

BALKAN RACKET

The inside story of the betrayal and destruction of Yugoslavia. Amazing revelations of Balkan terrorist intrigues and internal treachery. Axis plot to drive Britain from Near East. Drama of Prince Paul's ambition and weakness.

C. F. MELVILLE

In *Balkan Racket* C. F. Melville, author of *Guilty Frenchmen* (13th thousand), tells for the first time the inner story of the betrayal and destruction of Yugoslavia. At the same time he shows how the invasion and dismemberment of that country was part of the bigger Hitler-Mussolini plan to drive Britain out of the Mediterranean and Near East.

In this book is told in particular the story of the Balkan underground terrorist organizations, composed of political bandits and assassins, who were employed by Mussolini, and later by Hitler too, to undermine Yugoslavia from within, so that when the Axis Powers and their satellites invaded that country it had to withstand internal treachery as well as external attack.

It shows how the break-up and dismemberment of Yugoslavia was not just the result of last-minute decisions taken during this war, but the outcome of a many years old plot, and that the first shot in the war against Yugoslavia was really fired in 1934, when a Balkan gunman, in the employ of Mussolini, murdered King Alexander at Marseilles.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION: The Balkans and You. An open letter to the British Public	9
CHAPTER	
I. MUSSOLINI FISHES IN TROUBLED BALKAN WATERS	17
II. THE MARSEILLES MURDER	32
III. THE PLOT THICKENS.....	40
IV. HITLER TAKES A HAND	48
V. TRAGEDY OF PRINCE PAUL	53
VI. WAR	68
VII. YUGOSLAV QUISLINGS	77
VIII. YUGOSLAV DISMEMBERED	84
IX. SPIRIT OF KING ALEXANDER LIVES ON IN KING PETER	92
POSTSCRIPT : BYZANTIUM IN LONDON ...	94

INTRODUCTION

THE BALKANS AND YOU. AN OPEN LETTER TO THE BRITISH PUBLIC

DEAR READER,

Last Spring we lost the Balkans to Hitler and Mussolini. What might have been our base for an eventual Allied offensive against the enemy in Europe became the enemy's base for his operations against us in the Mediterranean and Middle East, and the southern thrust of his attack on Russia.

The Axis Powers had always realized the strategic importance of the Balkans, and they accordingly laid their plans for the subjugation of these territories long before the war started. We, on our part, neglected the Balkans, not only during the years before the war, but also during the first year of the war. We have had to pay dearly for that neglect. We have had to pay in frustrated effort, blood, material and loss of prestige. More especially we have had to make a payment in Time. For had we, instead of the enemy, been able to control the Balkans during the opening stages of the war, the road to our victory would have been immeasurably shortened.

You—the British public—began to realize these tragic facts when Hitler's Luftwaffe blasted to pieces our British and Anzac forces in Crete soon after his mechanized hordes had driven them from Greece. And then you were bewildered and began to ask yourself some painful questions.

Why did we lose Greece in three weeks and Crete in twelve days?

Why did our Yugoslav Ally collapse in little over a week?

Why was there no united Balkan front against aggression?

Why did we fail to organize such a front?

Why did Germany and Italy succeed in dividing the Balkans to their advantage and to our disadvantage?

When you asked yourself these questions you were unable to find the answers. Because you were faced with a problem you did not understand. You had never realized until then how intimately the Balkans are connected with our vital interests

in this war. You had always imagined they were remote, and then, suddenly, to your surprise, you discovered them to be near.

In your justifiable alarm at the turn of events you developed a critical faculty. You gave voice to your disquietude. You began to wonder who amongst our present political and military leaders were to blame. But you were searching amongst the wrong people, and you had begun your search too late.

For the Battle of the Balkans was lost to us long before the first shot was fired. Our defeat in the Balkans was not the fault of Mr. Winston Churchill or Sir John Dill, or anyone else in the year 1941. It was the fault of our politicians, publicists, officials during the years before the war; it was their fault because during those years they had turned a blind eye to Balkan machinations which created the situation which led to our Balkan defeat this year. And it was your fault too because you did not think it was any concern of yours at the time, and you were content to leave it to the politicians to muddle through. You did not mind how much of a muddle they made so long as they did not bother you about it.

It is the purpose of this book to try and answer these questions which you have been asking yourself, and to endeavour to explain, to the best of my ability, how it was that these things were possible. More especially, I shall show that they did not just happen as the result of eleventh-hour opportunist decisions on the part of Hitler and Mussolini in 1941, but that they were the outcome of a deep-laid plot, instigated some seven years ago, by the Fascists and Revisionist Powers, a plot which was like a time-bomb set to explode at a given moment, a time-bomb which was ticking all these years, but you did not know it because you were not sufficiently interested to listen to the ticking.

That time-bomb was the murder of King Alexander of Yugoslavia at Marseilles in 1934.

For a number of years you had read from time to time in your newspapers about political assassinations in the Balkans. You did not take much notice because you knew that the Balkans were "uncivilized," and that they went in for assassinations as a sport, just as we played cricket and golf. And the Balkans were a long way from Britain, anyway, and were no concern of ours.

When King Alexander was murdered, you took a little more notice. It made big headlines in your newspapers and it contributed a dramatic item to the newsreel at your local cinema. And there was a big international row about it at Geneva, and

our Mr. Eden acted as a sort of referee, and he and M. Laval poured oil on the troubled waters, and there wasn't any war about it, so why worry?

It did not occur to you at the time that the assassination of King Alexander, following the various other murderous episodes in the Balkans, was planned by Mussolini with a view to removing the one man in those parts who had the strength, the vision and the character not only to unite his own country, but also to unite the Balkan peoples against the kind of aggression which Mussolini and Hitler were to make in the Balkans during this war. You never imagined that the bullet which brought down this Balkan monarch in a French seaport could fire a political powder train which would cause a great explosion seven years later? You would have thought it absurd if you had been told at the time that the idea was to disrupt Yugoslavia, because it was the strongest Balkan State, and the one Balkan State capable of organizing all the Balkan countries on our side during the war to come? You would have dismissed as fantastic the notion, had it been put to you then, that the Marseilles murder was not just a crime against one particular country, but a crime of international ramification, and that it was destined to pay its instigators political and military dividends in 1941. Yet, as we see now, this is precisely the case!

You did not know; of course you did not. How could you? For even your rulers at the time, who, unlike you, had the benefit of expert advice, and diplomatic reports, did not know either. Or, rather, they did not bother to know, because they feared the burden of the knowledge, and feared still more the responsibility of acting upon that knowledge.

For some time they just did not believe it. Inured to civilized methods of politics and diplomacy they could not bring themselves to believe that great European Powers could conduct their foreign policy in a manner which seemed closer to the thriller novels of Mr. Phillips Oppenheim or the late Mr. Edgar Wallace than to reality. When, after the Marseilles murder, they discovered that political gangsterism was really in operation on a big scale, the knowledge came to them as a shock. The shock was sufficient to jolt them into some kind of action. But it was of a hopelessly inadequate kind. For instead of rooting out the evil with a knife, so that it could not bear fruit in later years, they covered it over with a diplomatic screen. In this way they felt that they had been able to keep the peace temporarily, and that they could leave the future for their successors to deal with.

To-day we are able to see the outcome of this weakness. For now political gangsterism stalks the world openly. It is the recognized weapon of our enemies.

The whole story has now come full circle. The Balkans, about which we could not bother, but about which our enemies bothered quite a lot, are now theirs to use against us politically, economically and militarily. And the Balkan desperadoes who carried out the Marseilles crime, at the instigation of Mussolini, and who were kept in cold storage on Mussolini's and Hitler's pay-roll against the day when they could be used as Quislings in this war, have now come back to their homeland from which they had been exiled for their crimes, have come back in the wake of the Axis armies of occupation, to act on behalf of their Axis paymasters, as chief gaolers of their unfortunate compatriots in the Balkan prison house which is called the "New Balkan Order."

Moreover, when Germany smashed Yugoslavia and so opened the way for the German Army to drive to Salonika and smash the Anglo-Greek resistance, she was aided and abetted by Bulgaria and Hungary. It followed, therefore, that when Germany and Italy proceeded to carve up Yugoslavia and overrun Greece, the Hungarians and Bulgarians were allowed to share the spoils — Hungary and Bulgaria in the case of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria in the case of Greece. In this connection, it must be remembered that the training camps for the Croatian "Ustacha" and Bulgarian "I.M.R.O." assassins, who murdered King Alexander, were established in Hungary and Italy. Therefore, when it came to the division of the spoils, all these countries had to have their reward, just as the actual assassins have had theirs.

It is one of the most extraordinary chapters in modern diplomatic history that during the years in which this plot—which to-day has borne fruit so tragic to our cause—was being hatched, people in this country could not read the writing on the wall. The British Government of the day because of their ineptitude. The mass of our people because of their indifference. But there were others here—busybodies, who played at international politics, and actively sided with the countries which are now our enemies. Some of them did so out of a mistaken sense of idealism, a concern for "national minorities" and a desire for "fair play" to ex-enemies; others had less honourable motives; but in both cases they made excellent tools for the agents and propagandists of the then ex-enemy countries which to-day are again our enemies.

As a result of all this folly, and especially after the Marseilles

murder, when it became clear that Britain and France could not maintain a decent order in the Balkans, and could not protect their Balkan friends from the machinations of their more powerful neighbours, the Balkans became a loss to us. The French lost their influence because they proved themselves too weak to maintain it. We lost our influence because we seemed both distant and disinterested.

And so Germany became the paramount Power in those parts. Alexander the "King Unifier" was dead. Mussolini had a free hand for his Balkan intrigues. Hitler had an equally free hand for his policy of "divide and rule," and the arts of disruption from within.

Thus it came about that when, early this year, the Axis faced Yugoslavia with an ultimatum to join the Three-Power Pact (the Axis Pact), the country was not in a position to put up an effective resistance. In March, however, the Yugoslav people turned out their Government of weaklings, who had been trying to preserve peace by subservience to the Axis, and replaced them with a Government of patriots, pledged to maintain Yugoslavia's honour and independence. It was a decision wh'ch we in this country hailed with enthusiasm. But it was a decision which cost Yugoslavia her life—her physical life, that is to say, because it also preserved her soul and guaranteed her resurrection when our victory shall have been won.

The destruction of Yugoslavia was sudden, swift, total. She fought with the peerless courage which is her tradition. But the odds were overwhelming and her fate was sealed before the fight began.

Attacked from without by forces vastly superior in numbers and material, and betrayed from within, her organized military res'tance was soon broken. But she never capitulated. She did not ask for an armistice or sue for peace. Invaded, overrun, dismembered and carved up, her people—and more especially the Serbs—continued the fight, in the form of guerilla warfare in the mountains, and civilian sabotage in the cities and villages. This resistance has never ceased. At the time of writing it is growing in strength. It is going on. And it will continue. Not even a reign of terror which equals anything the Nazis have done in Poland avails to stop it.

Now Yugoslav resistance is being organized from London, where a Free Yugoslav Government has been installed. The Boy King, Peter II, is in our midst, together with General Simovitch, the Prime Minister; Dr. Nintchitch, the Foreign

Minister, and other members of the Government who managed to get out of Yugoslavia. Free Yugoslav fighting forces are being organized in the Middle East, in Britain, in Russia and in the U.S.A. Yugoslavia's resurrection is now one of our official war aims.

The full significance of the Yugoslav tragedy—and what it meant to us as well as to the Yugoslavs—could not be fully grasped at the time. For it was a drama within a drama. Yugoslavia fell while Greece was falling and we were suffering the sudden reversal of our military fortunes in Lybia. There followed our own retreat from Greece and the Cretan drama. Thus, at the time, the Yugoslav debacle seemed but one tragic incident in a series of tragic incidents. Moreover, so completely was Yugoslavia surrounded that for some weeks it was impossible to obtain news of her from sources on the spot. Her death agony took place, as it were, behind sound-proof walls.

But now the time has come to attempt an assessment of the tragedy of Yugoslavia and its relation to the war at large. And in making such an assessment we shall have to remember that Yugoslavia was lost, not only because of the overwhelming odds with which she was faced on the field of battle, but because of the years' old plot which made her defeat possible.

It is a strange story. A story which has all the recognizable features of an American gangster yarn, but played out against a European background, and with international politics as the "racket." A story in which the actual gunmen were natives of the Balkans, but the big racketeers who employed them were the heads of supposedly civilized Great Powers.

You could not believe these things at the time. If, when reading this record, you are tempted to be sceptical, even at this time of day, I can only remind you that truth is stranger than fiction, and that the things I have to tell, which may seem incredible to you, were the mere commonplaces of politics to those who perpetrated them.

But much has happened since in Europe to show that such things are indeed possible. You are now no longer unaware that we are fighting political gangsterism. In this book, therefore, I am but disclosing another chapter in the story of the great Nazi-Fascist racket. One cannot now separate one part of the world from the other. It is now no longer a case of regarding the Balkans as remote and not our "pigeon." Hence the story I have to tell in this book, of the political gangsterism which led to the endeavours to obliterate Yugoslavia from the map. In

the unfolding of this story it is shown, however, how this plot against Yugoslavia was part of the greater plot against Britain.

