⁵⁸Brief submitted by Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy in the Interests of Canadians of Japanese Origin in Canada. In the Matter of the War Services Elections Bill (#135 of 1944) Sec. 5 24 June 1944, PAC, Papers of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese Canadians (hereafter CCJC Papers), MG 28 VI, vol. 1.

⁵⁹Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Debates, 4 August 1944, p. 5916.

⁶⁰"Armed Forces for Nisei - re Special Application Forms," Memo, July 1944, PAC, Papers of the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association (hereafter JCCA), MG 28 V7, File D-272.

⁶¹C. Thomas, Memo, "Enlistment Canadian Nisei," n.d. [c. August 1944], PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2640. Provision was also made to loan up to thirty-five Nisei to British Security Co-ordination. The British had their own recruiting officer work among the Nisei and arranged for advanced training in England.

⁶²Memo by A.D.P. Heeney, 16 January 1945 with Cabinet War Committee, 17 January 1945, PAC, CWCR, RG 2 7C; Memo by N.A. Robertson for the Prime Minister, 8 January 1945, PAC, King Papers, MG 26 J4, vol. 361.

⁶³Extract from Cabinet War Committee Meeting, 17 January 1945, PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2641.

⁶⁴Lt. C. Thomas who was in charge of recruiting Nisei in Ontario reported that of the first 73 he enlisted, the average "M" score was 168 and only 9 had scores below 160. Among the recruits were 3 with M.Sc.'s, 3 with B.A.'s, 2 with some university training and 27 high school graduates. (Thomas to Director Military Intelligence, 5 May 1945, PAC, DNDR, RG 24 vol. 2640). Later recruits were not up to the same high standard. (Commanding Officer, Pacific Command to National Defence Headquarters, 9 August 1945, D. Hist. File No. 322.09 (D586)).

⁶⁵"MF", "Trends in Japanese opinion in Canada re enlistment for overseas as observed in Censorship Reports," 9 May 1945, PAC, DEAR, RG 25 G1, File 724-ES-39.

⁶⁶Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy to W.L.M. King, 10 July 1945, copy in PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2641.

⁶⁷The Loyalty Commission was never formally established but the R.C.M.P. did interview evacuees in the interior camps. See Ken Adachi, The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 297-8.

⁶⁸"Recruitment of Canadian Nisei," Col. D.M.I. to B.C.G.S., 10 August 1945, PAC, DNDR, RG 24, vol. 2641.

⁶⁹Canada, House of Commons, Debates, 9 April 1945, p. 64.

⁷⁰Lt. C. Thomas to D.M.I., "Enlistment-Canadian Nisei," 24 February 1945, PAC, DNDR, RG 2, vol. 2640.

⁷¹A.P. McKenzie, Major, Commanding S-20 Japanese Language School to G.S.O., Intelligence, Headquarters, Pacific Command, 15 May 1945, D. Hist. File 322.009 (D586).

⁷²McKenzie to G.S.O., Intelligence, 15 September 1945, D. Hist., File 322.009 (D586).

⁷³Nisei Affairs, vol. 1, no. 2 (28 August 1945), p. 7.

Not all Nisei were so fortunate. At least one, experienced so much discrimination while attending language school in Vancouver that he sought a transfer to the east.

Incidents surrounding the transfer of the Language School from Vancouver to West Vancouver demonstrated that some British Columbians were still unwilling to accept the return to the coast of even a handful of Japanese. West Vancouver planned to protest; (Vancouver Sun, 14 November 1945) one of two local papers, The Lions Gate Times, described the presence of the Japanese as an "affront to the municipality;" (15 November 1945) and the proprietor of a local movie theatre refused admission to uniformed Nisei and even had one removed by municipal police. (F.F. Worthington, Major-General, G.O.C., Western Command to Secretary, Department of National Defence, 6 March 1946, D. Hist., File 322.009 (D586) Major-General Worthington defused the council protest by assuring the municipality that the school would close by mid-June 1946 and that the fifty-four Nisei at the school had been carefully screened and were subject to military discipline. He placed the theatre off limits to both white and Nisei students, a decision with which all ranks agreed. Despite these examples of hostility, there was also evidence of toleration for the Nisei. Students at the nearby West Vancouver High School organized athletic contests with the Nisei students; one citizens' group asserted that hostility was limited to a few, and the other local newspaper, the West Vancouver News, ignored the controversy.

⁷⁴Kunio Hidaka, Edith Fowke and Kinzi Tanaka, Report of the Subcommittee [of the Co-operative Committee on Japanese-Canadians], 26 October 1946, PAC, CCJC Papers, MG 28 VI, vol. 1.

⁷⁵Vancouver Daily Province, 1 June 1945; Ian Mackenzie to Humphrey Mitchell, 23 July 1946, PAC, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 24

⁷⁶Ian Mackenzie to Gordon Murchison, Director, Veteran's Land Act, 20 May 1946, PAC, Ian Mackenzie Papers, vol. 79.

⁷⁷T.C. Douglas to Ian Mackenzie, 5 March 1947, PAC, Morris Schumiatcher Papers, MG 31 E19. These papers include several letters concerning the attempt of "Buck" Suzuki, a Nisei fisherman and veteran, to get a fishing license.

⁷⁸British Columbia, Statutes, 9 Geo. VI, c. 26, s. 3.

⁷⁹See Lee, "The Road to Enfranchisement," pp. 57-8.

⁸⁰Worthington to Secretary, Department of National Defence, 14 March 1946, D. Hist., File 322.009 (D586).

DEFEAT IS AN ORPHAN: THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG RECONSIDERED

By Dr. K.C. Taylor

Official Histories are by their very nature more celebratory and heroic than definitive. Official History is to History as Victory Carillons are to the art of campanology. And yet, in Canada at least, it seems that academic historians have taken the attitude that the history of the Canadian experience in World War II has been written in sacred codas which must be left to gather dust in respectful silence. Quite the contrary; they must now be re-examined and amplified. First, because the Official Histories, in which the Canadian military experience during World War II is recorded, were compiled by those who had themselves contributed to a greater or lesser extent to the conduct of a just, heroic and victorious war effort recently concluded. The errors and defeats of earlier times were to be briefly though fairly examined only insofar as they still reverberated in the public memory and could not therefore be ignored. The thornier details could await a more propitious occasion. This attitude was reinforced by the atmosphere of the period in which they worked, for it was one in which military danger again apparently threatened that Western and Imperial Alliance whose most recent history they were recounting. It was not a unique situation. The biography of Dr. Thimme, the principal editor of German Official History of the First World War in the 1920's shows, not that pressures were brought to bear on him to present the facts in a certain way, but how the attitudes which he and his colleagues brought to the task in the period in which they worked dictated the form and content of the finished product. In the parlance of today, in both cases, the historical account was pasteurized and homogenized. And we all know that war does not lend itself to such a process without distortion. Its not that tidy or simple. Nor could such a defeat at Hong Kong in December 1941 be contained

in the few dozen pages assigned to it in the British and Canadian Official Histories. The attitudes to "tidy it up", already outlined, then were again reinforced by the spatial limitations imposed by the respective Stationery Offices. But in the case of the Hong Kong affair that process was taken a step further, and it represents the prime example of the inadvisability of continuing to accept the Official Histories as the definitive works they once purported to be.

In the interests of protecting the Atlantic Alliance and reducing, any chance of friction between British and Canadian troops, particularly if the latter should come under the higher command of the former, which seemed likely in the Cold War period, the actual historical record was tampered with by the then respective Chiefs of the Canadian and Imperial General Staffs, Foulkes and Montgomery. In other words even the very evidence which the Official Historians were to use was "edited" before they began their tidying up process. So that as General Foulkes reported in 1948 to his Minister in a Top Secret Memorandum "...after discussing this whole question with Field Marshal Montgomery he [Montgomery] agreed to have these offending paragraphs taken out" ... of the Official report on the Defence of Hong Kong by the General Officer commanding that defence.¹ It was thought best not to remind their successors in the North Atlantic Alliance - by publishing an official record which must have contained reference to it - that it was only a few years earlier in the history of the alliance that the poor morale and fighting efficiency of the Canadian troops at Hong Kong was in Foulkes words "...interpreted by their British superiors as a lack of courage, willingness to fight and even in some cases cowardice", whilst "On the other hand this had caused in the minds of Canadian troops bitterness, lack of confidence and resentment in their British

Superiors.”² In the circumstances of that time the chance of this creating friction between the respective nation's forces or even between their governments and High Commands was quite considerable. In this he was quite correct. But it does mean that the existing official historical record has been sanitised twice.