My data is based upon historical fact, personal knowledge and experience, and the revelations made to me by some of the principal actors in the drama. In it I have set down what I learned as a Diplomatic journalist writing for London newspapers. My job took me frequently to Central and South-Eastern Europe. I knew many of the people—statesmen, officials and the rest—who figure in these pages. This book is meant, frankly, to be "journalism within book covers." A reporter's book. In it I have revealed some of the things which, because they were confidential at the time, could not be included in my reports, dispatches and articles.

This book is also meant to be a tribute to the Yugoslavs, a gallant people, whom I have known and loved for many years; a people who are our Allies in this war, and whose cause is linked with our cause; a people who have passed through and are passing through great suffering and tribulations; but a people also whose spirit is undying and who will therefore again come into their heritage. For the soul of a nation which prefers physical death to dishonour cannot perish.

C. F. MELVILLE.

P.S.—With regard to Yugoslav names and terms, I have used the Serbian "vitch" instead of the Croatian "vic" in the case of names of Croats, because the Serbian form is more generally known to the British public. The difference is in the spelling. The pronunciation is the same. To those not conversant with these facts, the use of the Croatian form might convey the wrong pronunciation. With regard to the political gangster organization of Ante Pavelitch, known as the "Ustacha," it should be explained that where I have written "Ustacha" it refers to the organization, and where I have written "Ustachi" it refers to the members of that organization.—C.F.M.

CHAPTER I

MUSSOLINI FISHES IN TROUBLED BALKAN WATERS

MUSSOLINI opened his war on Yugoslavia with the murder of King Alexander at Marseilles, but he started his preparations long before, indeed almost as soon as he assumed power in Italy.

It is interesting to recall that in his early Socialist days he preached a different doctrine. At a meeting at Milan, attended by various people, including some Yugoslavs, he declared that Italy and Yugoslavia should always pursue a policy of friendship. But he jettisoned this principle of foreign policy, just as he threw over his Socialistic internal policy, as soon as he became Fascist Duce and the ruler of Italy.

He had not been long in power before he started fishing in troubled Balkan waters. He realized that there were plenty of queer fish in those waters which would probably be useful to him. These were the elements of unrest and subversion in the Balkans whose chance of survival depended upon the disruption of Yugoslavia and the removal of the unifying Monarch, King Alexander. Their local interests and ambitions coincided with Mussolini's grandiose Imperialist plans. They found in him a natural employer. He found in them natural employees. Most prominent amongst these were the Macedo-Bulgarian desperadoes of the "I.M.R.O." (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) and the Ustacha (the Croatian terrorist separatist organization). He was to employ them for the murder of King Alexander at Marseilles. After the Marseilles murder, when the Anglo-French intervention at Geneva saved him from the just punishment of his crime, he was to continue to employ them, and, at a later stage, Hitler was to join in the conspiracy. With them was plotted the destruction of Yugoslavia in 1941. To-day, still the lackeys of Mussolini and Hitler, they sit in the seats of Government in Croatia and Macedonia in dismembered Yugoslavia.

But to return to the early days: Mussolini quickly established relations with the I.M.R.O. The Ustacha connection was to come later. The leaders of the I.M.R.O. murder gang came frequently to Italy, where they received encouragement and funds. The I.M.R.O. was an organization of Komitadjis, or political bandits. Originally formed to fight the Turks, during the days when Bulgaria was the spearhead of the Balkan movement for liberation from Turkish rule, it degenerated in subsequent years into a vested interest of inter-Balkan murder politics. Ostensibly fighting for an "autonomous" Macedonia, it was in reality part of the Bulgarian revisionist movement for the recovery of territory from Greece and Yugoslavia. Being a "professional" organization of assassins, however, it also developed into a sort of State within a State, and not only murdered Yugoslavs and Greeks, but also Bulgarians, and even its own members, in the course of a number of internal feuds.

As a result of the last war part of Macedonia went to Yugoslavia and was known as South Serbia. The Bulgarians maintained revisionist claims to this territory. In South Serbia, or Yugoslav Macedonia, the average inhabitants spoke a dialect which professors in Belgrade argued was of Serbian origin, and professors in Sofia declared to be of Bulgarian origin. The average Macedonian asked for nothing better than to be left alone to till his land. But the I.M.R.O. gunmen, posing as "liberators" of this territory, for years conducted terrorist incursions there, murdering, pillaging, burning and raping. They also had a great influence in Bulgaria itself, especially in reactionary political circles and amongst army officers. In connivance with these circles in Bulgaria proper, the I.M.R.O. bandits strove to keep Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations in the condition of a running sore. For they knew, and their official backers in Sofia knew, that once Yugoslavia and Bulgaria came to a friendly understanding, it would mean the end of Bulgarian reactionary revisionist ambitions and the end of the gangster activities of the I.M.R.O.

Here, then, were men after Mussolini's own heart, men whose local aspirations could be exploited to further his own expansionist aims. Supported by Italy they could be relied upon to keep Yugoslavia and Bulgaria at loggerheads and, by thus preventing collaboration between the two strongest Balkan States, prevent also the creation of an inter-Balkan understanding on the basis of Gladstone's famous slogan: "The Balkans for the Balkan people."

For a time Mussolini was obliged to drop the I.M.R.O. That was when they came into the international limelight as a result of a murderous feud between themselves. The two wings of the I.M.R.O. — one led by General Protoguerov, and the other by Mihailov — started a vendetta, and a long series of "bumpings-off" took place, which took toll of the lives of countless people, including well-known Bulgarian politicians and officials. Eventually the Mihailovists succeeded in putting the Protoguerovists out of action. They just got hold of Protoguerov and "took him for a ride." Things quietened down again. The world press dropped the Macedonian feud story and became interested in other things. Then it was that Mussolini, quietly and without it being apparent to the outer world, took up the I.M.R.O. again.

Mussolini had viewed with alarm the Yugoslav-Bulgarian rapprochement of 1933, when, amongst scenes of great popular enthusiasm amongst the peasant population of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, King Alexander and King Boris met, and the two countries signed a Treaty of Perpetual Friendship. This Treaty brought many advantages to both countries. One of its greatest blessings was the action of the then Bulgarian Government in making a determined effort to suppress the I.M.R.O. troublemakers. With the suppression of the I.M.R.O. a new Balkan epoch was opened with every possibility of a wider Balkan unity growing out of the Yugoslav-Bulgarian rapprochement.

This, of course, was the red lamp for the Duce. He entered into new arrangements with the I.M.R.O. Driven underground in Bulgaria, they were assured of renewed and greater patronage in Italy. Thus it was that when Mussolini decided to use the amateur gunmen of the Croatian Ustacha—by supporting their fight for the separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia—to destroy King Alexander, he was able to arrange with the professional gunmen of the I.M.R.O. to give lessons in assassination to his Croatian employees.

Mussolini's dealings with the Ustacha followed lines not dissimilar to his dealings with the I.M.R.O. His employment of both these organizations was facilitated by the fact that the leaders of the former had themselves made contacts with the heads of the latter. But even as he had seen in the Macedo-Bulgarian agitation an opportunity to set Bulgar and Serb one against the other, so he saw in the Croatian separatist movement an opportunity to set Croat and Serb one against the other.

As the result of the war of 1914-1918, Croats and Slovenes

were united in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Basically of the same race, but with different cultural and historic backgrounds, Serbs and Croats disputed internally. The Croats wanted local autonomy. The Serbs wanted centralization. Left to their own devices they could have settled this internal quarrel, as indeed they eventually did. But outside influences—and, at this time, more especially Italy—saw in the Croatian agitation a first-class opportunity to weaken Yugoslavia from within. And so Mussolini took up the Croatian case.

It should be understood that the great majority of the Croats, as represented by the majority Croatian Peasant Party, under Dr. Raditch, and later under Dr. Matchek, however much they differed with the Serbs and disputed with them on matters of the internal organization of the Yugoslav State, never demanded the separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia. Their demand was for local administrative autonomy, not for independence. Whenever faced with an Italian or a Hungarian threat to Yugoslav unity, they always closed their ranks with the Serbs, and stood loyal to the Yugoslav idea. Indeed, as regards Italy, the Croats harboured a traditional dislike of that country, dating back to the days when the Croat regiments in the Austrian Army (when Croatia was part of the Hapsburg Empire) invariably inflicted upon the Italian Armies defeat in the various wars between Austria and Italy.

But there was an extreme section of the Croatian autonomists which wanted complete severance from Yugoslavia, and who hated the Serbs. These constituted a small faction known as the "Frankovtsi," mainly composed of one-time Croatian officers in the Aus'ro-Hungarian Army, who hated Belgrade and sighed for the old Kaiserlich und Koniglich days of Vienna. These pro-Hapsburgist Croats eventually—after the absorption of Austria by Germany—threw in their lot with Hitler. The Ustacha, the definitely terrorist organization of gunmen and assassins led by Ante Pavelitch, was the extreme wing of this extreme faction. Pavelitch and his associates were men of thwarted ambition, who turned to terrorist action when they failed to achieve their aims by more normal means. They gathered round them a mixed company of political adventurers, fanatics, common criminals, and members of the unemployed. Mussolini took the Pavelitch gang under his wing, and they lived in Italy, on Italian money, under the protection of the Italian political police, and in close contact with the Italian Foreign Office.

Pavelitch had his groups in Italy distributed over various

districts__at "training camps" in Ancona, Brescia and Borgotaro. There was also a "training camp" at Yanka Purszta in Hungary. At these camps the Ustachi were submitted to military discipline, wore a khaki uniform, and military looking caps, with the letter "U" upon them. There they were taught revolver firing and bomb throwing. Their instructors were Georgiev, of the I.M.R.O., and ex-Austro-Hungarian officers. They had a "dummy" of King Alexander set up, and the "trainees" had to fire at the "vital parts" of the effigy. Just as in Italy these camps were under the formal patronage of the Italian authorities, so in Hungary the camp at Yanka Puszta was under the informal patronage of the Hungarian authorities.

The more important members of the Ustacha were the "Politicals" - they were men ready to plot and kill for political purposes. But amongst the humbler members were unemployed Croat workmen and peasants who had been lured to Yanka Puszta and the camps in Italy under false pretences. There were also elements who were just ordinary criminals, working for Pavelitch in consideration of the quite substantial bribes which he and his deputies either gave or offered them.

As early as 1932 the Yugoslav Government had protested at the League of Nations about the activities at Yanka Puszta, and there was a battle royal between M. Fotitch, the Yugoslav representative, and M. Tibor Eckhart, the Hungarian representative. The Yugoslav Government brought forward detailed and damning evidence of what was really going on at Yanka Puszta, evidence which proved, moreover, that the Hungarian authorities were implicated. For the Hungarian Government was definitely in on the plot against Yugoslavia, acting as the henchmen of the Italian Government. The evidence brought forward by M. Fotitch, in 1932, is on record, in documentary form, and is available for anyone to read who will. The Yugoslavs did not receive any real satisfaction at Geneva in 1932. But they did at least nail down the facts. Amongst other things the evidence showed that four hundred and sixty-four cases of ammunition had been smuggled across the Hungaro-Yugoslav border in 1932, and four hundred and two cases in 1933. It was also a fact that when, in 1932, the Ustacha bands began definitely to be formed, they smuggled arms from Italy into Dalmatia. Furthermore, it turned out that some of the ammunition smuggled into Austria and Hungary—this was the notorious "Hirtenberg Affair"—found its way into the hands of the Ustacha.

A series of bomb explosions were engineered by the Ustacha

in Yugoslavia between 1933 and 1934. The plots, hatched and prepared in the camps in Italy and Hungary, all took place on Yugoslav soil. The most serious of all was the attempt, which failed, on the life of King Alexander at the time when he was visiting Zagreb in January, 1934.

Here is a list of these outrages:

April, 1931, bomb explosions at Nish and Zagreb; August, 1931, bomb explosion on Paris Express at Zemun, near Belgrade; September, 1932, bomb explosion at the Military Casino, Belgrade; January, 1934, Bregitza Railway bomb outrage during King Alexander's visit to Zagreb; August, 1934, bomb explosion at Zagreb, during Sokol Congress.

It is also instructive to pass in brief review some of the principal utterances of the Ustacha press during this period, as follows:

In 1933, Pavelitch published at Nova Wes, near Berlin, two papers, *Nezavisma Hrvatska* (Independent Croat State) in Croat, and *Croatia Presse* in German. They were later transferred to Zoppot in the Danzig Free State, following protests in Berlin by the Yugoslav Legation. During 1934 they appeared in a new form, supposedly printed in Zagreb, but in reality printed in Budapest. Later still they were transferred to Geneva and published in opposition to the papers printed there by the more moderate Croatian autonomists.

In *Nezavisma Hrvatska*, on February, 1934, there was published a threat to kill M. Perovitch, then Ban of Zagreb, and later to become Third Regent, when Prince Paul became First Regent. During January, 1934, at the time of King Alexander's visit to Zagreb, the same paper greeted the Royal Visitor with these headlines: "Croat fighters wait for Alexander with revolvers." On May 30th the same paper glorified Oreb and Begovitch, the two Ustachi who killed the police detectives who caught them while they were plotting the murder of King Alexander at Zagreb. On June 16th of the same year, Pavelitch wrote in his paper an article denouncing the pacifism of M. Raditch, the leader of the Croat Peasant Party before Dr. Matchek, and declaring that the violent and murderous methods of the Ustacha were the only possible policy. And on July 6th, the following appeared: "The Serbian Dynasty and the State must perish! If not of their own accord, then they will be destroyed by the armies of the Ustacha."

During March, 1934—in Ustacha—Pavelitch wrote (anent Lazitch, the Minister of the Interior): "We hasten to the fray,

despising danger and death, in order to crush your impudent head which drinks the blood of Croat children."

It will be seen from these examples that Pavelitch and his gang were quite open about their murderous intentions. It will also be seen that they were of the type likely to commend themselves as the hirelings of the Fascist Dictators, who invariably attracted to their service men addicted to the blood lust.

Berlin was to take a serious hand in these intrigues at a later stage after the Austro-German Anschluss and the creation of the Rome-Berlin Axis, and, more especially, after the Brenner meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in 1940, when Germany and Italy entered into full collaboration for the use of the Balkan terrorists against Yugoslavia. But during the earlier days Berlin played a less active part than Rome. Both the Ustacha and the I.M.R.O. had offices in Berlin, where they organized propaganda, and printed newspapers of their own. The German attitude at the time towards both of them was, however, much the same as that adopted towards the Ukrainians and other "White" Russian political emigres. It was considered that they might come in useful to Germany one of these days and were therefore worth keeping in cold storage. And so they were allowed to hatch their plots on German soil, while German officialdom turned a blind eye.

But Mussolini also had a number of other irons in the fire in addition to the Ustacha and the I.M.R.O. These included Hapsburgism (both Austrian and Hungarian varieties), Hungarian revisionism and Albania.

For a number of years Mussolini encouraged Austrian Royalist hopes of a Hapsburg restoration. This was particularly the case during the period when he supported Austrian independence against the Nazis. Moderate and realistic elements amongst the Austrian Monarchists wanted a restoration of the Hapsburg Monarchy in Austria proper, based on a democratic constitution. There was something to be said for their point of view, inasmuch as it was anti-Hitler and anti-Anschluss. But there were other elements amongst the Austrian—and more especially the Hungarian—Monarchists who wanted to have a restoration of all the old traditional Hapsburg lands, including those which embraced territories in Yugoslavia, such as Croatia. The ex-Empress, Zita, the mother of the Pretender, Arch-Duke Otto, shared these ideas, however much her son had come round to a more realistic outlook. These ideas were encouraged by Mussolini, although he never went all out for them. His Hapsburgist

friends in Vienna were told always to wait, the day would come, but it had not come yet. The Duce, in fact, was keeping the Hapsburg card up his sleeve, to be played if and when the situation warranted it.

It suited Mussolini's purpose to encourage—without compromising himself too far—Hapsburg restoration dreams. It served two ends: It was a counter-balance to Hitler as far as Austria was concerned, in the days when the Duce did not want to see the Germans on the Brenner frontier; and it provided yet another link with the Croatian Separatists, who, before Hitler seized Austria, were pro-Austrian and Hapsburgist.

The Austrian Hapsburgist intrigues, however, were never much more than a bogey, and I always felt they were taken far too seriously in Belgrade. Hitler rather than Hapsburg was the real menace to Yugoslavia. Far more serious than Mussolini's Hapsburg intrigue was his championing of Hungarian revisionism. The Magyars laid claim to the restoration of all the territories of the "historic" Kingdom of St. Stephen, which as far as Yugoslavia was concerned would have meant the return to Hungarian rule of Croatia and much else besides. Even the Croatian separatist extremists opposed this. However much they may have hated Belgrade they had no love for Budapest.

When Hungary began to show signs of wanting to realize her revisionist aims in Yugoslavia, even the Croatian Frankovtsi were alarmed. They preferred Italian or even German rule to Hungarian. Indeed, in some ways, history repeated itself. Just as in the old days of the Hapsburg Empire the Croats used to seek the patronage of Vienna against Budapest, so in the present instance the Croat separatists appealed to Berlin to save them from Budapest.

During the years before the war Italy was the main support of Hungarian revisionism. It was this which made possible the collusion of Hungary with Italy at the time of the Marseilles murder, when the Italians employed Ustacha gunmen, who were permitted by the Hungarian Government to do part of their "training" in camps situated on Hungarian soil.

Then there was Albania. Albanian emigres found sanctuary in Italy, and figured on Mussolini's pay-roll. This was yet another facet of the Duce's anti-Yugoslav policy. In the early nineteen-twenties Mussolini supported an Albanian politician called Fan Noli. He installed Fan Noli in power in Tirana, with a pro-Italian regime, which worked against Yugoslavia. In 1924 the world thought there would be war between Italy

and Yugoslavia on the Albanian issue. At the last moment, however, Mussolini drew back, and concluded a treaty of friendship with Yugoslavia, known as the Pact of Rome.

It is not generally known, however, that while the negotiations were in progress between Rome and Belgrade, Mussolini proposed to Dr. Nintchitch, the then Yugoslav Foreign Minister, that Italy and Yugoslavia should divide Albania between them, Italy taking the southern part and Yugoslavia the northern part. Dr. Nintchitch refused. The Pact of Rome was made, which provided that both countries should agree that neither of them would make any moves in regard to Albania without consulting the other. In a word, Albanian independence was to be maintained. By this agreement Mussolini was explicitly bound not to use Albania as a jumping-off place for Italy against Yugoslavia.

But Mussolini indugined in a policy of double-cross. At that time, Ahmed Bey Zogu, the Albanian Prime Minister who had been driven out by Mussolini's protege, Fan Noli, and was living in exile in Belgrade, returned to Albania and turned out Fan Noli. Mussolini, however, had already made arrangements in advance, whereby, upon his return to Albania, Zogu would carry out a policy in line with Italian requirements. Soon after his return to Albania, Zogu embarked on a pro-Italian policy. Later, under Mussolini's aegis, he proclaimed himself king, and assumed the title of King Zog. There followed the two Treaties of Tirana which made Albania into an Italian protectorate in all but name, and converted the country into an Italian base against Yugoslavia. Later in 1939 Mussolini double-crossed Zog, drove him out, and annexed Albania to Italy. It will be seen from this brief record, that Albania, as well as Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia and the Hapsburgs, was also used as a pawn by Mussolini in his game of intrigue and double-cross aimed at the destruction of Yugoslavia.

Throughout this period Mussolini succeeded in throwing dust into the eyes of both the British and the French. During the earlier years, when Franco-Yugoslav relations were close, and Franco-Italian relations strained, it was the British who were hoodwinked rather than the French. From the time of Laval's policy of Franco-Italian rapprochement, until the war, however, the French were as indifferent as the British to the real facts of the situation.

Even during the pre-MacDonald-Baldwin-Neville Chamberlain epoch of British foreign policy, when Sir Austen Chamberlain conducted what was in many respects a realistic foreign policy,

Downing Street and Whitehall were content to take Mussolini's word rather than listen to the Yugoslavs.

Yugoslavia constantly warned the British Foreign Office of the real meaning of Mussolini's Balkan machinations. But Sir Austen Chamberlain, and his advisers at the Foreign Office, preferred to accept the version of "civilized" Rome to that of "Balkan" Belgrade. So much was this the case that when, on a yachting cruise in the Adriatic with Mussolini, not long before the first Treaty of Tirana, Sir Austen said to the Duce that the independence of Albania was a matter close to the British heart, Mussolini was able to take him in with the reply: "So close is it to my heart that I am even prepared to make a treaty with Albania." And make a treaty he did—the Treaty of Tirana. But it was not the kind of treaty envisaged by London. Its primary purpose was to secure for Italy a military foothold on the Balkan Peninsular. This was not what Sir Austen had meant, or what he had thought Mussolini meant.

Similarly with the Italian intrigues with the Croatian Separatists. Both London and Paris took the view that the Croatian extremists were small and unimportant groups to which little serious attention need be paid. To be quite fair to the diplomats at the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay, Belgrade itself was inclined to take the line that these extremists were too small to be of much consequence. Belgrade was right in saying, and London and Paris in believing, that these groups did not represent the majority of Croatian opinion and feeling. But what nobody seemed to realize at the time—of Hitler had not yet given his object lesson on how small groups can be used by Great Powers to disrupt neighbouring States—was that however small and unrepresentative the Frankovtsi and Ustachi and suchlike movements may have been, they could be very dangerous when used by a hostile Great Power.

An event took place in London which demonstrates how these elements endeavoured to throw dust in the eyes of people here. Fortunately it shows that while there were a number of persons here, of various political complexions, who had their legs very seriously pulled, there were yet some who were clear sighted enough to maintain a realistic attitude. I refer to the visit of three Croatian separatist extremists to London at the time of the second Labour Government.

These Croatian terrorists brought with them a Memorandum demanding the separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia. They wanted to get it into the hands of Mr. Arthur Henderson, the then

Foreign Secretary. They had seen a number of people of various political creeds here, and apparently had succeeded in enlisting their sympathies. They did not appear on the scene as avowed terrorists, needless to say. They posed as earnest and respectable fighters for freedom. Encouraged by such successes as they had had they went to the House of Commons and presented their document to Mr. Rennie Smith, M.P., who, at that time, was Private Parliamentary Secretary to Mr. Hugh Dalton, the present Minister of Economic Warfare, who was then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Rennie Smith sent them about their business. He told them that internal Yugoslav disputes would have to be fought out in the internal Yugoslavia political arena and not in Britain; and that if they thought that the British Government would in any way associate itself with an intrigue against the unity and integrity of a friendly State, they were very much mistaken. "I do not want you to leave this building," he said to them, "under any misapprehension on this score."

I read their Memorandum, which Mr. Rennie Smith showed me. It was a particularly dangerous document, calling for the complete severance of Croatia from the rest of Yugoslavia, together with a demand for the creation of a separate Croatian Army. I had a long talk with Mr. Rennie Smith and expressed to him the very grave view I took of the activities of these terrorists. I also emphasized the dangers, as I saw them, of anything being said or done in London which might give them the slightest excuse for boasting that they had the sympathy of the British Government or the British Labour Movement. Mr. Rennie Smith was in complete agreement with me. He took a completely realistic view of the whole affair, which was shown by the way he dealt with it. I only wish the same could be said of all his colleagues at that time. Unfortunately—as I will explain fully in the chapter entitled "Byzantium in London"—there existed in the Labour Movement, as in the other political parties, those who for reasons of ignorance or self-interest gave encouragement, wittingly or unwittingly, to these subversive movements.

It gives me a strange feeling to look back on this episode, after all that has happened since. For it took place years before the murder of King Alexander, and even more years before the break up of Yugoslavia. At the time when Mr. Rennie Smith and myself put a spoke in the wheels of the Ustachi in London these tragic events were still in the womb of time. Mortal man cannot read the future. Neither of us had any idea that these

three wild men from the Balkans, hawking a memorandum around political London, were destined to play a part in developments which were to lead to such fatal results. It was simply that both of us happened to know enough about Balkan affairs to be aware that their activities were not based on the undiluted nationalistic idealism which they pretended, but were linked up with the revisionist intrigues of neighbours unfriendly to Yugoslavia.

It might have been very embarrassing for this country if the terrorists had succeeded in obtaining the ear of the Foreign Secretary. "Uncle Arthur" Henderson was no fool. He combined idealism with realism. But he did not pretend to have any particular knowledge of the intricacies of Balkan politics. Revolver politics is not a subject which usually comes the way of British trade union leaders and parliamentarians. If the terrorists had been able to see Mr. Henderson, under the false guise of interesting the British Government in a "Minority" question, the Ustachi, and their Italian employers, would certainly have exploited the occasion, just as, in later years, the Sudeten German agitators of Czechoslovakia exploited their meeting with British political and official personalities in London. Even if Mr. Henderson had confined himself to some purely non-committal remark—they would have used the occasion in their propaganda to say that "the Cause of an independent Croatia has received the blessings of the British Government and the British Labour Movement," or something to that effect. Hence, in blocking their path to the British Foreign Office, Mr. Rennie Smith rendered service to Britain no less than to Yugoslavia.

Mr. Rennie Smith having dealt successfully with the British official end of the affair, I then took steps to warn the Yugoslav Government. M. Pouritch, later to be Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Minister at Paris, was then the Charge d'Affaires at London. I communicated to him the contents of the Memorandum, which he duly passed on to the Belgrade Foreign Office.

In this connection it must be remembered that the authors of the Memorandum were not Croatian autonomists fighting for their Cause against Serbian centralism within the legitimate sphere of Yugoslav political action, as in the case of the late M. Raditch, Dr. Kosutitch, Dr. Matchek and others of the Croatian Peasant Party. They were emigres, exiled from their country on account of their crimes, and plotting terrorist action

on behalf and in the pay of hostile foreign governments. I knew enough about the political background to understand that their intrigues linked up with something bigger the internal Yugoslav politics, that they were connected with the much bigger revisionist plot aimed against the peace settlement, and, therefore, against Britain's own interests.

It may be asked: if these terrorists were working for the revisionist Powers, why should they try to enlist British sympathies for surely the two things are incompatible? I would answer this with another question: In view of the fact that the Sudeten German plot to break up Czechoslovakia was part of a bigger plot to wage a German war on Britain, why did the Sudeten Nazis and their German masters seek the sympathy of the British? It is all very simple really. The tactics of political action, as understood by the Mussolinis and Hitlers of this world, and as understood by their Fifth Columnist hirelings, is to use all and every means to an end, and, more especially, to use the gullible elements in the countries which they regard as the'r enemies. It helps, amongst other things, to create a condition of confusion, which provides fertile ground for yet further intrigues. In the case of the Croatian terrorists it was part of the game that, working in the interests of the Fascist and Revisionist forces in Europe, with a view to feathering their own nests, they should try to enlist the help and sympathy of the democratic forces. Hence their attempts to win the goodwill of people in this country.