Yet even after this process of removing the most spikey of the bones which might stick in the national throats; the reaction of those thought to be qualified critics to the accounts in the draft Official Histories was not favourable, and even the twice revised record was not to escape further revision at their behest. To take two examples in the case of the draft of the British Official History. Colonel Price, an extraordinarily intelligent, well educated, and gallant man of wide experience and unchallenged integrity who had commanded one of Canadian battalions involved in the defence of Hong Kong complained bitterly to the official historians that the draft of the British account was "...written in such a manner as to create a wrong impression as to intent and motive [in the course of the battle]", on the part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. That contrary to the impression given by the British Official History "There were plenty of Canadian Officers who had had battle experience in the first war and who were competent to judge as to the possibility of a successful outcome of the defence of the island."³ Also that the draft history "...casts a reflection on ... senior Canadian officers which I greatly resent and about which I protested to General Maltby..." in the prison camps.⁴ In his opinion also the report on the behaviour of the senior Canadian officers by the Brigadier commanding them ... "is not to be relied upon. He was in a state of great nervous excitement and I believe his mental state was such that he was incapable of collected judgement or of efficient

leadership."⁵ And the reference to the protest to Maltby in the prison camp evidences an extraordinary situation of which the existing accounts of the Hong Kong Affair take no account at all. Research shows that immediately upon capture the various officers responsible for the major decisions taken during the campaign metaphorically speaking "rushed into print", on whatever paper they could salvage. This at a time when the confusion was so great and the Japanese control of them so loose that escape was fairly simple and several attempts succeeded. Its a strange picture, these senior officers busily scribbling away in their pathetic school exercise books amidst the wreckage of defeat, ignoring the opportunity to organise their men in attempts to reach freedom and fight again another day. But this scene and the desperate lengths to which they went to preserve these accounts in the prison camps indicates what was at stake. It seems from reading between the lines in these stained and tattered documents of unhappier times in their present archival homes, that from the time of the loss of the Shingmun redoubt and particularly the abandonment of the mainland it was apparent to the commanders of each of the national contingents that there would be, after the war, and their faith in ultimate victory is also remarkable - a reckoning; in which the nationalities involved - Britain, India, and Canada - using as counters in this contest the units which each had contributed would each blame the other for the failure to meet the pre war expectations of a 90 day defensive battle awaiting relief from the sea. In the Canadian case the British approach was that the senior Canadian officer, always regarded his first responsibility to be answerable not to his superiors in the Hong Kong Garrison but in the words of the GOC's secret report to the British authorities regarded himself "...answerable to the Canadian Chief of the General Staff, to the Dominion Government, to the

Canadian people", and thus by implication his first responsibility was to preserve the Canadian units intact rather than suffer heavy losses in a forlorn hope defending an indefensible position.⁶ Brigadier Price's strictures over the extracts from the G.O.C.'s official despatch were accepted and the final version of the British Official History modified accordingly, despite Price's personal involvement in the outcome of the conflicting versions. In other words, rightly or wrongly, the Official History had been "sanitized" once again at the behest of another party with a stake in the form the Official Historical record would take.

The reaction of Augustus Muir, the pseudonymous author of the Regimental History of the Royal Scots to the British Official History as originally drafted was similar. In a 64 page memorandum supplied to the Cabinet Office, supported by sworn statements by survivors, and prewar aerial photographs of the mainland defences the Official Historians had not known existed, he pointed out the minor errors which could be corrected easily, and which are only to be expected. But he then went on to conduct what was almost a legal brief in defence of the Royal Scots performance. The expected losses due to malaria vs the actual ones; withdrawing over ground they had never before traversed; the foolishness of the Brigadier's appreciation of the redoubt both as the key to the defence of the mainland, though he avoids the fact that it was constructed on a bluff overlooking the colony's main water reservoir so that its loss involved the loss of that irreplaceable facility to a continued defence. He points out that the pillboxes in the defence line were poorly constructed; that the routes used by the Japanese in the attack had not even been considered in the pre-invasion calculations; and that the redoubt at night - the period during which it was attacked - was by orders manned by three solitary men. In Muir's words it was

not "impregnable", merely a "death trap". He went on to point out all the reasons he concluded that the defence was weakened by Garrison H.Q. in allowing "the vested interests of civilians, - European and Chinese -, to take priority over military considerations." He attacked the conclusion that the capture of the Shingmun redoubt "altered the whole course of the campaign", and was "actually the key to the whole position", since the Japanese had cut it off in any case due to the failure of the British High Command to use their artillery to break up the Japanese commander's risking concentrations of the troops in the open to conduct this out-flanking movement of the redoubt. And he emphasises that the Brigadier and the G.O.C. projected after its fall a defence of the mainland longer than that projected before the fall of the Redoubt. And so it goes on. What he does show is that the Official Historians, without the oral testimony on oath given to the Royal Scots Regimental enquiries - and without the usual documentary evidence - really had no idea what the defensive positions were like in the Battle for Hong Kong, or what had happened in them. They had taken the opinions of senior officers who had not gone forward to see what was going on - for reasons which remain inconclusive - and with very poor control and communications. Those opinions as he said, were "not based upon a full knowledge of the facts".⁷ Research amongst the survivors has shown that, in this at least, Muir was quite right. The Official Historians were on pretty shaky ground in replying on these opinions and reports of senior officers in their account of what was after all a series of minor tactical actions - a "Soldiers Battle". The rest of Muir's statements of the Draft Official History were modified as a result of this attack by the well briefed committed defence counsel for the Royal Scots. So in a sense you could say that it had been "sanitised" once again in response

to his partisan regimental views. But equally important is the knowledge that the Official Historians, working against a schedule to cover an enormous amount of ground were not able - even with the unprecedented resources placed at their disposal - to do more than give a cursory glance at the mass of evidence that could have been available to them from the participants in what was a confused affair of myriad small actions. Particularly was this so in the case of Hong Kong, which appeared to be a minor affair - in terms of scale and long term efforts. A false appearance to which this analysis must return.

Normally, these sorts of commissions and errors in the Historical Record of World War II have since been corrected by the appearance after the "Official" histories of literally hundreds of published works, memoirs, campaign histories, and accounts of particular engagements which act as supplements to, commentaries on, and thus a corrective to, those governmental behemoths. It is indeed a "growth industry", particularly where controversy is a natural concomitant. Nor is the war in the Pacific or the Canadian military experience exempt from this process. One could write a historiographical essay on the works on Singapore and as the chief P.R.O. of the Canadian Department of Veterans Affairs told James Leasor, in the latter's words "...he had received a number of requests for help from other writers who had reconstructed the story of the Dieppe Raid over the years and he personally wondered what new material could now be found...."⁸

Surely then the pattern will have been the same in the case of the fall of Hong Kong and the record of such an important episode, at least in Canadian History, has been corrected since then you will assume. After all it was the first occasion in which large numbers of Canadian Troops were employed in action in World War II, the only occasion on which a major ground force was

contributed by Canada to combat in the Pacific, the first major defeat in Canadian military history, the first occasion on which large numbers of Canadian troops went into captivity, and the first since the Boer War in which Canada contributed to the active defence of the British Empire per se.⁹ There are the monographs you will assume, the scholarly articles, and certainly the popularised versions of the battle and imprisonment which pour from the paper back presses. In this conclusion you would be quite wrong.

The popular press and Weekend Magazine/Macleans circuit have had a sensationalised go at it - about once a decade on average. There is one Masters Thesis on the role of the Royal Rifles written some years ago under the patronage of the Chancellor of that University who happened to be the former commander of that regiment, for which not a single request has been received from academic circles since its completion. That is not to say that no attempts have been made to write on the subject. I know of at least ten manuscripts languishing in dead men's attics and several more under way by the living. But they fall into the "stand by your memoirs" category of dusty military recollection. Proof of this lack of interest on the part of the military historians in Canada and Britain and their willingness to allow the Official Histories' accounts to stand without reexamination is that when this research began a couple of years ago, many of the germane British and Canadian documents had to be declassified. No one had asked to see them since the Official Historians had completed their work.

The British publication_ picture is even more bizarre, despite Hong

Kong's importance in Imperial history. In the immediate aftermath of liberation, several accounts of P.O.W. experiences and escapes by those involved in the Hong Kong Affair appeared in common with the similar accounts of those captured at Singapore or who had worked on the Death railway. They tended to be paper backs of transient quality paper and to have the usual sensationalized titles, with suitably exotic covers. There has always been a ready market for this kind of thing, and the Death Railway/Singapore examples still sell briskly here and in Britain. But to find copies of the Hong Kong examples one has to be satisfied with dangerously brittle and ancient copies from dusty second hand book shops. One wonders why? They were the same Japanese after all. However, there have been two more recent developments which are equally odd. Mr. Ford, who served with the Royal Scots in Hong Kong, (together with his Brotherexecuted by the Japanese for his role in the pipeline out of the camps to the outside world and decorated posthumously for his refusal to betray his comrades) felt that he had something to say, both about the defence of Hong Kong and his role in it and the imprisonment which followed its failure. From such an extremely able and literate observer with a trained legal mind now serving as one of Her Majesty's most senior civil servants in Scotland one could have expected much. But he saw fit to fictionalise his recollections and views of the battle and the imprisonment; thus preserved his anonymity as one of the leading figures in the United Kingdom legal system. Consequently one is not permitted therefore to know whether or not there is a word of absolute truth in either of them.¹⁰ Curioser and curioser. Finally there is the strange case of Tim Carew, a veteran officer in the war against the Japanese, decorated, wounded, - and a first class author of popular military history. But when Carew turned his attention to Hong Kong as

an unfilled gap in British Military history, he became totally committed to what he saw as the telling of a neglected tale of unsung heroes. And in the process retold every old soldiers story ever concocted about the Battle. The end result is that he is the honoured guest at their reunions as their sole advocate in a world which seems to be determined to forget their short but bloody and repercussive campaign. They are not in error there. Proof lies in the publication history of Carew's two books. The second book on the P.O.W.'s experiences never made it onto the Paper Back book shelves, largely due to the strange history of the book on the battle itself which did - and under a major imprint in a major series too.¹¹ It was one of the earliest works included in Pan's British Battles Series, coming out in 1963 - three years after the original hard back publication date - a pretty fair record. But it was swiftly deleted and it remains the only title to be so abused, whereas the others which appeared with it nearly 15 years ago are still available and have gone through myriad printings. It has now reappeared. But it has never been reinstated in the original series. Carew's account of the fall of Hong Kong had obviously been "terminated with extreme prejudice". I can only sincerely hope that the latest British entry in the Hong Kong stakes is offered a longer publication life. A major in the Grenadier Guards, stationed in Hong Kong where his interest in the battle germinated; and later in Canada where that interest could be fed, has recently completed a manuscript which he fully expects to be published shortly. Impressed, by walking the ground over which they fought, with the heroism of those charged with such a difficult task, and having met many of the civilians who had been involved in what was after all a siege - albeit a short one - and imprisoned in its aftermath, he felt - quite rightly - that their story was worth telling. The

facts he has learned, particularly from the civilian participants, will add to the possibility that a professional military historian will be able to re-examine the defence and fall of Hong Kong in its proper context, which includes the diplomatic and international ramifications and the Canadian constitutional and legal issues which it raises.

There are the regimental histories of course. But they suffer from the same caveats as the Official histories - in short - space and heroism. But what is left out of them is extremely revealing, particularly from the Canadian point of view. Nothing is said there about the convening of a regimental court of enquiry into the loss of the Shingmun redoubt actually in the P.O.W. camps, as soon as this could be arranged, or of the postwar enquiry in the Edinburgh Royal Scots Club before which each officer involved in the Defence of Hong Kong who survived the P.O.W. Camps was summoned on his return to explain his personal behaviour in the battle 5 years before, the proceedings of which were taken down by a shorthand reporter, sealed, and deposited in the care of the Princess Royal, then Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment. One finds nothing about the communications failure between the prepared positions in the mainland defences largely due, as the signals NCO who had laid the lines pointed out, to the fact that the poorer rural Chinese dug up many of the copper telephone cables to use or sell as fast as they were laid. Nor that the Intelligence Officer for the mainland brigade was a gentleman of the Royal Scots who had been released from Hospital 48 hours before the actual invasion and was actually walking the defensive positions for the first time to fix them in his mind when the Japanese attacked. There is no reference to the fact that the dour and experienced Lowland Scots of the prewar battalion had been largely returned to their homeland to flesh out the new battalions being

raised there, being replaced by drafts of Welsh and North Country Englishmen with little training, no experience and absolutely nothing in common with the Scots alongside whom they were supposed to serve. And more important that only 1 in 10 of the trained regular NCO's and Officers - by British regulations imposed on the Hong Kong garrison when it was de-clared a fortress garrison in 1940 - remained to direct the defence in 1941. The balance being made up of regular NCO's promoted over their heads, NCO's from Royal Scots Territorial battalions who had joined for the extra money in the depression, and officers from the same source - largely minor professional men - who had appreciated that social and even professional life in the Edinburgh of the 30's was primarily dictated by the Regiment. It was a military freemasonry which did not fit its members for a field command in desperate circumstances. In fact, the situation became so desperate just before the Japanese attack that men who had been commissioned into the H.K.V.D.C. (the Home Guard of the Colony) as their due as Taipans of the business community were transferred into the Royal Scots to fill empty command postings. Yet the regiment stands by the account in their regimental history, and it is not surprising to discover that in comparison with their Canadian counterparts their surviving officers from the defence of Hong Kong had fared exceedingly badly. The professional ambitions which had led many of them to join the Regiment had been sadly blighted by their performance at Hong Kong in a society still largely dominated by Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard.

There are no regimental histories of the 5/7 Rajputs and 2/14 Punjabis, since the passing away of the British Raj so shortly after the war - swiftly followed by Gale and Polden - made such an eventuality unlikely and almost irrelevant. There is an Indian "Official History", and it contributes

to a general knowledge of the battle with its short, tactical, and heroic overview.¹² But regimental magazines did exist until 1948, and these are far more useful as a careful study of the postings to and from the battalions in the period 1940-1941 confirms one of Carew's more carefully contrived opinions "The Indians were a mixture of reservists - time expired men recalled for duty at the outbreak of war and raw youngsters. The Rajputs and Punjabis, martial races both, have produced some of India's finest fighting men. But a reservist of any nationality, his service behind him, civilian life in front of him, must inevitably be something of an 'unwilling warrior.'¹³ What he has missed is two additional factors further reducing the effectiveness of these two particular battalions. The recruiting situation being what it was in India at the time, the traditional policy of keeping like with like amongst the quarrelsome tribes, castes and religions of India, had been abandoned in certain cases. And where fear of immediate action was the least pressing, say a battalion taking up garrison duties in Hong Kong, the old rules - based on decades of experience and good sense - were suspended. Consequently the 5/7 Rajputs contained rather fewer of that most outstanding of the Hindu "martial races" than it should have done and the numbers had been made up with their avowed rivals - if not outright enemies - Muslims from the Punjab. It was then unlikely that they would weld into a cohesive fighting unit. The 2/14 Punjabis were homogeneous in the sense that they were all Muslims but they were broken down into platoons made up of distinct and separate tribal groups within the same companies. And in command of each were Indian officers as they had been one of the few Indian Army regiments chosen for the recent experiment of commissioning Indians through an Indian equivalent of the R.M.A. Sandhurst. As this was in its early stages and as they had very little in common with their

men, coming as they usually did from entirely different cultural backgrounds it was to prove a weakness in the forge of combat. And these two battalions of fine regiments with long and honourable traditions had also been robbed of their backbone - their best senior NCO's - for training purposes at their respective depots in their homeland.

The odd dearth of publications regarding the Defence of Hong Kong aside, in considering this aspect of the problem something else has emerged. And before one turns to the Middlesex Regiment who fall into a category of their own - except in one important respect - that emergent phenomenon must be clearly stated. The traditional British and Canadian view has been that two insufficiently trained, inexperienced, unhomogeneous, poorly equipped and badly led Canadian Militia battalions with a morale problem and hastily filled with new recruits were sent to join battalions of the regular Imperial and Indian armies representing the other side of the coin of military effectiveness. One could suggest that it has now emerged to have been a double headed panny and that this alone calls for a re-examination of the existing history of the fall of Hong Kong. The exception was the Middlesex Regiment. They had suffered the same losses in manpower and leadership and very few of them were, by December 1941, born within the "Sound of Bow Bells," their traditional cockney recruiting ground. But their role as a machine gun battalion rather than an infantry battalion, the extraordinarily high calibre of their regular officers remaining, the fact that they were not involved in the disastrous mainland defense, and the "family" feeling of the "Die Hards", into which the replacements were quickly incorporated, all seem to have contributed to a different attitude - and thus performance - to the other battalions. Their regimental history is as full in its account of their performance as that of

others is brief, and quite rightly. It is interesting therefore that their most distinguished surviving Hong Kong soldier Christopher Man who rose to the rank of Major General in the post war army and now the Steward to the Duke of Atholl's Estates in Scotland should ask that his opinion of the Canadian troops be conveyed for any future reconsideration of the defence of Hong Kong. In comparison with the existing garrison he points out "that the Canadians appeared fit, confident ... and unusually well equipped by our standards".¹⁴ Again this seems to bear out the conclusion, from an unprejudiced observer - after all none ever accused his regiment of performing other than in an exemplary fashion - that the previously accepted comparison between the Canadians and the Imperial and Indian battalions they were to join is a false one.

That's the historical record as it stands, with some idea of how poor it is and some of its weaknesses. Yet there is a consensus amongst those who normally provide the most help in historical research that this unfortunate affair should never be reopened. For there are prominent Canadians and British figures who were involved in some way in the negotiations leading up to the despatch of the expeditionary force, the defence itself and the consequences of the fall, who still agree with the Canadian C.G.S. when he told his minister a decade after the battle, and nearly twenty years ago, that "...unless this case is reopened these regrettable circumstances [that is those surrounding the despatch of the expedition and its performance on arrival] can remain in oblivion."¹⁵ The reasons for these attitudes are often valid ones from the holder's viewpoint, being due to political and diplomatic fears rather than personal ones. For instance, the renegotiation of the Hong Kong treaty or its present defence posture could be complicated by a critical re-examination of

the only serious attack upon it and this failure to withstand it. Also the ruling party in Canada is still the party of those who led that nation in its most difficult international and military crisis, the second world war. Who can tell what conclusions might be drawn as to its failings in that regard by such a reconsideration and extrapolated into the present by the unwise. Though in that respect the caveat that "Those who do not study history (or more than the "official" histories anyway) are condemned to relive it".might have some application here, for in this case we have not done so and some recent events in Canada have their constitutional and legal precedents in the "Hong Kong Affair", a factor which adds considerably to its historical importance and this will be considered here.

Frankly, so long after the event and with such attitudes still current amongst the participants on the political level it is doubtful if historians will ever be able to discover the "whole" story if that is possible about any event. Questions will remain unanswered to the most diligent researcher. But utilising the evidence of those involved who are willing to cooperate, and in view of the limitations imposed upon the Official Historians by time, space, and even subject matter there is a very strong case for a reconsideration of the "Hong Kong Affair" above and beyond the "Official" and regimental histories. This is particularly true in the Canadian historical context. There is the role of the affair in Canadian political and legal history, the vital role it played in the history of modern China, and the history of the imprisonment together with the aftermath of that' experience, the post-war pressures group which has grown up around that shared memory.

But a history of the Hong Kong expeditionary force and the Hong Kong campaign must not be designed to reveal all in order solely to sell books or

enhance a historian's professional reputation. What then would the "redeeming value" be of a reconsideration of the Hong Kong Affair against such a galaxy of entrenched opposition? First there is the whole question as to whether the history of a military campaign is even half complete without a major consideration of its importance in International Affairs and the political and economic background to it. It must be suggested that here one has just that problem. The Hong Kong Affair involves more than a tactical battle lost or won. It brings into question the whole subject of McKenzie King's wartime leadership, both in terms of competence and the kind of measures it took to ensure that - in the interests of national unity - no challenge however constitutionally sanctified should be allowed to weaken its hold whilst the war continued. George Drew, throwing down the gauntlet for His Majesty's Opposition, in public, when his private and parliamentary challenges over what he regarded as the fiasco over the Hong Kong expedition were brushed aside, was quite literally held on charges of treasonable activities against the Canadian State in time of war. And the legal aspects of the Affair are as important historically as the constitutional ones. That other sacred safeguard of Canadian liberties, the Supreme Court, in the person of the embodiment of its virtues the Chief Justice, was first cajoled and then bullied into lending that hitherto untarnished virtue to a Royal Commission which was designed to be a whitewash because raison d'état at that juncture demanded it.¹⁶ That proud and unique symbol of Canada's British inheritance of the police powers duty to "Maintain the Right" the RCMP were used by the government to gather evidence for that enquiry. But were also apparently instructed that they must ensure that those who could give evidence contrary to the government's position, which was that all had been-done that could be done to provide an adequately

trained and equipped force for the task envisaged - namely garrison duty in an Imperial possession which stood in very little danger of attack, were to be not only ignored but physically prevented from testifying.¹⁷ Just one more example will suffice to show that surely the very nature of Canadian government in the war years must be re-examined against the yardstick of the events surrounding the Hong Kong Expedition and the Royal Commission which followed it. The Commander of the First Canadian Army then under intensive training in Britain and shortly expected to be used in combat was ordered home in the midst of this to give evidence to the Royal Commission. The documents show that he refused on the grounds that this was an incredible and monumental political interference with his function as the commander of fighting troops at a most crucial point in their preparation for actual battle. He was told in effect that it was far more important that he give favourable evidence on behalf of the government in this enquiry for public consumption - all the leading military persons in the public eye had to have been seen to have given evidence - than it was for him to continue his purely military duties in the battle zone. That he was to stay as long away from those duties as the Royal Commission - or rather the government - required, and that he obviously did not understand the government's wartime priorities by his objections.¹⁸ I think that these three separate but connected sources of evidence will give you some idea of the importance in Canadian Political and Legal history of the Hong Kong Royal Commission, which - quite rightly - the Official Histories largely ignore, as being outside their given frame of reference.