The fact remains that the Croatian extremists were active in London, Paris and Geneva as well as in Rome and Berlin, Vienna and Budapest. They had their propaganda side as well as their purely terroristic side. In Rome, Berlin, Budapest and Vienna they had a highly organized propaganda machine. In Geneva they had a propaganda group which was active amongst people attending sessions of the League of Nations. From Geneva also they wrote letters to newspapers and persons in Britain, and likewise in France. Some of them sometimes visited London, as instanced above, and also Paris.

But behind this propaganda facade the more serious business of terroristic preparations went on, with ever increasing energy, and with ever increasing resources.

This brings me to the eve of the Marseilles murder. Mussolini ordered the assassination of King Alexander to take place during September, 1934, because at that time the Yugoslav monarch was on his way to Paris to talk with the French Government, after

which he was to go on to London to talk with the British Government.

French foreign policy at that time had had infused into it new energy and purpose by M. Barthou, who had taken over the Foreign Ministry. M. Barthou was out to rebuild a European security system based on France's alliances, which, under his predecessors, had lost something of their vitality. He was prepared, if it should be possible, to come to terms with Italy. But unlike Laval, who followed him, he was not prepared to make an agreement with Italy merely on Mussolini's terms. Far from it. But as he hoped for some kind of European arrangement which would include Italian co-operation on reasonable terms, he was anxious to hear from King Alexander whether Yugoslavia would be amenable to a Franco-Balkan-Italian understanding.

King Alexander's policy was: friendship with Britain and France; strengthening of the Little Entente; and building up of the Balkan Bloc, including friendship with Bulgaria. It was a sound policy. It did not exclude some sort of friendly relations with Germany; but it did not include friendship of any sort with Italy. King Alexander at the time looked upon Italy—with good reason—as Yugoslavia's principal enemy. But he would not have been adverse to agreeing with M. Barthou, to include Italy in any new groupings which might have come out of the Paris talks, provided the terms would be such as would compel Mussolini to drop his anti-Yugoslav intrigues.

Mussolini, needless to say, had no intention of entering into any international arrangements which would restrict in any way his plans to disrupt Yugoslavia and obtain Italian hegemony in the Balkans.

Moreover, Mussolini feared that arrangements might be made between the Western Democracies and the then strongest Balkan State which would create a barrier against aggression stretching from Western to South-Eastern Europe. He saw in such a possibility the denial of his ambitions to extend the Italian Empire to the Balkans, the frustration of his expansionist hopes. He saw the possibility of a Balkan Peninsula unified against external aggression under the aegis of a Yugoslavia acting in close harmony with Britain and France. He saw that this would mean consolidation, order and peace; while what he required was unrest, fluidity, and war. He wanted a Balkans rent with internal animosities and dissensions, a condition of troubled waters in which he could fish to his own advantage. He wanted a "Balkanized" Balkans—indeed, a "Balkanized" Europe—

which could be exploited to the greater glory of the "Fascist dynamic." But the Duce's gaze did not confine itself to the Yugoslav coast across the Adriatic. It extended further. To the Mediterranean. To Africa. He dreamed dreams, not only of Balkan hegemony, but of Mediterranean overlordship, too. "Mare nostrum" was already a slogan. The Mediterranean must cease to be a British lake and become an Italian sea. The destruction of Yugoslavia, therefore, meant for him more than just the removal of an Adriatic rival, although it also meant that. It meant more to him than just the overlordship of South-Eastern Europe, although it also meant that. In the long view, it meant the restoration of the Roman Empire, and the exclusion of Britain and France from the Middle Sea. King Alexander, with his policy of Balkan unity against external aggression, was the main obstacle. And so Mussolini condemned King Alexander to death.

Adding fuel to the fire of this political animosity for King Alexander was a matter of personal rancour. Not long before King Alexander's departure for Marseilles, the Italian press, under Mussolini's direction, had attacked Yugoslavia. It had even indulged its spleen to the fantastic extent of disparaging Serbian military valour, which, in view of the respective military reputations of the Yugoslavs and Italians, was as absurd as it was uncalled for. King Alexander lost no time in hitting back. An article appeared in the Belgrade *Vreme*, which everybody "in the know" knew to have been directly inspired by the King, if not actually written by him, reminding the Italians that people in glass houses should not throw stones, especially when the glass house was so fragile a thing as Caporetto.

Mussolini never forgave King Alexander for that riposte. His desire for personal vengeance, therefore, reinforced his political motive for having the Yugoslav monarch destroyed.

Preparations for the murder went ahead at great speed. Mussolini had it conveyed to Pavelitch that the moment for action had come. The long months of preparation at the terrorist training camps in Italy and Hungary were now to bear fruit. Pavelitch gave the order. Pertchetz organized the campaign. Kvaternik superintended its execution. A number of the more ferocious members of the Ustacha were selected for the job. With them was Georgiev (alias Kelemen), who was the chauffeur of Mihai-lov, the I.M.R.O. chief, and one of the worse murderers in that gang of Macedo-Bulgarian terrorists. A veritable human tiger.

By the time King Alexander was on the battleship taking

him to Marseilles, the assassins had taken up their positions in Marseilles ready to commit their foul deed.

A new chapter in the history of post-last-war Europe was about to be written in blood. Mussolini was on the eve of essaying with the assassin's bullet what he had previously tried, but failed to accomplish, by diplomatic intrigue and underground political manoeuvre.

CHAPTER II THE MARSEILLES MURDER

MUSSOLINI'S hired assassins, members of the Ustacha and the I.M.R.O., arrived in France and Britain, via Switzerland. Five, including Kvaternik, Pavelitch's deputy, who was in command, had been sent to France. Four others had been sent to Britain. This was the first division of forces. The idea was that if the assassination attempts in France should fail, they might succeed in Britain, where it was expected that there would be ample opportunities of killing King Alexander while he would be on his way to visit his son, Crown Prince (now King) Peter, at his school in Surrey. The next division of forces was when the group sent to France was split up between Paris and Marseilles. If the shot to be fired in Marseilles should fail to bring down King Alexander, then another attempt would be made when he arrived in Paris.

Both the Ustachi sent to Britain and those sent to France were well provided with money, and carried false Czechoslovak passports forged in Hungary, the work of the same Hungarian organization which at an earlier date had created a European scandal by forging millions of French francs.

The band of assassins made up a motley body of rogues, part fanatic, part criminal. Four Croatian gunmen, one Macedo-Bulgarian gunman, a "mystery man" and a nameless woman. The last two were a certain "Monsieur Pierre" and "la femme blonde," who joined the others after their arrival in France. Nobody ever discovered either the name or the nationality of the "blonde woman" who was always referred to as such.

Their movements during the few days between their reception of their final orders and the time of the actual crime at Marseilles,

are redolent of a cheap mystery "shocker." They seem to have spent their time partly in covering up their tracks, and partly in studying the territory over which they would operate. There were frequent changes of their hotels; much splitting up and re-uniting; issues of new forged passports; serving out of revolvers and ammunition; and a lot of coming and going. But if their actions seem to have had a quality of over-dramatization, there was nevertheless method in all that they did. For, at any rate they did succeed in remaining undiscovered by the French

Three members of the Ustacha—Poppichil, Rayitch and Miyo Kralj - set off from their training camps and went first to Zurich, where they were met by Kvaternik, and Georgiev, of the I.M.R.O. They then went to Lausanne, where they provided themselves with new outfits of clothes. From Lausanne they crossed the lake into France, some going to Thonon, others to Evian, with a view to re-uniting on the Paris train. At Fontaine-bleau they left the train and went on to Paris by bus.

Arrived at Paris they began to take elaborate precautions. Kvaternik first took them to a cinema. During the show, he made signs to Poppichil and Kralj to follow him out, and he then took them to have themselves registered in the names on their forged passports which, being supposedly Czech, did not require visas. He returned to the cinema and told Rayitch and Georgiev to follow him. He took them to the Hotel Regina, going himself to the Hotel Bellevue, but changing the next morning to the Commodor.

Until October 6th, Kvaternik made his followers repeatedly change their hotels. He also took them for rides on the Paris Metro so that they could familiarize themselves with its network. Next, he introduced them to "Monsieur Pierre." He explained that in certain circumstances "Monsieur Pierre" might have to act as his deputy. On October 6th, he divided his forces: Georgiev and Kralj went with him to Avignon, while Poppichil and Rayitch remained behind in Paris as the reserve force. The last two passed the night of October 7-8th at Versailles, to become familiar with the layout of the town, as they understood that King Alexander had it on his programme to include Versailles in his round of visits.

At Avignon, Kvaternik, Kralj and Georgiev went to the Hotel Regina, and there met again "Monsieur Pierre," who this time was accompanied by la femme blonde, who was supposed to be his "wife." Georgiev and Kralj received new forged Czech

passports. They then all went on to Aix, where they split up between two hotels. Kvaternik, Georgiev and Kralj visited Marseilles and studied the layout of the town. Kvaternik produced a map of Marseilles and marked upon it various points at which the assassination could most conveniently be carried out. Upon their return to Aix, Kvaternik went with Georgiev and Kralj into their room and gave them final instructions what to do at Marseilles. He then left for Montreux. It is to be observed that, being one of the chiefs, he did not himself intend to take any undue risks. If things should go awry at Marseilles, then his subordinates would have to take the consequences, while he would be out of it. The same day—this was October 9th—"Monsieur Pierre" and la femme blonde, already dressed in travelling clothes, and ready to make their departure, handed Georgiev and Kralj four revolvers and four ammunition pouches. The two assassins then took the bus to Marseilles, and, upon arrival there, mingled with the crowd of sightseers who awaited the coming of King Alexander.

All the elaborate precautions of the Ustachi—the splitting of their forces between Paris and Marseilles—proved to have been unnecessary. The leaving of a reserve of assassins in Paris, and another such reserve in London, turned out to be an over-elaboration. For the expert Georgiev succeeded with one shot at Marseilles. Back in Paris, Poppichil and Rayitch heard the news as they came out of a cinema, and quickly fled to Evian. Two of the band sent to London were arrested by the British police and handed over to the French police. The other two were "wanted" by Scotland Yard. Most of the band in France were rounded up.

Georgiev was able to kill King Alexander with the utmost ease and dispatch because of the scandalous laxity of the French Ministry of the Interior and the French police. For a long time after there were to be acrimonious disputes between the Ministry and the Surete Generale. Albert Sarraut, the Minister of the Interior, had to pass many uncomfortable months trying to live down the scandal. King Alexander and M. Barthou drove along the main street of Marseilles in an open car. The route was not lined with troops, but only by a few policemen who stood at wide intervals apart. This gave Georgiev the opportunity to carry out the easiest murder of his whole criminal career. He ran towards the car, jumped on the running board, and shot King Alexander dead. M. Barthou was also wounded, and died soon afterwards in hospital. The King fell back bleeding pro-

fusely. M. Yevtitch, his Foreign Minister, who was in the car following behind, ran to the King and opened his tunic. He bent over him to catch his dying words. In a few minutes the King was no more. But just before he breathed his last he murmured: "Cuvajte mi Jugoslaviju" ("Protect for me Yugoslavia")—a cry which was to be echoed in slightly different form by the Yugoslav peasants who lined the route of his funeral cortege when the body was brought back to Yugoslavia; for then the peasants cried: "Mi cemo cuvati" ("We will protect Yugoslavia"). Georgiev was cut down by an officers sabre and then trampled to death by the infuriated crowd. His end was horrible enough, but it was fitting.

It had all happened within less than a quarter of an hour of King Alexander's arrival at Marseilles. He stepped off the launch which had brought him ashore from the battleship, his face wreathed in smiles as he returned the salutations of M. Barthou. He looked with interest at the port as he moved to his car. When the car moved off he returned the cheers of the crowd with salutes and more smiles. His usually stern-looking face showed signs of his pleasure at his arrival in France. He looked smart and spruce in his admiral's uniform. The sun shone brightly and it seemed that the forebodings of his friends were to be disproved. And then, after barely fifteen minutes, these forebodings were proved to have been correct. Tragedy, swift and stark, had overtaken him. And not only him but his country also, as the subsequent course of events was to demonstrate.

A news film of the Marseilles crime was shown not long after in every London cinema. But it was a censored film. The more horrifying parts had been cut out. The complete film, including the censored parts, has never been shown to the public. Here, I submit, is a chance for the Film Section of the Ministry of Information. I would recommend them to arrange for a re-showing of the film, but in its entirety; and to have a new commentary specially written for it, giving the political background as well as the explanation of the actual events depicted on the screen. It would be excellent propaganda, for it would demonstrate to the public something of the horror of the Marseilles crime, and also bring home to present-day audiences how the murder of King Alexander was a link in a chain leading to the events of to-day in the present war.

I was privileged not so long ago to attend a private showing of the censored part of the film. It was given by M. Sabo, of

Twentieth Century Fox, a Yugoslav who has long been associated with the British film industry. M. Sabo, by the courtesy of the Gaumont British Film Company, was able to run over the film in their private theatre in Wardour Street. He showed both the film as it was originally presented to the public and in its uncensored version. The audience consisted of the Yugoslav Minister and members of the Legation Staff.

The censored part of the film shows the detail of the King's death, and also of the cutting down and trampling to death of the assassin. It shows, moreover, even more clearly than did the uncensored part—and that showed it clearly enough—the hopelessly inadequate nature of the police protection afforded King Alexander and M. Barthou by the French Government. Looking back on the event one can but ask oneself how it was that the French, who had one of the best detective services in the world, did not know that the assassins were at large in France during the days immediately preceding the arrival of King Alexander. One wants to know why the assassins were able to move about in Paris, Avignon, Aix, Montreux and Marseilles without let or hindrance. And finally, one demands an explanation of the complete absence of soldiery lining the streets of Marseilles and the fantastically small body of police on the route when King Alexander drove through Marseilles. For the Governments and police administrations in every European capital all knew that dangers of some kind were threatening King Alexander. This had been made abundantly clear by the attempt on his life on the occasion of his visit to Zagreb earlier in the year. And further warning had been provided by the threatening utterances printed openly and without shame in the *Ustacha* papers. A highly organized country like France might have been expected to have taken special precautions (1) to be on the lookout for suspicious foreigners coming into France at the time, and (2) to provide the best possible military and police protection for the royal visitor. It is not conceivable that the same negligence could have been possible in Britain. It is the worst example of negligence—of almost criminal negligence—on record in modern times.

This, in brief, was the actual drama at Marseilles. The events immediately following the murder throw a vivid light on the way the Western Powers were at pains to hush up the origins of the plot which had resulted in King Alexander's untimely end. It was not that London and Paris were not shocked. They were considerably shocked. But even more were they scared of the

possible consequences of publicly indicting Mussolini. So that when the Yugoslav Government prepared to raise the matter at Geneva, Anglo-French diplomacy immediately took steps to ensure that any such indictment should not be made.

The Yugoslav Government was not long in notifying its intentions of invoking the League of Nations. Belgrade prepared a complete case, accusing both Italy and Hungary—Italy as the major criminal, and Hungary as the accomplice. But when the hearing actually took place at Geneva the name of Italy was not mentioned. The reason was that Paris and London had brought pressure to bear upon Belgrade to suppress any kind of reference to Italy. French and British diplomacy argued that silence on the question of Italy's guilt was necessary in the interests of peace. We and the French as good as told the Yugoslavs that if they should mention Italy they would forfeit any kind of Anglo-French support at Geneva.

The League meeting duly took place. Yugoslavia was represented by M. Yevtitch. Hungary was again represented by M. Tibor Eckhart. Laval was there for France. Mr. Eden for Britain. And Mr. Eden was made the League Rapporteur.

Owing to the manoeuvres behind the scenes on the part of the Great Powers before the League session opened, Italy was enabled to play the role of the wide-eyed innocent.

The whole thing had been nicely arranged in advance between Laval and Baron Aloisi. This was what was known at Geneva as hotel diplomacy, a case of real decisions being taken in the apartments of the delegations before they reached the Council Chamber. It was agreed between the French and Italian representatives that France would not support Yugoslavia too strongly, while Italy would leave Hungary in the lurch. By these means it was thought that France and Italy could avoid being forced into a clash. Britain gave her approval, inasmuch as she did nothing to upset this pleasant little Franco-Italian arrangement. Indeed, official London appeared to be only too relieved that international complications on a big scale were thus to be avoided.

The League accordingly adopted a resolution which condemned Hungary with reservations which made the condemnation of no practical value. The nature of the resolution may be gathered from the following extracts: "Whereas . . . certain Hungarian authorities may have assumed, at any rate through negligence, certain responsibilities relative to acts having a connection with the preparations of the crime at Marseilles, etc."

Observe the saving words: "may"; "certain authorities"; "certain responsibilities relative to"; "at any rate through negligence," and so on. The framers of this fact-dodging sentence knew perfectly well that the "certain authorities" were the Hungarian Government; that the "negligence" was nothing of the kind, but that it had all been deliberate; and that the "certain responsibilities relative to" really meant definite responsibility in regard to the preparations at Yanka Puszta for the Marseilles crime.

The resolution then went on to say that Hungary should undertake to punish the "certain authorities" who had thus shown "negligence."

Finally, it proposed an international convention against terrorism.

It should be noted that the resolution made no positive accusation against Hungary, and did not call upon that country to agree to any procedure which might in any way conflict with the prerogative of national sovereignty.

And, of course, the name of Italy was not mentioned once.

As regards the proposed international convention against terrorism, needless to say nothing ever came of it.

The most enlightening thing about it all appeared in a report in the London Times, which said that the whole thing showed that the Franco-Italian rapprochement had not only stood the strain, but had been further reinforced at a long talk between Laval and Baron Aloisi, as a result of which Laval's visit to Rome was brought definitely nearer.

Laval's visit to Rome! The visit during which the French-Quisling-to-be told Mussolini that he could have a free hand in Abyssinia!

Mr. Eden returned from Geneva, having added to his reputation as a young man with a future in international politics. His tact and gift for compromise had, it was said at the time, done much to avert a serious crisis and to keep the peace. I believe that a game of golf at Geneva figured in all this. British sangfroid! What!

The Yugoslav Delegation had to be content with this. They probably felt like saying "thank you for nothing." That is what, in effect, Yugoslav public opinion did say. But it was not the Delegation's fault. They had got as much as they could in the circumstances. They never had a chance to obtain real satisfaction. But why worry? Laval had brought his visit to Mussolini "definitely nearer." Mussolini had got off scot-free, and

his Hungarian satellite had been let off with a caution. Mussolini was now in the position to continue his intrigues against Yugoslavia with impunity, which he was to do, after allowing a suitable time to elapse. And Mr. Eden had added to his political stature. So all was well—for everybody other than the Yugoslavs!

In the long run it was to be demonstrated that in this case, as in every other case, honesty would have been the best policy. But it was to take the present war to drive home that truism. Nobody would see it at the time. And so the last laugh was with Mussolini.

The German attitude was interesting. The Nazis went to great lengths to show their "sympathy" for the Yugoslavs (because they wanted the Yugoslav support for their policy in regard to Austria; and so they courted Belgrade and snubbed Rome). At the same time they got in a dig at the French. They printed leaflets (in Serbo-Croat) to the effect that the French negligence at Marseilles had been responsible for the murder of King Alexander, and they distributed them amongst the Dalmatian peasantry just at the time when the French Fleet was due to pay a courtesy visit to the Dalmatian ports.

Needless to say the Yugoslavs felt somewhat disillusioned in the Western Democracies and in the League of Nations after their experience of the Marseilles debate at Geneva. It was not surprising, therefore, if for a time they thought it would be a realistic policy to be on good terms with Germany and Italy. Nevertheless they loyally joined in the sanctions policy imposed by the League on Italy, at the instance of Britain, during the Italo-Abyssinian War. And this in spite of the fact that it was economically ruinous for them. And in spite of the fact also that we did practically nothing to ease the path for them economically. They knew, moreover, that Germany was backing Italy, and that for them to join in the sanctions against Italy would therefore be displeasing to Germany. (Germany, it should be remembered, had agreed to back Italy in Abyssinia, in return for Italy selling out to Germany in Austria.) But they took the risks, out of loyalty to the principles for which Britain—which country had helped to let them down at Geneva over the Marseilles murder—claimed to stand.

In the meantime Mussolini, as soon as he had the Abyssinian affair in hand, got busy with the Ustacha and the I.M.R.O. again, and, later, Hitler was to come into the business as well.

There were to be new uses for these political bandits, for a new chapter in the plot against Yugoslavia was about to begin.

CHAPTER III THE PLOT THICKENS

THE war against Yugoslavia, which began with the Marseilles murder, became a delayed action war because in 1934 the alignments of the Great Powers were such that it was possible at the time to prevent an actual outbreak of hostilities between Italy and Yugoslavia. Italy and Germany were not then in alliance, but had opposing interests in Central and South-Eastern Europe. In particular, the two countries were at loggerheads over Austria. It was the period when Britain was urging France to seek Italy's friendship, and the French, becoming increasingly anxious over the growing power of Germany under the then new Nazi regime, were only too willing to take Britain's advice. France wanted a Franco-British-Italian line-up against Germany. Hence, when the Marseilles murder threatened to plunge Italy and Yugoslavia into war, with the possibility of France having to support Yugoslavia against Italy, French diplomacy, supported by the British Foreign Office, had intervened to keep the peace. This they succeeded in doing— at the expense of justice for Yugoslavia—by hushing up Italy's crime.

By an ironic twist of fate, all this was to prove unavailing in the long run, because, as a result of the Italo-Abyssinian War, in 1935, there came about a new alignment of the Great Powers. When Italy attacked Abyssinia, Britain and France opposed Italy sufficiently to anger her, but not enough to stop her. This was the policy described by a political wag at the time as "taking off our boots and kicking Mussolini with our stockinged feet," which resulted in Mussolini flinging himself into the arms of Hitler, and the birth of the Rome-Berlin Axis, which made possible the present world war. But, of course, none of this was foreseen at the time by the British and French diplomatists concerned, for these gentlemen had only short-term ideas and worked for purely short-term results. They acted as though they had turned up a stone and found some particularly noxious insects underneath, it, and quickly turned the stone back again to cover up the unpleasant sight. And they were all the more anxious to do this, and forget the unpleasant sight, because of the revelation that the noxious insects were the hirelings of the heads of a great Western civilized Power.

With longer vision, greater courage and more honesty it would have been possible for Britain and France in 1934 to have secured justice for Yugoslavia, and put a stop to Italy's intrigues against that country, without war. But even if war had been necessary, it would have been better in 1933 than seven years later. For then Italy would have been beaten. She was no more capable at that time than she is now of winning a war on her own account. Even if a war in 1934 had assumed European proportions, it would still have been better than now, because it is doubtful whether Germany would have made common cause with Italy, and even if she had seized the occasion for a war of revenge, she was not then at a stage of rearmament sufficient to ensure her any reasonable prospect of success. The Anglo-French action in preventing hostilities between Italy and Yugoslavia in 1934 at any cost, and without heed for the future, made it possible for events to work out in such a way that Yugoslavia should be smashed by a German-Italian combination in 1941 in the course of a European war in which Germany and Italy were ranged against Britain and France.

It truly may be said, therefore, that Yugoslavia was sacrificed for the maintenance of a peace which could not be maintained. Even from the point of view of Anglo-French interests, it was a sacrifice in vain. And as regards Yugoslavia herself, it was a fatal sacrifice. Because while in 1934 she would have had a chance to emerge victorious, in 1941 she had no such chance. Hence the injustice done to her seven years ago sealed her doom to-day.

This reprieve which Mussolini received at the hands of the Western Powers enabled him to keep intact his underground organization of Balkan terrorists and to resume his secret plottings against Yugoslavia. He was thus in the position to plan the dismemberment of that country well in advance of the actual event.

It is not possible to know exactly when he began to formulate these dismemberment plans. They must have taken shape—at least as far as the separation of Croatia from Yugoslavia was concerned—over the period 1934-1941, during which he maintained contacts, through his subordinates, with the Pavelitch organization in Italy. What can be said for certain is that there is definite evidence that various plans for partitioning Yugoslavia were discussed between Mussolini and Hitler during 1940 and 1941, and also that the plan for the setting up of a separatist Croatia was worked out in final form, complete in every detail,

at a Conference between Pavelitch and Ciano at Rome during January, 1940.

That the dismemberment of Yugoslavia was thus decided upon, and the plans worked out in detail, long before the actual event took place is not only confirmed from authoritative Yugo-slav sources, but, in addition, from equally authoritative Italian sources, for the Italians have been eager not only to admit this but also to boast about it. As one of the many examples of Italian confirmation, I give here a quotation from the officially inspired Italian newspaper, *Cornere delta Sera*. In the issue of this paper for May 20th, 1941, there was published a report by its special correspondent, Signor Curzio Malaparte, of a Conference held at Montfalcone which was attended by Mussolini, Ciano, Pavelitch and Lorkovitch on May 7th, 1941. In this report the *Corriere delta Sera* is at pains to point out that the attack on Yugoslavia and the dismemberment of that country which followed, were not just the result of last-moment decisions but the outcome of a long-matured plan.

"A number of people," the paper states, "have erroneously imagined that it all happened as the result of the attack. This was not the case. It was the result of a plan, the natural consequences of a political action which had long been prepared and which guided the events." Alluding to the specific case of the creation of an "independent" Croatia, Signor Malaparte claims that this resulted from the scheme worked out by Pavelitch and Ciano at their meeting in January, 1940, to which I have already referred. Furthermore, he fastens responsibility upon Mussolini himself, saying that the Pavelitch-Ciano scheme was "worked out in all its particulars under the direction of the Duce." "It was no improvisation," he proudly declared.

The article in the *Corriere delta Sera* occupied the best part of a page, and was accompanied by photographs of Mussolini, Ciano, Pavelitch and Lorkovitch.

The most interesting thing about the *Corriere delta Sera* statement is the insistence of the writer—indeed, one might call it his evident anxiety that there should be no doubts in the minds of his readers—upon the guilt of the Italian Government. In a word: The Criminal is most anxious to proclaim his criminality. Evidently the one fear of the criminal is that the world—and more especially the Italian world—should not give him full marks for the care, time and ingenuity which he had devoted to the accomplishment of his evil deed.

However one may be shocked by the habit of the Dictators

in glorying in their crimes, one can but be grateful to them for so obligingly providing confirmation out of their own mouths of the accusations one brings against them.