The importance of the British failure to defend Hong Kong in Modern Chinese history is also largely underestimated by Canadian and British Historians, though not by the Chinese Historians of course. To give one easily

accessible example,.... Chan Lan Kit-Ching, lecturer in History at the University of Hong Kong writing on the Hong Kong Question during the Pacific War 1941-1945 in the Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History points out just what a traumatic shock the fall of Hong Kong was to the Nationalist Chinese government's will to continue the war as a fighting ally against Japan. The story of the K.M.T. forces unwillingness to actively oppose Japanese aggression is too well known to repeat here. Suffice it to say, there was a good reason to believe that this Chinese dormant posture would change as a result of Pearl Harbour. As Chan points out China welcomed Pearl Harbour as she needed the allies thus gained if she was to go over to the offensive again. But in his words, "China was quickly disillusioned" about the power and the will of her new allies

"particularly Britain whose deeply entrenched position in South East Asia collapsed rapidly in face of the Japanese invaders. Hong Kong in fact started the ball of Chinese disappointment rolling fast. China was willing to write off Britain's loss of her two capital ships, the Repulse and the Prince of Wales, three days after Pearl Harbour, as 'no more than bad luck which would be speedily made good...' But before the year was over, China's greatest shock was the fall of Hong Kong. The Chinese were both surprised and worried: surprised because what they had hitherto regarded as a strong British base should be occupied by Japan with such ease; and worried. because not a few of them, particularly those in senior government positions, had been using the colony as a refuge for their wives and children. Resentment more often than not followed the trail of disappointment and fear."¹⁹

It seems that the Nationalist Chinese were set on the road to accepting the military stalemate with Japan as permanent during World War II by the Fall of Hong Kong, and that the tendency toward the alternative policy of hoarding what military sources were available for a massive strike at the internal enemy - the Communists - rather than the Japanese was given a major boost. It is interesting to note too in view of this largely Canadian readership that as a result of the failure to defend Hong Kong adequately Britain found it in Chan's words "most difficult to defend her position in Hong Kong. [When the post-war world was under discussion during W.W. II]. Intense pressure and devastating criticism were directed at her by both China and the United States" the latter on the grounds that "One of the common questions asked in the United States about the Pacific War was why should Americans die to protect British Imperialism in places like Hong Kong". A question no doubt many in Winnipeg and Quebec were simultaneously asking themselves. As Chan points out as a result of her failure and the resulting criticism "Britain seriously considered giving up the colony".²⁰ Nor is that the end of the role of the Fall of Hong Kong in Chinese History and that of International Relations. There is reason to believe that Mao's views of the Western will to defend their interests in China proper, as expressed in the late 1940's to the cautious over anxious Stalin faced by a U.S. military giant with nuclear capacity - and defending a ravaged weary U.S.R. without that capacity - were similarly influenced by the circumstances surrounding the Fall of Hong Kong. You might say the "Paper Tiger" was born on Christmas Day 1941, and has haunted us ever since. What price then the 54 pages in the Canadian Official History - is Canada not a Pacific Power? There is twice as much on Dieppe, as one would expect in an Official History. It would seem to have been twice as important, in a strictly tactical and numerical

sense it was, and that's what Official History's do - give military history from that point of view, but the Hong Kong case suggests that there are more facets to military history than those covered there, and that military historians must widen their horizons a great deal if they are to justify their existence within the profession - as many are indeed beginning to do.

Finally, what one might call the Pearl Harbour/Singapore syndrome establishes the narrowness of the current military historian's approach to the history of World War II quite well if one considers the case of the fall of Hong Kong alongside their historiography. The international repercussions of the former and the sheer scale of the latter have led military historians into the attitude that all the simultaneous Japanese attacks on objectives in the Far East including that on Hong Kong were and are "sideshow". "Were" perhaps but no longer. Did the fall of Singapore lead to a change in the relationship during the 2nd World War between two of the major Allied powers - China and the United States - as did that of Hong Kong? Does the ghost of Pearl Harbour still bedevil the international relationship between the successors to those governments? The spectre of Hong Kong does. So what is now the major defeat in the early stages of the Pacific War?

Several of the reasons for the importance of the Hong Kong Expedition in purely Canadian military history, offering good reason for a thorough reconsideration in a major work have already been mentioned. But there are others. For example, the attempts to strike an East/West and Anglo/French balance even in a Force as small as this with their contemporary parallels are important in their own right, and though the results of research into this thorny subject are conclusive - the survivors tend to project a unity they did not perhaps possess in fact. A tentative conclusion would be that such a policy

did nothing to strengthen the military effectiveness of the expedition or their ability to withstand imprisonment. Actually the French-Canadian who played the most influential role in the regimental history was General Vanier, then in command of Valcartier Camp from which they were despatched to the West Coast for their final destination. Perhaps his evidence in fact may show that, with a thorough re-examination of the Hong Kong expedition, we have the only means of testing the Canadian state of preparedness and effectiveness after more than 2 years of War and why the "heroic" image is protected by those who wish to leave the questions unanswered. When asked by the Royal Commission if he had passed them fit for their duties in Hong Kong he replied that he had followed the normal procedure for a General Commanding at that time - he had stood on the saluting base and taken their eyes right as they marched out of his care into the prospective battleground.²¹ This is not to suggest however that their Imperial Allies in Hong Kong had not been in the same state of mind - that of the western front in World War I - at the same stage of their military involvement in the second World War. The Royal Scots, as the mainland defence battalion, had been told - before the 1940 debacle in France and the low countries - that they should not only prepare defensive lines based on those around the Ypres salient twenty years before but that they should practice trench raids. This kept them busy under the instruction of a few very old soldiers who had had experience of this kind of warfare until Dunkirk made the practice of this tactic look as ridiculous as it really was.²² What it does suggest is that Canada had as yet not passed that stage in its thinking - or so it seems - particularly at the higher training, planning and staff levels in Ottawa. This is one of the claims to prominence of the Hong Kong expedition in Canadian military history. In many ways it is proof of it.

One must mention too a couple more of the aspects of the Fall of Hong Kong which are not adequately covered by the existing literature, such as it is. First, the whole question of the imprisonment is outside the scope of the Official Histories, but not outside the scope of the military historian attempting to give an adequate picture of the Hong Kong Expedition. The leadership potential in the Royal Rifles and the "family" feeling was similar to that in the Middlesex; the Winnipeg Grenadiers can be seen as equivalent to the Royal Scots in that regard. And there are many interesting aspects to that - seldom does one get the chance to analyse whole "units" - particularly Canadian - of men going into captivity alongside British ones and examining the strengths and weaknesses of each. But there is a wider aspect to this. In the opinion of the Doctors from the camps consulted, the British regiments with their long experience of the East, whatever it might have done to weaken their fighting spirit had brought them to terms with the normal standard of living - particularly in nutrition - in the East. The Canadians, largely from rural or semi-rural areas had not. Despite the Depression they were used - in the physiological sense - to a much higher standard of living than the British troops and believed that no one could live below, that level, unless they were orientals of course. One can conclude that there was a survival pecking order based upon past experience, with the civilians at the top since they knew the level at which countless millions in China had existed for generations and that their level of physical well being - from which the will to live is of course directly derived - was no worse than that of those millions and generations. The British came into a middle category, and the Canadians who though they had been suffering at home in the Depression years came a long way last.

Which leads into the final aspect of the Canadian Hong Kong Expedition which should be at least mentioned here. The results of that bottom place in the

survival league led those who did survive to feel that they had been treated as less than [Canadian] humans and amongst them the rate of disablement, permanent or temporary, complete or semi, was similarly higher than that of their fellow prisoners. Add to this the attitude of the King government on their return, which was understandably one of seeing them as numerous living reminders of past misdemeanours which might still come home to roost - with serious political and legal consequences - and one can see why there grew up, in the postwar period, a pressure group with a history almost as fascinating politically speaking as that of the more recent Campaign to Save the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, though the latter had the advantage of being able to call on devolutionist sentiment in Scotland and the fear of it at Westminster. From the Canadian Hong Kong veterans King had little to fear, had he but known it, yet from the beginning they were to be kept out of the public eye insofar as that was possible and not to share in the heady fruits of victory. Col. Price as the commanding officer of the survivors en route homewards from the U.S. was warned not to give any comments to the press, and simultaneously the award of the Pacific Star - which incidentally would have involved the payment of large sums of supplementary pay to add to the arrears of pay already due the survivors - was denied. The cold chill of the Canadian welcome was particularly galling after the warmth of the care offered by the American military authorities. The Minister of National Defence welcomed them home on the West Coast with honeyed words on behalf of the Prime Minister. In the pregnant pause which followed, the perennial rear rank voice expressed the sentiments of them all. "Bugger the Prime Minister, what about the Pacific Star?"²³ It has been that way ever since.