With Mussolini, I think, there must have been two motives for instructing his journalistic lackey on the *Corriere della Sera* to give his master full credit for this particular ill-deed. One of them was probably his desire to show his own people what an astute, clever fellow they had for their Duce; and the other was most probably his desire to remind his partner in crime, Hitler, that as Italy had been plotting the dismemberment of Yugoslavia for long before Germany took a hand in it, she was entitled to the major share of the spoils.

No less anxious than the Italian press to stress Italy's responsibility was the official Italian wireless. Thus we find Rome Radio (soon after the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the setting up of the Ustacha regime in Croatia) adding its quota. Commenting on a B.B.C. broadcast, which had castigated Pavelitch, Rome Radio stated:

"Why should we pay attention to British lies or British insults addressed to Ante Pavelitch? . . . If the London Radio wishes to have any weight it will have to furnish proof of its allegations."

But following this outburst of synthetic indignation, the same transmission went on to declare:

"The new Croatia was born of the Ustacha revolution, planned by Pavelitch during his exile in Italy."

Now let us consider the sequence, of events as they occurred from the time of the Marseilles Crime until the coming of the present war.

After the Marseilles murder, when Italy's guilt had been hushed up at the League of Nations by Britain and France, Mussolini for a time was careful to mask his real intentions. He gave assurances that if there were any Croatian terrorists living on Italian soil, they would not be allowed to indulge in political action. He played the role of the innocent, shocked to think that anything like the Marseilles crime could have been carried out by persons living in Italy. And everybody, except the outraged Yugoslavs, was happy and satisfied. But when, at the time of the Marseilles trial, the French Government asked for the extradition of Pavelitch, so that he could be brought to trial for his part in organizing the murder of King Alexander,

his extradition was refused by the Italian judicial authorities, while Mussolini winked the other eye.

The French Government, in pursuance of their policy at that time of not embarrassing Italy, then dropped the matter. In point of fact they had never pressed seriously their extradition demand. They made just enough show of energy to put a good face on their actions in the eyes of Belgrade. But in reality this action was extremely lukewarm. They were probably relieved that, owing to Italy's refusal to agree to the extradition, they would be spared further embarrassments. For had Pavelitch been brought to trial it would have been impossible to keep dark his relations with Mussolini and Ciano, and this was one of the things which the French Government did not want brought to light for fear of disturbing their new "friendship" with Italy.

For a time, for the sake of appearances, Pavelitch was arrested and imprisoned in Italy. But not seriously and not for long. He was soon set at liberty again, and spent the rest of his time living as a man of leisure (on the funds of the Italian Secret Service) in a villa near Bologna. His home became the political headquarters of the Ustacha organization after the Marseilles crime. From there he conducted his propaganda, organized his forces, sent out his emissaries to various European capitals, including Berlin and Brussels, and also Washington, New York and Chicago. From the time of the Marseilles murder until the attack on Yugoslavia, Pavelitch spent most of his time in this way, under the protection of the Italian Ministry of the Interior and in close liaison with the Italian Foreign Office.

The Berlin office of the Ustacha was of less importance than the headquarters in Italy, but the Berlin representatives, Mile Budak and Yelitch, kept in contact with the Nazi leaders, more especially with Rosenberg. Before the time of the rise to power of the Nazis in Germany, the Vienna branch of the Ustacha had maintained contacts with the more extreme elements amongst the Austrian monarchists, in particular with Colonel Wolf, the head of the organization known as "Eiserner Ring" (Iron Ring) After the bomb outrage at Zagreb, which preceded the Marseilles murder, the Vienna branch of the Ustacha was broken up. The Yugoslav Government induced the Austrian Government to expel Pertchetz, who was Pavelitch's principal lieutenant and closest friend. Pertchetz then went to Budapest and Yanka Pusztá, maintaining contacts with Pavelitch in Italy.

There then occurred one of those dark chapters of internal

strife, leading to a bloody conclusion, which so often characterize the story of terrorist organizations. Pertchetz had a mistress named Yelka Pogozelaz. She was said to have been an intelligent woman, elegant and with a good presence, and not without a certain dark beauty. Yelka, it seems, came in time to tire of the life of plotting, intrigue and murder into which she had been inveigled by her lover. Even before the Marseilles murder she had had enough of it. Soon after the Ustacha bomb outrages in Yugoslavia she left Pertchetz and returned home to Yugoslavia, where she published a pamphlet exposing the activities of the terrorists amongst whom she had lived for so long. The pamphlet caused a sensation in Yugoslavia, and alarm amongst the Ustachi in Italy and their Italian patrons.

After the League meeting on the Marseilles murder, when Pertchetz and others among the Ustachi in Hungary went to Italy, Pavelitch had Pertchetz murdered, following a travesty of a "trial" by the "High Tribunal" of the Ustacha. That Pertchetz had been Pavelitch's oldest and closest companion in crime did not avail to save him. Pavelitch was scared by the Yelka Pogozelaz revelations. In his fear he thought that perhaps Pertchetz, too, might one day indulge in revelations. The mistress had recanted and turned "King's evidence." Might not the lover do likewise? And might not some of the most dangerous secrets of the Ustacha be thus given away? These were the kind of thoughts which went through Pavelitch's mind when he decided to have his old comrade killed. There was absolutely no evidence that Pertchetz intended to give away his fellow conspirators. But Pavelitch was not taking any chances. He evidently believed in the old adage that "dead men tell no tales." And so Pertchetz was "liquidated," according to the approved methods of American gangsterism applied to European politics.

The career of yet another one of the Ustachi from the Berlin office—Yelitch—also came to an equally unexpected, if less violent, conclusion. Yelitch had gone from Berlin to the U.S.A. on a special mission. I do not know what were the exact details of the mission. But amongst other things it was concerned with the financial side of the Ustacha activities in relation to the Hitler-Mussolini plan to use the terrorist organization for the internal disruption of Yugoslavia. For it should be remembered that in the U.S.A. there is quite a number of Croatian emigrants, some of them very poor, but others quite wealthy. While Yelitch was in the U.S.A. the war broke out. During

the first year of the war he was ordered to go to Italy. But on leaving New York he never reached his destination. The long arm of the British Secret Service reached out and caught him at Gibraltar. He was removed from the ship on which he was travelling and placed where he could not do any more harm. He is to-day still in that safe place—"somewhere in the British Empire."

With the coming together of Italy and Germany in the Axis, and the consequent selling out of Austria by Mussolini to Hitler, the Ustachi and the Frankovtzi came fully into the German-Italian scheme of things. The Frankovtzi dropped their Haps-burgist allegiance. And the Ustachi dropped their contacts with Austrian monarchist circles. "Austria" for the future was to mean Germany—and Greater Germany at that. Austria, indeed, was to be used in such a way that the old pre-last-war Austrian expansionist schemes in the Balkans could be resurrected but made to work with a success which in the old days they had failed to achieve. For whereas the old Austrian method was once described as "tyranny tempered by Schlampererei" (easy-goingness) the new method was to be realpolitik plus efficiency. For behind it would be the hard Prussian drive. Vienna was still to have a role to play. But it was to be for Hitler's Reich. The Fuehrer decided to make Vienna the headquarters for his Central European and Balkan intrigues. He realized that in Austria rather than in Germany proper were to be found the technique and the channels for the furtherance of German expansionist aims in South-Eastern Europe. While Austria remained "Austria" the possession of the technique did not constitute a major menace, even in the days of the old Empire. In the days of post-last-war little Austria it did not constitute a menace of any kind. But with the absorption of Austria by Germany, that technique was to become the greatest menace South-Eastern Europe had ever known.

Thus, in 1939, between the time of the Munich settlement and the German occupation of Bohemia-Moravia, the break up of Czechoslovakia (by the promotion of Slovak separatist movement) was engineered in Vienna by Seyss-Inquart, the Austrian Quisling. When this was accomplished, Nazified Vienna turned its attention to the Balkans. By April, 1940, reports were already coming through of the setting up of a special organization in the one-time Austrian capital, under the chairmanship of General Glaise-Horstenau, another Austrian Quisling, for the ostensible purpose of promoting German-Balkan "cultural" relations, but

in reality with a view to conducting disruptive propaganda in the Balkans.

The Frankovtsi and the Ustachi realized the meaning of the new situation, and quickly transferred their hopes from Hapsburg to Hitler. They jumped on the Nazi band wagon in the belief that this would be the quickest way to an "independent" Croatia in which they would be the local bosses. The fact that their patron Mussolini had gone into partnership with Hitler made it all the easier for them. For practical purposes Pavelitch and his associates in Italy continued to work in closer touch with Rome than with Berlin, but they had their relations with Hitler through Mussolini. The Frankovtsi, working in Croatia, maintained contacts with Berlin and Vienna.

This, it must be remembered, was the period of Axis "friendship" for Yugoslavia. Italy had her treaty of friendship with that country. Germany had the closest economic relations. After a time these economic relations became so close that they constituted a veritable stranglehold. Moreover, they carried with them a veiled form of political control, which was noticeable in the gagging of the Yugoslav press. But ostensibly the relationship was a friendly one, decked out with all the usual trappings of "cultural" exchanges and the like. During the premiership of Milan Stoyadinovitch, who had definitely hitched his wagon to the Axis star, much to the alarm of the great majority of his people, there were comings and goings of high official personages, between Berlin, Belgrade and Rome. Yugoslavia had not gone into the Axis camp. But she was no longer in the camp of the Western Powers. She had become a "neutral"—a position which she tried to maintain, with increasing difficulty, until finally she became isolated, when M. Svetkovitch succeeded Stoyadinovitch in the premiership. I have emphasized this "friendship" of the Axis for Yugoslavia during this period, because it brings home with added force the duplicity of Hitler and Mussolini. For while they were both, in their different ways, conducting their surface relations with Yugoslavia in a friendly spirit, they were the same time building up in secret their machinery for disrupting that country by Fifth Column action. While amicable exchanges took place between Berlin and Belgrade and between Rome and Belgrade, the plans for using the Ustacha, the Frankovtsi and the I.M.R.O. steadily went forward behind the scenes.

CHAPTER IV HITLER TAKES A HAND

THE big tie-up, however, took place after the present war had started. Things were settled in their main outline between Hitler and Mussolini at their first meeting on the Brenner during the early part of 1940. Hitler promised Mussolini the greater part of the Balkans as the reward for Italy's entry into the war as a full belligerent in Germany's interests, when the right moment should come. Hitler intimated that he would have to take Roumania for himself, both because of the oil (of which Mussolini could have some, if not much), and because he would need the country as a jumping-off place for future operations in South-Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and, eventually, Russia. But Italy would be allowed to have the greater part of the Balkan loot, including most of Yugoslavia and part of Greece. The actual lines of demarcation between the German and the Italian spheres in the Balkans were not worked out in full details. That was to be left until a later stage. Mussolini wanted his loot as quickly as possible, and suggested to Hitler that he should attack Yugoslavia while the British and French were fully occupied in meeting the German onrush in France. But Hitler had other plans. He insisted that Italy should attack France, saying that the Balkan affair could be dealt with later. All this was very typical of Hitler, who always wanted immediate and concrete plans to be to the advantage of Germany, while Italy's requirements could be left to the future. Hitler endeavoured to reassure Mussolini by telling him that if he attacked France he would be able to realize some (but not all) of his territorial claims upon France and the French Colonial Empire. Mussolini saw in this some prospect of immediate loot. Not as much as he wanted. But still something. So he made his jackal's attack on France at the very moment when that country was reeling under the German hammer blows. But Hitler double-crossed Mussolini. He had other plans for France—the meaning of which we now understand fully. These plans necessitated the co-operation of Vichy with Germany against Britain. Therefore, Italy could not be permitted to help herself to French territory. Hitler brusquely reminded his Axis partner—by now very much the junior partner—that at the Brenner it had been arranged that Italy should be

recompensed in the Balkans. Mussolini must not press his claim on France yet awhile, because that would interfere with Hitler's French plans. Mussolini did not like this, and he made up his mind to show Hitler that the Italian end of the Axis counted for something after all. And so he plunged into the Greek adventure. It is a mistake to imagine that the Italian attack on Greece was in itself contrary to Hitler's wishes. Hitler was perfectly willing, in accordance with the Brenner agreement, that Italy should go into the Balkans. But all in good time. He was busy about other things and was not ready to help Mussolini just then. He considered the Greek adventure to be premature. He had, however, a shrewd guess that Mussolini had taken time by the forelock in a fit of pique in order to show his Axis partner that Italy no less than Germany was a Great Power. And so, when Italy met with reverses in Greece and was later driven back into Albania, Hitler let Mussolini stew in his own juice. He did not intend to let Italy down completely. She had her uses. Therefore she must be given some sops. Later on, when it suited him, but not before, he would pull her out of the mess.

Throughout 1940 and 1941 Hitler and Mussolini discussed various ways and means for working out the details of the Balkan division of spoils, especially as regards the dismemberment of Yugoslavia. From time to time modifications were thought out and analysed. It often happened that the two Dictators did not see eye to eye. Like gangsters they warred together on society but watched each other jealously and suspiciously lest one should get more than the other. Information received in London during 1940 showed that scheme followed scheme, each one varying in detail, but all bearing a resemblance inasmuch as in each case the carving up of Yugoslavia was the main feature. These reports came from a variety of reliable sources, and were carefully authenticated.