King had one last hurdle to negotiate before he could forget the Hong

Kong Expedition. Those very Official Histories whose inadequacies in this case have already been outlined. For 1948 the pending publication of those Histories raised the spectre of disclosure about what had really happened in 1941. Unfortunately for the historians, however, the same Prime Minister was still in office and his opposition was still George Drew - with the latter's chance of reversing roles quickly diminishing, faced as he was with a Liberal Party which had led the nation to a recent and massive victory. He took every possible opportunity to embarrass the Prime Minister, but the pending publication of the History of the Hong Kong Expedition held a special attraction for him. If he could now reveal the truth about the failures in wartime leadership the despatch of that expedition represented, and the truth about the role of the Supreme Court in the enquiry which followed it, he could not only raise doubts about just how much King and his henchmen had contributed to victory, but perhaps even prove they had delayed it. And at the same time he could revenge himself for the humiliations he had suffered at King's hands, in the course of his first attempt in 1942, as a result of wartime restrictions on what was and what was not permitted in the parliamentary arena. A less likely combination of circumstances for the emergence of an adequate account of the Hong Kong Expedition is hard to conceive. But King had to be more thorough this time in his rebuttal of the storm of vitriolic criticism which was bound to burst about his head from Drew, for though the undeclared Cold War was in progress he did not have the extraordinary powers which had devolved upon him as Prime Minister in the recent declared War. Nor could he use the government's security agencies to suppress evidence surrounding an affair nearly a decade old - at least not one in which the now dreaded Reds made an appearance. The evidence shows that he charged the C.G.S. and his Staff to re-

examine all the evidence surrounding the despatch of the Expedition including that suppressed in 1942 so that all embarrassing opposition questions might be met with satisfactory Parliamentary answers. The conclusions of the C.G.S. as transmitted through his Minister - and they are those one must remember of an extremely able and experienced Field Commander and Staff Officer were extremely detailed but may be summed up in his own opening advice. "I would strongly recommend that every effort should be made to avoid reopening this Hong Kong [Affair]". Amongst the regrettable circumstances he identifies surrounding the expedition is the fact that there was "nothing to show that the Department of National Defence [in 1941] had a staff which could work out the pros and cons of accepting the British proposal as a calculated risk of war", and that "any such lack of energy" on the part of the Staff of the Department of National Defence in despatching the expedition to Hong Kong "would" in his words "certainly within 1 Cdn. Corps have presented suitable grounds for a field general court martial."²⁴ But Drew, of course, had no access to these conclusions and King was able to follow the advice of the C.G.S. In the interests of national security and friendship with allies, this time the common enemy being the Soviets and their spies in Ottawa, he was again able to turn Drew's by now rather antiquated slings and arrows once again harmlessly away in Parliamentary answers. But are military historians prepared to allow this situation to continue?

And one should not confine oneself solely to the case of Hong Kong. This is a whole new generation of military historians. First there were the official historians; honoured be their memory. Then came the minor flood of memoirs in which all military historians drowned together. It is time for a generation of reconsideration of the record. The term revisionism is unsuitable

- it smacks of self serving and ideological commitment. But something has to be done and it is fitting that this should have originally been given as the last paper at the first symposium conducted by the infant Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War affiliated to the International Body. But the fact that it is an infant tells volumes about the attitudes formerly current in Canada as to any reconsideration of its recent military history. Yet its birth is an encouraging sign of the changes in those attitudes; and in turn gives birth to the hope that we may soon expect a "Nouvelle Vague" of scholarly monographs reconsidering in all their aspects not only Canada's victories but also its defeats. For we should remember that as the late President John F. Kennedy pointed out in regard to the recent Indo-China War "Victory has many fathers - defeat is an orphan".

Footnotes

1. Foulkes to Hon. Brooke Claxton, 9 Feb., 1948, p. 1. Archives, Directorate of History, Dept. of National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa 111.13 D.66 hereinafter referred to D.N.D.
2. Ibid.
3. Price to Nicholson, Deputy Director, Historical Section (G.S.) D.N.D., Ottawa, 27 Jan., 1948 D.N.D. 352.019(Dl) p. 1. Emphasis added.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Extract from Maltby's official dispatch on the Hong Kong Operations attached to Nicholson's letter to Price, 13 Jan. 1948 for comment D.N.D. 352.019(D.1).
7. Memorandum to Colonel J.F. Meiklejohn, C.I.E., Historical Section, Cabinet Office. "Concerning the 2nd battalion, the Royal Scots..." from Augustus Muir, Historian, the Royal Scots, dated 26th March 1955 as supplied to the author by Augustus Muir (Pseud).
8. J. Leasor Green Beach, London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1975, p. 249.
9. There may be some hesitation as to these characterisations of the defence and fall of Hong Kong, but after going over it item by item with the most knowledgeable John Swettenham at the National War Museum it was agreed that on Balance they were correct. The Canadian contribution to the invasion of Kiska is well encapsulated in the first line of the chapter dealing with the episode in Brian Garfield's interesting account of the Aleutian campaign the Thousand Mile War, New York, Random House 1970, p. 327. "The Day After the Japanese had Evacuated Kiska....". There have been occasions, particularly in the first world war when the Canadian expeditionary forces were not exactly victorious but they hardly fall into the category of major defeats. And the defence of such "outposts of Empire" as Bermuda were essentially passive. Not without influence certainly in the overall picture but certainly with little interest for anything other than the diplomatic or "Grand Strategic" historian.
10. J.A. Ford, The Brave White Flag, London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., 1961. Season of Escape, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963.
11. Tim Carew, The Fall of Hong Kong, London: Anthony Blond, 1960. Hostages to Fortune, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971.
12. B. Prasad, ed., Official History of the Indian armed forces in World War II, Delhi: 1960.
13. Carew, Fall of Hong Kong, op.cit. p.22 (London: Pan Edition, 1976)
14. Cited from "Some Rambling Jottings on my experiences during the Battle of Hong Kong" at the request of the author. General Man's use of the term [over] confident should be taken in the context of hindsight. No infantry battalion can be said to be such before the fact of battle.
15. Foulkes, op. cit. p.1.
16. Oral evidence given to the author by the former clerk to the Supreme Court.

17. Evidenced by letters from Drews legal counsel in Vancouver - Now in the Archives at the University of Victoria library, Victoria, B.C.
18. This telegraphic correspondence is located in the "Sundries" file attached to R.L. Kellock's copy of the Full "Proceedings of Royal Commission....To inquire into and report upon the organization, authorization and dispatch of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to the crown colony of Hong Kong". Now in the DND Archives. Hereinafter referred to as "Royal Commission".
19. Chan Lan Kit Ching "The Hong Kong Question during the Pacific War (1941-5)", in The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol. II, No. I, October, 1973, p. 57.
20. Ibid, pp. 73/74.
21. "Royal Commission" - evidence given by Vanier, pp. 715/719.
22. Oral evidence of Royal Scots Regimental Security (Col. B.A. Fergus) given to the author 1974, Edinburgh.
23. Oral evidence given by Brigadier J.H. Price to the author, Montreal 1974.
24. Foulkes report and its supporting evidence op.cit.

THE SOLDIERS CANADA DIDN'T WANT
HER CHINESE AND JAPANESE CITIZENS

Commentator - Roy Ito

As one of the soldiers Canada did not want, I found Patricia Roy's paper to be most illuminating. It filled in for me the arguments that were going on in government circles and army councils while Nisei like myself were trying to serve our country in time of war.

The last paragraph of the paper neatly summarizes this episode in Canada's history. "The tragedy was that racial prejudice, the British Columbia politician's support of it, and the army's fear of it prevented the earlier service of Japanese Canadians and Chinese Canadians,"

Next week in Toronto I will be attending a reunion dinner of Nisei veterans. It will be a pleasure for me to read to them the fine commendation given in 1946 by Major-General Worthington, former GOC Pacific Command.

I can remember the exciting days of the NRMA call-ups that included the Nisei in September, 1940. You have to understand that the Nisei lived in a community that made him a spectator rather than a participator in Canadian life. He always felt left out; he never felt that he was a part of his country. Every Japanese Canadian felt it -- this ache in the heart -- this great desire to be a part of one's own country.

When the NRMA call-ups came, the Japanese community got a tremendous boost. Its young men were called with other Canadians, to defend Canada in time of war. It was the most positive happening for a community that suffered from a long, continuous, never ceasing accusations of disloyalty. But, of course, the Nisei were not inducted with the other NRMA call-ups.

It pains me even today to hear that the Canadian Government would go as far to recommend the discharge of Japanese Canadians already in the army because of evacuation. The evacuation was a terrible wrong. But to use this as a reason for committing another injustice -- the logic of it defies me. I'm glad that it was never done.

The story of Japanese Canadians in the First World War parallels their story in the Second World War.

In 1914-1915 Japanese Canadians were refused enlistment in the army for the same reason; a man who fought for his country could not be denied the

right to vote. The Canadian Japanese Association made a bold decision. It decided to organize a group of volunteers and offer their services to Canada.

In December, 1915 notices appeared in the Japanese language newspapers. Soon 200 men began learning to fall-in, stand at attention, stand-at-ease under the direction of a retired English non-commissioned officer -- Sgt. Maj. Hall. He was assisted by two interpreters. An officer of the Army Service Corps, a Captain Robert Colqhoun, a local businessman, was the officer in charge. All expenses, the feeding and housing of 200 men, were paid for by the Japanese community.

Ottawa was informed that a group of men were ready to fight for their adopted country. There was no reply. The secretary of the Association went to Ottawa. He got the run-around. In the end the answer was no. Officially, the government was most appreciative and said if the Japanese could raise 2,000 men, a thousand to form a battalion and another thousand to provide reinforcements it might be considered. The volunteers were disbanded.

Let us follow the story of Sainosuke Kubota who now lives in Toronto. Kubota wanted to enlist so badly that he took the train to Calgary. When he arrived at the station, he found several army units looking for recruits. The recruiting officers had never heard of the problems in B.C. and promptly enrolled Kubota as Private Sainosuke Kubota, Regimental No. 696968, in the 175th Battalion based in Medicine Hat.

Word got to Lt. Col. Nelson Spencer, the commanding officer of the 175th, that more Japanese eager to enlist were on the coast. The prairie battalions were desperate for men. Signals went back and forth between Ottawa and Lt. Gen. E.A. Cruikshank, the officer commanding the Military District, and to cut the story short, Kubota returned to Vancouver with an officer and recruited 55 Japanese Canadians for the 175th Battalion. Other recruiting officers from Alberta turned up on Powell Street and for a period there was keen competition to sign up men with names like Yamasaki, Nakamura, Ishihara ...

Eventually 202 volunteers went overseas and fought with the 10th, the 50th, and the 52nd Battalions. Fifty-four were killed. It took the survivors twelve years to gain the franchise. Kubota, as the secretary of the Veterans' Group brought the news firsthand from Victoria. The survivors and their friends formed a parade and went down to the Japanese Canadian War Memorial in

Stanley Park to remember their dead comrades buried in France.

The story of the Nisei and army service in World War II centres around a young British officer -- Captain Don Mollison.

Captain Mollison was in charge of a Field Broadcasting Unit in Burma that operated close to the front lines. The task of the Field Broadcasting Unit was to broadcast to the Japanese positions and try to weaken the morale of the Japanese soldier and persuade some of them to surrender. Up to that point no Japanese had been taken prisoner. Finally, one Japanese did surrender. He told Captain Mollison that using a Japanese-speaking Korean was not a good idea because of the Korean accent. Mollison, having lived in Japan, knew about Japanese living in Canada, passed this information up to his headquarters with the request -- we need Japanese Canadians. He was given orders to go to Canada to get the men he needed.

When he arrived in Canada in 1944, he was astonished to find that the Canadian Army had no Japanese Canadians within its ranks. He decided to recruit them directly into the British Army but the Canadian government would not guarantee that these men would be allowed back in Canada.

Mollison, not wishing to add another unhappy note to the long list already suffered by the Japanese Canadians and of course, he wasn't getting the number he wanted, signalled HQ South-East Asia Command suggesting that the GOC request Churchill to make a direct plea to MacKenzie King to get the Nisei into the Canadian Army. I don't know whether this happened or not but the Nisei early in 1945 found themselves in Canadian Army uniform and two groups were promptly sent overseas without the benefit of any training.

The bulk of the Nisei proceeded to No. 20 Basic Infantry Training Centre in Brantford and then to S-20 Canadian Army Japanese Language School in Vancouver. In Brantford, an American Nisei officer, Major John Aiso, gave language tests to the Nisei. When the group arrived in Vancouver, the Nisei were assigned to classes according to their language facility. The majority of the men were in first two beginner groups. Six Nisei, having good command of the language, were enrolled in Course 3, spent eight weeks at S-20 and went overseas. I was in this group.

S-20 ran a 12-month language course. It was a very rigorous affair. The white students were carefully selected men and women. Arthur Erikson, the architect, William Sommerville , past president of the Canadian Bar

Association, and Judy LaMarsh graduated from the course.

We studied Sakusen Yomurei, the military manual of the Japanese Army, Japanese military organization, Japanese military terms, captured Japanese documents, interrogation of prisoners, monitoring radio broadcasts. Two American Nisei officers were on staff to give us the benefit of their experience in the South Pacific.

The school was right beside Vancouver Technical School, a high school. There was a fence but I think it was common sense to have that fence and not particularly because the Nisei were there. You couldn't have high school students wandering into a camp crammed with documents marked "secret", "confidential", "restricted", and there were one hundred soldiers living in the huts.

At S-20 things went smoothly. No one seemed upset to see Japanese Canadians in uniform. Maybe the people thought we were Chinese Canadians. In Chinatown we always got a great welcome in the restaurants. There were a number of Chinese Canadians on the S-20 course -- Frank Ho Lem, Charlie Lowe, Dan Chin.

The only incident while I was at S-20 concerned a Town Hall meeting discussing the question -- all Japanese should be deported after the war. Three Nisei in uniform attended -- George Tanaka, Roger Obata and Tom Shoyama. They had no plans to be disruptive, even though their presence would not be particularly noticed. It was not a large meeting; there was no reaction when the Nisei appeared. Near the end of the meeting the Nisei were invited to say a few words. This got a big play in the newspaper.

I'm sure somebody phoned up Lt-Col MacKenzie, C.O. S-20 and asked what was going on. The army's fear of a racial incident had happened. All Nisei were called to the assembly hall. The sergeant-major called us to attention. Col MacKenzie came marching in, looking very grim. He proceeded to give us a real blast -- didn't we know we were in the army? Attendance at any meetings was forbidden, although church was all right. In the end he softened a bit because I think his sympathies were really with the Nisei.

What did the Nisei do overseas? Some members of the first two groups were assigned to Force 136 for the invasion of Malaya. Others served in the field. Others like myself, after S-20, travelled to the British Intelligence Corps depot in Rotherham, Yorks, and then to Karachi and then to South-East

Asia Translator Interrogator Centre known as SEATIC. The war was over by this time.

I spent a few months in New Delhi and got posted to Singapore. Work was mostly in war crimes. Only one case involved intelligence work. Towards the end of the war when aircraft replacements ceased to arrive from Japan, the younger pilots were formed into a unit known as the Hikari Kikan. The British suspected that this unit was being trained for guerrilla warfare following surrender and I spent some time questioning the young pilots.

From Singapore I was posted to Hong Kong for 14 months. The Hong Kong SEATIC detachment consisted of two Nisei, two Chinese Canadians, Captain Cecil Brett a fellow S-20 graduate who acted as O.C., and one Indian warrant officer who spoke Japanese.

I spent a little time acting as Japanese monitor for No. 5 War Crimes Court. The courts utilized Japanese as interpreters and my duty was to make certain there was no hanky panky going on between the interpreters and Japanese accused and witnesses. Other duties were with the No. 13 and No. 14 War Crimes Investigation Teams. We conducted identification parades, interrogated prisoners, and witnessed hangings. Fred Nogami and I didn't particularly care for the hangings since it meant getting up early in the morning and attending an execution without breakfast -- not a pleasant task at the best of times. We had to ask the condemned man if he had any final statement to make. We prayed that he would go quietly to his fate without giving any big speeches.

A Canadian prosecutor, Major J.B. Puddicombe, a Montreal lawyer, turned up to prosecute war crimes involving members of the Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers. It was a tricky business trying to establish responsibility for events that had taken place in 1941, five years previously.

Two commanding officers of the three Japanese regiments in the Hong Kong attacking force were brought back to stand trial. Maj. Puddicombe and I spent many days with them tramping the hills of Hong Kong to determine the course of battle of the three Japanese regiments -- the 228th, the 229th, and 230th Regiments of the 38th Japanese Infantry Division.

Cecil Britt and I took the opportunity to write up a short history

of the 230th Regiment, Commanded by Colonel Shoji. The 230th was on the right flank of the Japanese forces and landed at North Point. After Hong Kong it took part in the Java operations and then ended its fighting days at the Guadacanal nightmare as one of the reinforcement units.

The Nisei in uniform did perform a useful but a limited role. It could have been a greater one except for this matter called racial prejudice.

October 22, 1977

Notes for speech to the Canadian
Committee for the History of the
Second World War at St Jean
d'Iberville, October 21st, 1977.

Perhaps I may be allowed to forego the frequent but brazenly untruthful denial a speaker so often makes of the kind things said about him by way of introduction. However, be assured that if I eschew this challenge to your Chairman's judgment, it is not without a silent prayer that I shall not lead you to make it later.

There is a curious concatenation of date and place in tonight's dinner which requires a preliminary observation. The date is the 172nd anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar which forever confirmed Lord Nelson as Britain's greatest sailor. The place, St Jean d'Iberville, of course brings to mind the man who is beyond doubt Canada's greatest native sailors Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville. Because Nelson may be less well known to those who read more in French and d'Iberville, less well known to those who read more in English, I propose to deal with Nelson in French and, with d'Iberville in English.

Il y a 172 ans et six semaines ce soir que l'amiral Lord Nelson, qui avait déjà perdu un bras et l'usage d'un oeil au service de son Souverain, quittait les délices de son manoir à Merton pour rejoindre la flotte anglaise en Méditerranée. Il quittait avec l'approbation de sa bien aimée Lady Hamilton, veuve depuis peu de Sir William Hamilton, le mari complaisant qui avait complété le bizarre ménage-à-trois qui avait existé avant sa mort. Lady Nelson, inutile d'ajouter, n'était pas consultée et Horatia, fille illégitime de Lady

Hamilton et Nelson, était trop jeune pour donner son avis. Ce départ marquait l'apogée et la fin d'une carrière brillante. Au large du Cap Trafalgar, le 21 octobre 1805, Nelson gagnait bien la bataille contre l'amiral de Villeneuve qui, accablé de reproches par Napoléon, s'y engageait bien contre son gré, mais aussi Nelson y perdait sa vie tôt dans le combat. Sa victoire et sa mort faisaient de lui peut-être le marin le mieux connu des deux derniers siècles.

Reconnu pour sa vanité, Nelson avait tout de même de très grandes qualités pour justifier sa réputation. Ses exploits antérieurs lui avaient valu son élévation à la pairie britannique à titre de vicomte. Il gagnait la confiance et l'affection de ses officiers en partageant toujours avec eux et la stratégie et la tactique qu'il projetait. Quant aux simples marins, il était leur idole - et à bon droit - car avec eux, aussi il partageait ses projets. En plus, au début du XIX siècle - époque peu humanitaire - il était un des rares officiers à se préoccuper des besoins et des intérêts de ses hommes. Par dessus tout, il avait les solides qualités du grand marin. Un tel homme possédait alors - et conserve encore aujourd'hui - un attrait immense. C'est une des très grandes figures de l'histoire navale dont nous célébrons l'anniversaire ce soir.