Thus, during April, 1940, it became known that Hitler had put before Mussolini a plan whereby Germany should be the dominating Power in the Northern Balkans, and Italy in the Southern Balkans; so that both the Allies and the Russians would be excluded; and Yugoslavia would be presented with the choice of accepting such a proposition or being partitioned.

During October, 1940, it became evident that in the meantime the Axis plans had reached a further stage, and one which was, moreover, even more threatening to Yugoslavia. By this time it was clear that Yugoslavia was to be treated like Czechoslovakia and broken up into component parts, each under Axis

"protection" and helpless. The new German plan, which Ribbentrop had already conveyed to Ciano, proposed (1) an "autonomous" Slovenia under German direction; (2) "auto-nomy" for Croatia; (3) the creation of an independent Banat, at the expense of Yugoslavia; (4) "autonomy" for an "independent" Macedonia, under Axis control; (5) the Dalmatian coast to be given to Italy.

On November 9th, 1940, there came to light yet another partition plan, which, incidentally, also showed how the Axis partners were wont to quarrel over the details. According to this plan both Berlin and Rome agreed that the country should, be broken up and shared between Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. There were, however, difficulties in the fulfilment of the plan, because Germany and Italy could not agree about Dalmatia, Germany wanting both Fiume (in Yugoslavia) and Trieste (in Italy). Italy, who wanted Dalmatia for herself, was opposed to this, and, with Hungary, agitated for the incorporation of Croatia in Hungary, to prevent Germany getting things, all her own way.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Axis plans underwent modifications from time to time, in accordance with the development of the situation and the particular stresses and strains of the Axis partnership during the period in question. In the final event, when the actual break-up of Yugoslavia took place, the dismemberment took a form which showed a yet further modification. But the main idea running through the earlier plans was the main idea also of the plan which was actually put into execution—i.e. the carving up of Yugoslavia and the distribution of its component parts amongst the Axis Powers and their associates, and the setting up of some kind of separatist Croatian State (the playing about with words, such as "autonomous," "independent" and so on, concerned only matters of form; the basic fact was the "separation" of Croatia from the other parts of Yugoslavia, and its inception as an entity, under Axis domination).

While these plots were being hatched against Yugoslavia behind the scenes, Mussolini continued to express the warmest friendship for that country. It was not until Hitler indicated that the time for action was approaching, that Mussolini began to change his tone. He did so only when he knew definitely that Hitler's Balkan plans had been completed and that the Italian military failure in Greece would be adjusted by the Germans.

During this period of their "mailed fist in the velvet glove" friendship for Yugoslavia, the Axis Powers not only plotted her eventual dismemberment, but also took practical steps to prepare the ground for it. But they did it cleverly, carefully disguising their real intentions. Thus the Germans bought up properties

in Slovenia, in the Maribor district, near the one-time Austro-Yugoslav frontier. At the same time they organized the German minority in Yugoslavia into a compact political group, strictly disciplined, and taking its orders from Berlin, on the approved Nazi model. These German minority groups, and the organizations which they formed, were particularly strong in Slovenia and Croatia. The man who carried out this work was von Heeren, the German Minister in Belgrade, who had been specially selected for his work because of the experience he had gained doing similar work in Czechoslovakia during the time he was at the German Legation in Prague. Hitler's main instruments in Yugoslavia were the German Fifth Column and the Croatian Frankovtsi. Mussolini's main instruments were, as ever, the Ustachi. All these elements were linked up through the German-Italian collaboration.

Hungarian revisionism was also made to play its part. Both Hitler and Mussolini made use of Hungarian aspirations in order to further their plans for disrupting Yugoslavia, although as the Dictators sometimes had ideas as to detail which brought them into a certain rivalry, they did not always manipulate the Hungarian weapon for completely identical reasons. For example, Mussolini would sometimes back Hungary's claims to territory in Croatia which went beyond what Hitler was prepared to grant, and he did this in order that Germany should not get too big

a share. Mussolini could always rely on the Hungarians to play a pro-Italian game. At least that is what he thought. Therefore he considered it to be in Italy's interests to sponsor the Hungarian claims. Hitler, on the other hand, would sometimes pretend that he was willing to satisfy even the most exorbitant Hungarian claims—while making the mental reservation that he would go back on his promises when it suited him—because he knew that by so doing he could influence the Croatian Frankovtsi to adopt

a more and more pro-German attitude. Hitler realized that these Croatian separatists did not love Budapest any more than they loved Belgrade, although they too had worked in with the Hungarian revisionists for tactical reasons when it suited them, therefore, if he threatened to support the Hungarians he could be quite sure that the Frankovtsi would be willing to go all

out in favour of Germany, as they would think that by allegiance to Berlin they would be able to influence Hitler to modify his support of the Hungarians.

Hungary also featured in the open diplomatic moves. The Axis Powers induced Yugoslavia to enter into a friendship pact with Hungary. The Yugoslavs thought that in this was they could avoid being involved in the war, and also that Yugoslavia and Hungary between them would be able to act as a brake on the more extreme expansionist policies of the Axis Powers. Moderate opinion in Hungary took much the same view, although the extreme revisionist elements in that country, which really wield the power behind the scenes, had other and more cynical ideas on the subject.

It did not occur to Belgrade at the time that one of the main reasons why the Axis promoted the Hungaro-Yugoslav Pact was to detach Yugoslavia from what was left of the Balkan Pact, and thus prevent a defensive agreement on the part of Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. It is evident the then Hungarian Premier, Count Teleki, acted in good faith. For when after a visit to Berchtesgaden, he was informed by Hitler that Hungary would be expected to co-operate with Germany even to the extent of allowing the passage of German troops through her territory into Yugoslavia, should the occasion arise, he preferred death to dishonour, and committed suicide. Teleki was far from being anti-German. But he did not carry his pro-Germanism to the extent of treating a Pact to which he had affixed his signature as a mere "scrap of paper." Unable to find a way out of the dilemma—because Hungary was already compromised with Germany beyond repair—he shot himself. That Hungary was so compromised seemed to have been evident to everybody other than the British diplomatic experts. Or, if it was evident to them, they continued to go on as though the matter might still be in doubt. This British policy of hoping for the best up to the eleventh hour was the cause of much valuable time being lost on our side. We should have recognized much earlier where Hungary stood and acted accordingly.

If British hesitations were excusable during the Teleki regime—and even this is difficult to concede, because there were elements in the Teleki government which did not share their Prime Minister's sense of honour—they were without a shadow of excuse during the regime of his successor, de Bardossy. Bardossy did not share Teleki's scruples. He was willing to do anything Hitler might require of him. He

agreed that Hungary should play jackal if and when the occasion should arise.

The agreements entered into between Hitler, Mussolini and de Bardossy constituted yet another stage in the development of the Axis plot against Yugoslavia. For it meant that in the event of the Axis being able to deal with Yugoslavia "peacefully," and make of that country a corridor for the passage of German troops to the Aegean, Hungary would act as a corridor for the passage of German troops to the Yugoslav border; while should the Axis decide to attack Yugoslavia, then Hungary would similarly act as a corridor for the passage of German troops. Hungary would get payment for services rendered in the form of Yugoslav territory in either case, for in either case it was the Axis intention to bring about the dismemberment of Yugoslavia.

Bulgaria no less than Hungary figured in Hitler's plans. Bulgaria had by this time become an appendage of Germany rather than of Italy, so that Hitler "took over" Mihailov, the I.M.R.O. chief, from Mussolini. Mihailov, who had been passing his time between Italy, Germany, Albania and Bulgaria, now became the special protege of Ribbentrop, who, incidentally, had been instrumental in saving him from a violent death in Poland.

In this connection it should be remembered that the idea of setting up I.M.R.O. gangster rule in an "autonomous Macedonia" was as much a part of the Axis plan to break up Yugoslavia as was the project for the creation of a separatist Croatia.

CHAPTER V TRAGEDY OF PRINCE PAUL

THE next stage of the story is very largely that of the last phase of the Prince Paul regime in Yugoslavia. For it was during this period that the Axis Powers, and more especially Germany, brought great pressure to bear upon the Yugoslav Regency and government to bring their country into the Tripartite (Axis) Pact. It was the Axis intention to undermine Yugoslavia from within after having completely isolated

her externally. For Hitler, who by this time had the last word in all Axis decisions, still felt that it would be more convenient to dismember the country by homcephatic methods than by one big surgical operation. He still felt it would be a less expensive method than war, although, as ever, he was none the less quite ready to make war on the country if the more "peaceful" method should fail (which, in the end, was what actually did happen).

The intrigues of the Axis Powers with the Croatian Frankovtsi and Ustacha, and the Macedonian I.M.R.O., would bear their expected fruit whichever method was used. They would be the Fifth Column in either case. That is to say, they would be the conscious Fifth Column. For the Axis Powers regarded Prince Paul and his government as the unconscious Fifth Column, the men who, while they were not witting traitors, would be sufficiently weak to be used as unwitting instruments of the Axis plans.

This chapter, therefore, necessarily centres round Prince Paul to a considerable extent; and it will facilitate understanding of the wider political drama if, in the first place, I devote some attention to the man and his policy. For politics are not an abstract science. They have their roots in human thought and feeling. This is so with all statesmen and politicians. It was particularly the case with Prince Paul. One must know something of his psychology if one is to understand his political actions; and comprehension of the motives which inspired those actions will make possible an accurate appreciation of the events themselves.

I propose, therefore, to begin with a study of the ex-Prince Regent, based upon both known data and my own intimate memories of him. This will not be a digression, I hope, because it will be found that the general and the particular are one in this case.

Will the verdict of posterity be that Prince Paul should take his place with Laval, Tiso, Antonescu and Quisling himself in the gallery of portraits of rulers who betrayed their countries to Hitler, or will it be said of him that he was only a victim of circumstance? I do not think that either verdict would be completely accurate. The problem is not so simple. It would be doing the ex-Regent of Yugoslavia an injustice to label him "Quisling" and leave it at that. On the other hand, he does not merit to be presented as the completely innocent tool of destiny. His case is a complicated one and as such it should be regarded

by future historians. Even more must the contemporary chronicler be careful to approach the subject objectively. Let us first consider his background and origin, as these have an important bearing on the case.

Prince Paul Karageorgevitch, cousin of the late King Alexander of Yugoslavia, and relative by marriage to the Duchess of Kent, is Serbo-Russian by blood and English by education. An undergraduate at Oxford, he was later to become a popular figure in English Society. He was a "good Londoner" and was pleased when he was referred to as such. His interests and hobbies were mainly concerned with art and sport. He was a good judge of pictures, and he could play a useful round of golf. He was fond of English life, and felt particularly at home with English people. He had many friends here and was sincerely attached to our Royal Family.

From being an "English" man-about-town, with a flair for the arts, he was suddenly called upon, on the morrow of the assassination of King Alexander, to become Regent of Yugoslavia until such time as the Boy King, Peter II, should reach his majority. He assumed office in Belgrade at one of the most difficult moments in Yugoslavia's history, when the country was rent with internal dissensions and faced with grave external dangers. Yugoslavia was stunned, angered and frustrated by the murder of King Alexander, and bit'er about the way that crime had been dealt with by Britain and France. And the internal dispute between the Serbs and Croats, temporarily put aside because of the calamity of King Alexander's tragic death, was ready to break out again as soon as the period of national mourning for the dead monarch would be over.

It was with a natural feeling of reluctance that Prince Paul exchanged the urbane pleasures of the London Season and English country house life for the turbulent politics of Yugoslavia. But he answered the call with what can only be described as a high sense of duty.

Most foreign observers, as well as people in Yugoslavia felt that this mildly mannered, quietly spoken flaneur of the Western world would be quite unfitted by temperament and experience to shoulder the burden of responsibility in the semi-oriental world of the Balkans. But he was not long in bringing about a change in these opinions. He grappled with the difficult problems, both internal and external, which awaited him in Belgrade, with intelligence, patience and firmness. He showed himself to be a man in whom a capacity for compromise and conciliation—an

English rather than Balkan talent for "seeing the other fellow's point of view"—combined with firmness to make of him a wise ruler. Those early days were full of promise. Later, however, performance was to fall short of promise. The high hopes were to be dashed in after years, for what at first had seemed to be a gift for conciliation was later seen to be a form of weakness; and what had been mistaken for firmness proved to be mainly obstinacy.

This combination of weakness and obstinacy explains the paradoxical way in which he would be strong in the carrying out of weak politics. It partly explains how it was that during the last phase of his regime he gave way to the German demand that Yugoslavia should adhere to the Axis Pact. But it does not provide the complete explanation. For that it is necessary to add to the weakness and the obstinacy the third element of ambition. He was not ambitious when he first took up the reins of government. Ambition was born in him with the experience of power. Whereas at the beginning the Regency had been for him something of a burden, which he had undertaken out of his sense of duty and responsibility, as time went on it began to assume for him an importance on its own account. At first it had been Yugoslavia, and Yugoslavia only that had mattered to him. Later on Yugoslavia still mattered, but so also did his own regime, and the role his family played in it. The Nazis were not slow to recognize this development. They cleverly worked upon it. And so it came about that eventually he saw in collaboration with Germany what he thought to be the most effective way of serving at the same time the interests of his country, his regime and his family.

I am certain that Prince Paul preferred Britain to Germany, and that when the war came he hoped we should win. But I am equally certain that he had not confidence in our prospects of victory. When he paid his state visit to Berlin, not long before the war, he fell a victim to the legend of German invincibility, Hitler had staged things with a view to impressing his royal visitor. He paraded before him Germany's military might Prince Paul was duly overcome by what he saw.