The other great figure was Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville, one of the famed eleven sons of Charles LeMoyne de Longueuil, father of the most brilliant family in a single generation that Canada has yet known. If circumstance allowed Nelson to play his rôle a hundred years later and on a greater stage than LeMoyne d'Iberville, the two

men nevertheless had curiously similar problems in their private lives. As Nelson had Lady Hamilton - with all the complications of their illegitimate daughter, of the Hamilton woman's husband and of Nelson's wife - so d'Iberville had Mademoiselle de Belestre by whom he too had the problem of a child without benefit of marriage, but at least without the complication of double adultery but nevertheless in a colony in which sexual mores were exceedingly strict as opposed to the looser mores of the England of 1800. However, be assured that I pass no judgment nor do I scorn. Notwithstanding our own permissive times, we must remember that a passion, which is irresistible, is not irremissible.

Again like Nelson, d'Iberville's career was one of brilliant achievements in warfare - in Canada, on the New England coast, in the Hudson Bay of unsettled sovereignty and elsewhere. In his final years, it was he who established Louisiana. The peak of his naval career came in 1697 when Louis XIV decided to reconquer Hudson Bay and its fur market. To implement the Great Monarch's purpose, d'Iberville, with five ships, set off for the Bay where he had his great moment of naval glory on September 5th, 1697.

At Port Nelson, separated from his other ships and alone in PÉLICAN with 42 guns, d'Iberville met up with three English warships. They were HAMPSHIRE with 50 guns, DERING with 32 guns and HUDSON BAY with 32 guns. The odds against him were daunting, indeed overwhelming, - three ships to one and 114 guns to 42. Even better men than he might have taken to flight. But not d'Iberville.

Without hesitation, he immediately attacked HAMPSHIRE, his most powerful opponent who narrowly escaped boarding. At the same time, PÉLICAN kept firing broadsides at DERING and at HUDSON BAY. All the while, the three English ships kept firing at PÉLICAN's rigging in order to cripple her. This fierce battle and the devastating cannonades continued for three harrowing hours. HAMPSHIRE then closed PÉLICAN and Fletcher, her Captain, summoned d'Iberville to surrender. Upon his refusal to yield, Fletcher toasted him from his bridge and d'Iberville, not to be outdone in the amenities of XVII century warfare, also raised a glass to his opponent. The fighting then resumed and Fletcher fired his heaviest broadside at PELICAN. D'Iberville answered by a broadside aimed at HAMPSHIRE's waterline in order to sink her. His tactic was effective as HAMPSHIRE spun around and sank. HUDSON BAY then hauled down her flag in surrender and DERING took to flight. This colourful naval action is perhaps best summarized by your historian colleague, Nellis M. Crouse, in his book "LeMoyne d'Iberville", in the following terms:

"The capture of Port Nelson in 1697 brought to an end d'Iberville's activities in Hudson Bay. His action off Hayes River earned him unending applause, for it was indeed a great feat of seamanship. With one ship he had sunk an English man-of-war, captured another and put to flight a third, an achievement perhaps unparalleled in the long history of Anglo-French naval warfare ... It placed him on a footing with the great naval captains of France".

It is curious that in Canadian seafaring circles today, d'Iberville's name is commemorated only by the civilian Department of Transport through its icebreaker D'IBERVILLE but not by the great

naval officer's less imaginative - or perhaps less well informed - naval successors.

This evening, I pay the unreserved tribute due to these two great sailors who both belong to our past - because of the date, to Nelson, and because of the place, to Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville, beyond doubt Canada's greatest native sailor, though he may be less well known except among the better-read historians.

I am delighted, and indeed honoured, to be with the members of your Committee who are ensuring that the history of the Second World War will become known at least to that rather small segment of our population which actually reads the printed word. I come as a septuagenarian - practically snatched from beneath the undertaker's covetous eye - and also - with more relevance - as one who fought at sea through the long and harrowing years of the Battle of the Atlantic. It is of this battle that Churchill wrote

"The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril. ... The Admiralty, with whom I lived in the closest amity and contact, shared these fears".

Though there is a distinct possibility that Churchill may have been unaware of it, I too shared his fears - for the very simple reason that I saw so many ships go down, so many men die and so many vital cargoes lost. Your endeavours lead you to look upon the broader aspects of the war, at the strategic, the overall outlook. As Officer-of-the-Watch and later as Captain in warships, the side of

the Battle of the Atlantic which I saw was naturally the tactical one, the narrower one, and, consequently, I come to speak of the more intimate and personal side of the war and, even more, of the men who fought it.

When war broke out, the older hands not only brought about the required metamorphosis from peaceful civilian to bloodthirsty warrior. Much more importantly, they successfully instilled into the new sailors the spirit of the sea. It is by virtue of this spirit that the sailor has only part of himself that he can - or even seeks - to call his own. The other part of himself he has given fully and unconditionally to his ship. He knows full well that, before any other consideration in life, come the happiness and safety of his ship because in them lie his own happiness and safety and that of his shipmates. This spirit takes deep root in the sailor's heart and engenders in him an intense loyalty to his ship and his shipmates. His feeling on this score manifests itself most markedly when he deems one or the other to stand in any jeopardy from an outside source.

This same spirit of the sea moves men to give their best efforts, to give of themselves, in the most trying circumstances. After days and nights of the famed wolf-pack attacks, men groggy with fatigue would carry on cheerfully and men deathly seasick would stick to their jobs in stuffy, smelly and overheated stations - and those of you who have known the death-wish of the seasick know what heroism that spells.

I remember one outstanding incident when the destroyer SAGUENAY was torpedoed in early December 1940. It was the middle of the night and many men had been killed or wounded by the torpedo explosion. It took some time to find out who they were but there could be no doubt about the presence of the enemy. Being a gunnery officer at the time, I was charged with the after guns as much of the ship's bows had been blown away and fire was raging around the forward guns.

Not having any idea of who was dead or alive. I called for volunteers to man the guns until a little sorting out could be done. Among these was a young lad, not a gunnery rating, who took on the job of passing up shells - and, because of what is coming, I stress that these were heavy, hard, cold, metal shells. This he did until the fire forward suddenly burst into particularly bright flames and, by their light, I was able to observe that his hands and face were shockingly burned by the original torpedo explosion. Naturally I ordered him. to go below for medical care.

Some time later, there having been much to do in the interim, I found the lad sitting at the top of the vertical ladder leading down from the gun platform to the main deck and sobbing quietly like a hurt child. I chided him for not having gone down for medical help as I had told him to do. He silenced me most effectively when he explained through his tears - and such tears are devastating - that his hands were far too painful for him to be able to climb down the ladder. I had him lowered to the upper deck by a

line. Yet this was the man who had volunteered for the job of passing up shells to the gun - and had stuck to it until I interfered.

There can be no doubt that the sea takes from the sailors something intangible and gives it to the ship herself - and that something intangible is her soul. Heretical as it may seem, ships do have souls, personalities of their own, and because of this, they inspire a very real love which no landsman will ever understand. My immensely courageous fellow with the burnt hands knew that love.

There is a strange fascination to life on board ship which arises inevitably from living at such close quarters with so many men - and nowadays, for all I know, women too, which could only add to it. You become involved in their lives and their problems to a degree impossible elsewhere. However, this proximity, interesting as it was, could involve you in incidents whereby our friend the sailor, in his off moments, disturbed the serenity of his superiors.

There was a case in Glasgow, early in the war, when my former legal career and my new naval career were brought together in a manner far from satisfactory to me. One of my lads called Murphy was hauled up in Court on a charge of having broken a large plate-glass window. Happily the owner of the window rejoiced in the very un-Scottish name of Guglielmo Tettrazzini and the incident occurred at a time when Italy's stock was at an all-time low. As soon as I heard of Murphy's jeopardy, I rushed off to Court but - most

unfortunately - when I arrived in the courtroom, his case was already well under way. Thus was I deprived of the inestimable and completely essential benefit of a pre-trial consultation with my unwelcome and impecunious client. The presiding magistrate, observing my uniform and the somewhat sickly smile bestowed upon me by the accused, realized that we were shipmates and very kindly asked me if I had come to speak on Murphy's behalf.

I had to admit that I had so come and I then promptly led off into an impassioned eulogy on what a fine fellow Murphy was, how we could never win the war without him on board and on how he could never have broken Signor Tettrazzini's wretched plate-glass window, even by the remotest accident. My plea was obviously having very little effect on the magistrate who kept looking as though he were about to interrupt me. Would that he had done so before he did! This, of course, only spurred me on to further outbursts of forensic eloquence in a case about which I unfortunately knew nothing whatsoever until finally the magistrate leaned forward and said to me: "I beg your pardon, but are you fully aware of the fact that the accused has pleaded guilty to the offence charged".

I, of course, was not aware of the accused's guilty plea or of anything else connected with the case but I was young enough to be embarrassed. The courtroom spectators - and even Murphy himself, the wretch - all chuckled at my discomfiture. So, on a much lower pitch, I quickly urged that all I had said be considered in mitigation of sentence. This was to prove a singularly prudent move

on my part because, when the fine was imposed, Murphy, as usual, had no money and I had to pay to get the body out of Glasgow's gaol.

If the lack of pre-trial consultation with Murphy led to one of the darker moments of my legal career, to retrieve my reputation as a lawyer perhaps I may be allowed to turn to another sailor-in-trouble yarn which casts a brighter light on my legal ingenuity - it might even bring me consultations.

In the autumn of 1943, I was finishing a refit of my ship AMHERST in Charlottetown and my ship's company asked me to approve a ship's dance before we sailed away. So a ship's dance there was. Among my sailors was a nineteen-year-old lad called Blake. At the time, he was not yet fully familiar with the perils of over-indulgence in alcohol. This inexperience led him to a condition of alcoholic exuberance in which he stole - or perhaps I should only say that he "took" - not just a mere automobile but, rather, a large roomy bus. He drove his bus through the streets of Charlottetown to the alarm and dismay of those citizens who had not already gone to bed and headed for the Hillsborough Bridge - an unusual bridge at the time in that railway and vehicular traffic both used the same right of way - you simply did not engage on the bridge if you saw a train coming. Blake engaged on the bridge in gleeful abandon and lost control of the bus half-way over, jamming it securely across the bridge. The bus was badly damaged, so was the bridge and all traffic across it, rail and vehicle, was suspended for fourteen hours - a matter of considerable inconvenience to those who depended

on the use of the bridge. Blake was marched off to goal and earned the then minimum sentence of seven days for drunken driving which, in calm retrospect, does not seem entirely unreasonable.

However, I hated the idea of a nineteen-year-old in gaol. Smugly perhaps, I thought that he would be in worse company than in the ship. The civil authorities were very understanding towards my representations for his release to continue fighting the war - but at sea this time and not in the vicinity of Charlottetown. They even agreed to surrender him to me providing I undertook to punish him severely in the ship. This was all very well but there was a serious hindrance to it all: I could not legally punish Blake a second time for an offence for which he had already been punished by the civil court.

I mulled over the issues and finally inspiration came. I made a few quiet, discreet suggestions and, a little later, I held Requestmen, a naval ceremonial at which men bring forward their varied requests to their Captain. All the officers were duly present as I really needed witnesses to what I was about to do. Then up came Blake with two civil policeman standing by at a discreet distance and looking a bit bewildered by what they did not understand. Then, perhaps for the only time in naval history, Blake as a requestman solemnly asked for 14 days No 11 and 30 days No 12, two very unpleasant naval punishments and, no less solemnly. I granted his request. Thus was I able to get Blake out of gaol ?????????????????????????a great deal of paper work with the naval shore authorities about such unprecedented goings-on.

Not all incidents for a ship's Captain had the lighter side of the two I have related. Command at sea in wartime involved a dreadful loneliness when new and unforeseen circumstances cropped up and there was no one from whom to seek guidance or advice. In November 1942, I was captain of one of the escorts of Convoy SC-107, one of the most ill-fated of the war - fifteen ships out of a total of forty-two were lost to the enemy. For four consecutive nights and days, thirteen submarines - operating under the unexpectedly gentle name of "Group Violet" - carried out relentless wolf-pack attacks until everyone was worn-out from constant presence at action stations and lack of sleep.

On the last night of these attacks, I was stationed on the port side of the convoy when DALEBY, a ship in the port column of ships, was torpedoed. Shortly afterwards, I got a good asdic contact on what I now have reason to believe was the submarine U-89 and I naturally prepared to attack. A heavy sea was running and there was complete darkness. I started to close the U-boat for a depth-charge attack at high speed. My ship's company was not only tense and ready but also, because of all the death and destruction in the last few days, angry and eager. It was the classic setting for an attack upon a U-boat - or so I thought.

Then, suddenly, I was struck by the stunning realization that my submarine contact lay dead ahead beneath a group of about forty survivors from DALEBY whose flashing lights on the shoulders of their life-jackets could be seen in the water. Like all Captains,

I had daydreamed or lain awake at night a thousand times conjuring up every possible situation and applying to it my judgment on the action to be taken. However, the cruel dilemma before me was one I had never dreamed up. To continue my attack on the submarine meant death, maiming or, at best, prolonged physical agony for the unfortunate men from my depth charge explosions. They were our men too, the very men whom I was trying to protect. There is no question that my mind fairly spun under the weight of the decision which had to be made - and made within seconds.

The men on my bridge were fully aware of the harsh crisis and quite happy, indeed, that the decision was mine to make and not theirs. Shocked by the situation, they all stared at me instead of keeping their lookouts and waited to see what I would do. I, of course, had no one to whom I could turn and, above all. I could not possibly delay. I gave orders to press on with the attack. Obviously the mere giving of such an order would tear anyone asunder but I decided that the destruction of a U-boat, firmly held by asdic, must take priority over the lives and safety of these few unhappy men when weighed against the safety of the remaining ships and the hundreds of men in them, to say nothing of the safe landing of the desperately needed cargoes. I am still quite certain that I gave the right order. Nevertheless it took an enormous toll at the time.

By a providential stroke of luck for the poor devils in the water, just after I had given orders to press on with the attack, my asdic broke down for a short time. Though I was prepared

to carry out a precision attack and kill certainly most of our survivors, it was unthinkable to drop depth-charges among them by mere rough guesswork about the evasive tactics of the U-boat. Consequently, I countermanded the attack and then had to turn my attention to efforts to avoid killing the same men either by running them down with my ship or by overwhelming them with the ship's wash -- in total darkness, not quite as simple a task as might seem.

The same stricken ship, DALEBY, was to give me further mental torment that night. Though on fire aft and down by the head, she did not sink for some time. I screened the rescue ship while she picked up survivors. Indeed, my standing orders formally forbade me to stop my ship in such circumstances. However, while screening the rescue ship, I had occasion to steam close to DALEBY and I saw that there were still three men on board who called piteously to be rescued. I informed the rescue ship but she refused to send her boat in the heavy seas. Her stand was realism - or perhaps more accurately, pusillanimity - beyond what I could accept. when it spelled certain death for the three men. Perhaps I was still under the spell of my brush not with death for me but with killing others, but in any event, against all orders, I decided to stop my ship and send away my own boat to effect the rescue. When there was a call for volunteers to man the boat, I was much moved by the fact that everyone sought to go.

My suspension of the screen placed the rescue ship in jeopardy and the stopping of my own ship placed her also in jeopardy as well as delaying my return to my station with the convoy. In

pitch darkness, without the use of any lights at all, my boat was lowered in heavy seas and headed for DALEBY. I resumed the search of the rescue ship and spent a very anxious hour or so wondering if I had sent my own boat's crew to their deaths for the rescue of three unknown men. I ran the double risk of not finding my boat in the vastness of the ocean and the darkness and of running it down in the dark. Everyone kept a good lookout and, in due course to my intense relief, I found my boat, stopped my ship again and hoisted the boat - and, with all three survivors on board.

This was no simple evolution. Corvette boats were small. The ship was rolling and pitching heavily. I had to find the best heading to avoid too much roll and to provide some kind of lee for my boat in the heavy sea without any lights while lowering and hoisting the boat. The decisions, the orders - right or wrong - may have been mine that night but, mark you, the final stress, the final courage in their execution was not mine but that of my men.

There was at least an amusing sequel to the forbidden rescue effort. A few days later in Liverpool, I mentioned the incident to the famed U-boat killer, Captain Johnnie Walker, then Captain (D) in Liverpool, and sought his views on my action. He criticized me harshly for having stopped my ship and then quietly looked up at me and said: "But I would have done the same, Audette".

If there were trying moments, there were also days and months of great satisfaction. It is impossible to live at such close quarters with a group of men under your command without becoming

deeply involved in their daily lives. Involvement of this nature inevitably begets a very real affection for them which is often reciprocated as is the case with all affection in life. Because the Navy provides that any man may see and consult privately with his Captain on personal problems, there were naturally some rather odd moments. I remember the day when one of my men sought to see me on such a personal problem. It was highly personal and, whatever may be said of its solution, it was simple in nature his girl sought to marry him on the grounds that she was pregnant. As he was a fine looking chap, I am inclined to the view that they may both have enjoyed any actions which - I am informed - are likely to lead to such a situation. However, my sailor laboured under the disquieting impression that he was not entirely alone in such activities and was consequently somewhat reluctant to commit matrimony. I finally urged that he take steps to verify the truth of the alleged pregnancy. These steps established that the acquiescent lady was not pregnant and my sailor finished the war as a single man. I never knew whether his moment of anxiety served to temper his later moments of passion.

These were the men who fought the Battle of the Atlantic and the men of whom you write. But they were not alone on the seas. Over 50,000 merchant seamen lost their lives in the same battle and they too were splendid fellows. Over 5,000 allied merchant ships were sunk. Master Hitler lost 784 of his U-boats. The U-boats alone sank 148 allied warships. But these are just statistics, mere figures. To see men injured, maimed or killed, to watch and even to hear them die - because men in pain do not always die silently -

gives to such figures a devastating reality. Indeed, to watch a ship die is also overwhelming. Earlier this evening, I advanced the heresy that ships had souls. This may be why I was always deeply moved at seeing a ship go down. Nor was I alone in this. Time and again, I have seen the men - particularly the Captains - from a sinking ship burst into tears when faced with the sombre and somewhat awe-inspiring spectacle of her burial at sea.

In speaking of the Battle of the Atlantic and of those men who fought it, it would be sadly amiss not to add a word about the gallant men of the Air Force. Their patrols served to keep the U-boats down by day, thus preventing them from successfully shadowing and keeping visual contact with the convoys. This action was of enormous help to the men in the surface escorts when darkness had come - the usual time for U-boat attacks on the ships. They also destroyed a large number of U-boats. They too fought and died that the same battle should be won.

Your work, your learned papers and your books all lead you into the broader aspects of the war. Beneath it all, there were the men of whom I spoke. They were mostly young, generally with scanty education, many bruised and hurt by the Great Depression, but I do know whereof I speak when I say to you that they were nevertheless splendid men. I saw them, I worked with them, I knew them, I admired them and, indeed, I loved them. Were there men who did not, they were lesser men than I. At the risk of falling into the poet Horace's sneering category of "laudator temporis acti" and

at the risk of betraying a prejudice of old age, I cannot help but wonder if the sons and grandsons of these same men - after some forty years of spoon-fed prosperity - would do as well were they called upon to do so tomorrow. Equally do I pray that they will not be called upon to do so.

En terminant, Monsieur le président, qu'il me soit permis de reprendre la douce langue de mon parent, Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville - je suis persuadé que Lord Nelson ne m'en voudra pas à ce compte. Je suis vivement reconnaissant pour l'occasion de causer avec ce groupe d'historiens distingués et, en même temps, de leur signaler quelques aspects plutôt intimes de la Bataille de l'Atlantique et de ses combattants. De tout coeur, Monsieur le président, je vous dis ma gratitude pour votre aimable invitation ainsi que pour la courtoisie du bon accueil qui m'a été accordé.

Louis Audette