I shall always believe that Prince Paul was sincere when, on the occasion of my last meeting with him in London, towards the end of 1938, he declared to me: "I really do love your country." But if he loved Britain, he was impressed by German. Perhaps the key to his outlook on these things is provided by his remarks to me when we discussed the Munich crisis. "Mr.

Neville Chamberlain," he declared, "did the only possible thing," and he added, "Some people thought that Yugoslavia should have marched to the aid of Czechoslovakia. But I dared not risk emptying my country of her armies to help the Czechs. Yugoslavia's neighbours would have fallen upon her while her troops were away." There is no denying that there was much practical sense in this last remark, although I could not agree with him about Mr. Chamberlain's Munich policy, and I expressed my disagreement. But, taking his two remarks together, one caught a glimpse of his inner thoughts and feelings, and one saw a man who was earnest, well-meaning, cautious to a degree, fearful, pessimistic, and obstinately bent upon taking what seemed to him to be the safest line. I realized at the time that he was concerned to avoid risks because he felt that this kind of prudence was in the best interests of his country. I was not to understand until later on that he was also considering the interests of his regime and his family.

When we discussed Yugoslavia's internal problems the same mental and emotional processes were to be seen at work within him. He referred to the difficulties he had encountered in trying to induce the Serbs and Croats to see something of each other's point of view. He said he had done his best and would continue to do so. His actual words to me were: "Believe me, I have tried very hard." I did believe him. I do still. For his words rung true.

His endeavours to bring about the Serbo-Croat rapprochement were highly praiseworthy. For such a rapprochement was necessary and long overdue. Posterity will award him full marks for his good intentions in this respect. Unfortunately a thing good in itself may be vitiated by the methods by which it is brought about. In his anxiety to meet the Croats half-way, Prince Paul went further than half-way. A situation which before had been prejudicial to the Croats now became prejudicial to the Serbs. He had been advised to have the Serbo-Croat agreement carried through by a broadly based government which would be truly representative of all the political elements in the country. But he would not listen to this advice. He was in too much of a hurry to put the agreement through in his own way. And so he used for the purpose a government in which the Serbian element was not truly representative of all shades of Serbian feeling in the country. His Prime Minister, M. Svetkovitch, was not a statesman of initiative. He was not a political leader with a popular mandate. He was just a rubber stamp for the Prince's policies.

In acting this way the Prince was evincing both his weakness and his obstinacy. But here yet another facet of his character showed itself—his inclination, in spite of a theoretic attachment to Democracy, towards Autocracy. He took things very much into his own hands, and showed himself to be bent upon going his own way, determined not to be restrained by criticism or advice.

Prince Paul was governed in his actions as regards both internal and external policy by a desire, amounting almost to an obsession, to preserve at all costs a united Yugoslavia. He believed that so long as the weakness of internal disagreement remained, Yugoslavia would not be able to stand the strain of external pressure, and, conversely, that Yugoslavia dare not risk resistance to external pressure lest the strain on the internal weakness proved too strong. Towards the end, he said privately to a friend in Belgrade that if Yugoslavia went to war she would fall to pieces internally. He was clear-sighted enough to realize that war was coming, and that Germany would have great initial successes. He feared that Germany would either attack Yugoslavia, or, in company with Italy, disrupt her from within by making use of disaffected elements amongst the Croats. He doubted—and in this who shall say that he was wrong?—that Britain or France would be able to come to his country's aid in time to avert disaster. And so he staked everything on avoiding trouble with the Axis.

At first his principal motive was to be able to hand over an intact Yugoslavia to the Boy King Peter when the latter should come of age. But later on considerations of the interests of his King and Country became mixed with considerations of those more personal interests to which I have already alluded. In the end all these things dove-tailed in his mind and between them caused him to go to extreme lengths of conciliation alike in meeting the internal demands of the Croats and the external demands of the Axis. When, in the last instance, he virtually signed away his country's independence, he committed this final act of weakness obstinately and autocratically. It was the supreme example of his capacity for doing the weak thing in the strong way. The final irony was that in so doing he was to lose everything—his regime, his hopes for his family and his country.

At a much earlier stage there had been rumours from time to time that he, and more especially his wife, Princess Olga, wanted to overshadow King Peter and the Queen-Mother, Queer Marija. I do not know if these rumours were true or not. Per-

sonally, however, I am inclined to believe in his loyalty, in those days, to the mission entrusted to him in the last Will and Testament of King Alexander. It is likely that the allegations arose, out of something else; his touchiness about the dignity of his own position, which led him frequently to be over insistent upon recognition of his royal status. In him there was a mixture of sensitiveness and pride which sometimes caused him to convey the impression of hauteur. Whenever, for instance, foreign news-papers alluded to him as "The Regent," or "The First Regent," he would complain to his Ministers abroad and instruct them to insist upon the use by the newspapers concerned of his proper title of "The Prince Regent." He was particularly sensitive about criticism in the British Press, or anything in British newspapers which to him seemed to show a lack of proper consideration for his dignity.

Every morning, at the breakfast table, he would first read the British newspapers, only turning to the press of other countries afterwards. And he was quick to notice anything—either complimentary or critical—about himself or his country. This was probably due to the fact that as he genuinely liked Britain and most things British he was all the more sensitive to British newspaper comment.

On the occasion of his last visit to London, when he received me in audience at Buckingham Palace, he complained to me about an article which had appeared in a London evening paper about the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga of Serbia. The trouble was that the article was published on the very day of his arrival in London, and he imagined that it had been done deliberately as a slight to him and his country. I explained that it was just an unhappy coincidence; that the article was the first of a series of articles on famous political crimes, which had been planned weeks before, without any knowledge that he would be coming to London; and that therefore it had no relation whatever to his presence. But I had the impression that I had failed to convince him.

This was my last meeting with him. I never saw him again. He spoke frankly and freely to me about a number of matters concerning his country and his own task. He could be very natural and charming when he liked. He was both on this occasion.

It is, therefore, not without some diffidence that I turn to the last phase of Prince Paul's Regency, for it is the phase in which what I believe was his quite genuine affection for this

country, gave place to pro-Germanism based upon opportunism. The politician in him made him turn to Germany. I shall always believe that in his purely human feelings he retained his attachment to Britain.

Willi my pleasant memories of him, it is not a congenial task to have to pile up criticisms of him. But a journalist's job is to report the facts. The liking I had for him, and which he, I think, also had for me, cannot therefore be allowed to stand in the way of making this a truthful chronicle: although in this case I am afraid the truth makes unpleasant reading.

The details of the last phase of Prince Paul's story seem like a page out of some Ruritanian tale of intrigue and plot and counterplot. Unfortunately they are not the romantic imaginings of the novelist, but grim matters of fact.

In explaining what happened during the closing chapter of his Regency, it is necessary to point out that in addition to the interplay of the various motives which governed his actions at this time (motives which I have already examined at some length), other influences made themselves felt. One might permit oneself the speculation that but for these influences he might not have travelled quite so far as he did down the slippery slope of appeasement of the Axis. A very important influence was that of his wife. Princess Olga was the more ambitious of the two. Moreover, she had family connections with Germany no less than with Britain. If one of her sisters had married the British Duke of Kent, another had married the German Count Toerring of Hohenzollern. The family frequently visited the German relatives at Munich. Princess Olga's ambitions—for her husband, her children and herself—became identified in time with the idea of a pro-German orientation for Yugoslavia. And this was probably strengthened on the occasion of the state visit to Hitler.

Not long before Yugoslavia's adherence to the Axis Pact, Prince Paul paid a secret visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden. It was then that Hitler tempted him, employing the usual Hitlerian methods of mingled bullying and enticement. It is evident that Hitler sought to dazzle Prince Paul with visions of the brilliant perspective which would open for Yugoslavia and the Regency if only they conformed to the Nazi plans.

For Hitler suggested to Prince Paul that if Yugoslavia would march with the Axis, Germany would see to it that she would be recompensed with a greatly enhanced position in the Balkans. He offered, as a bait to Prince Paul, the following proposals:

- (1) A Yugoslav-Bulgarian union, with Bulgaria incorporated in a Greater Yugoslavia.
- (2) Yugoslavia to take Salonika from Greece.
- (3) King Peter's coming-of-age to be postponed from his eighteenth birthday to his twenty-fifth birthday, and Prince Paul to be made Chancellor as well as Regent.
- (4) Prince Paul's eldest son, Prince Alexander, to be nominated Crown Prince-Elect, so that in time the royal succession would pass to the Pauline side of the Kara-georgevitch family.

There is nothing to suggest that Prince Paul agreed to these proposals. But the temptation had been implanted in his mind, and it seems that it was difficult for him to forget the dazzling picture which Hitler had painted for him. For although the German promptings that Yugoslavia should seize Salonika were not acted upon, the fact remains that by this time Prince Paul was determined that Yugoslavia should go into the Axis camp. If General Simovitch's coup d'etat, which killed Yugoslavia's adherence to the Axis Pact, had not taken place, would Prince Paul have asked Hitler to redeem his promise of Salonika? This we shall never know. It can but remain a matter for speculation.

All that can be said for certain is that before Yugoslavia joined the Axis, General Simovitch had told Prince Paul bluntly that if Yugoslavia were to embark upon the Salonika adventure she would call down on herself the opprobrium of the entire democratic world, with consequences fatal to her future. The General also told the Prince that if he persisted in his intention of harnessing Yugoslavia to the chariot of the Axis, there would be a popular uprising in the country against the regime, as the people and the armed forces would never agree to purchase peace at the price of honour, or find themselves ranged against Britain or the U.S.A.

Even M. Svetkovitch plucked up sufficient courage at the eleventh hour to try and persuade Prince Paul to draw back on the brink. For one brief moment M. Svetkovitch ceased to be a rubber stamp and became a man. He presented the Regent with a Memorandum giving reasons why Yugoslavia should not give way to Germany. But Prince Paul would not listen to either M. Svetkovitch or General Simovitch. He refused to be deflected from his course. Accordingly he sent M. Svetkovitch and his Foreign Minister, Cincar Markovitch, to Vienna to sign the Pact. M. Svetkovitch felt extremely unhappy about it. But

the habit of obeying the Regent's orders proved too strong for him. He did what he was told.

I do not know whether Prince Paul even read the Svetkovitch Memorandum. In any case he ignored it, just as he had ignored General Simovitch's warnings. Actually it was a most convincing document, full of sound sense, and not without prophetic vision. It is interesting also on account of the unexpected light it throws on the character of its author. I have called M. Svetkovitch a "rubber stamp" for Prince Paul. It is a fair description. For throughout his stewardship as Premier he never once showed a spark of personal initiative, with the one exception of the writing of this Memorandum. The document shows that at the last moment, even in a nature as compliant as his, there were stirrings of the traditional Serbian concern for national honour. It shows also that—as a friend of his once said to me—he had his measure of "peasant common sense." For the Memorandum is based on a practical appreciation of the facts of the situation. One can only regret that his loyalty to the Regent prevented him from standing by his guns. In fairness to him, however, it must be set on record that he made his attempt, however short it may have been, to preserve the honour of his country.

I give below a brief resume of the main arguments of the Memorandum:

M. Svetkovitch began by saying that Germany obviously intended to make Yugoslavia proposals which would further German military and political aims in South Eastern Europe. Germany, he wrote, had two alternatives: (1) to invade Britain, in which case she would have to secure herself in the Balkans; or (2) to prepare for a long war, in which case she would likewise have to secure herself in the Balkans. In either case the outlook for Yugoslavia would be a grim one. "The proposals which Germany will make," he contended, "will be hard on us and our future. They will insist pitilessly on getting all they need from us. No manoeuvring will enable us to escape from the grip which they are preparing, for the Germans themselves are held in a grip which endangers their own future."

The Memorandum then reviews the various demands Germany would be likely to make on Yugoslavia:

- "(1) Passage of German troops through our territory. To consent to this would be deliberate suicide. The Germans should be told this as soon as possible."

"(2) Triple Pact (i.e. Axis Pact). This Pact imposes military collaboration. As soon as it was signed we should be summoned to authorize the passage of German troops through our territory, Further adhesions to the Pact would be incompatible with our obligations towards Greece and Turkey. This proposal should be refused."

M. Svetkovitch then went on to consider the possibility of Yugoslavia signing the Pact with reservations. Of this he wrote: "Whether the Germans accepted this or not, what guarantee had Yugoslavia that they would not demand passage as soon as they found it necessary. Adherence to the Pact would inevitably involve Yugoslavia in conflict with Britain and America." In conclusion, he declared: "If in virtue of the Pact concluded or about to be concluded with Bulgaria, the Germans should march south, towards Salonika, we should be summoned to let war material or even troops pass through our territory. We must not forget that the communications between Germany and the AEgean do not pass through Bulgaria, but through Yugoslavia. The best and shortest road follows the valleys of the Morava and the Vardar. . . . We should prefer to be attacked directly rather than destroyed little by little when we are isolated. While in either case our fate must be the same, we should meet it by a different road. If we are attacked and resist our honour will be saved, and that will mean something when this war is liquidated."

When, in spite of the better judgment shown in the Memorandum, M. Svetkovitch signed the Axis Pact, revolt broke out exactly as General Simovitch had predicted to Prince Paul. It happened with lightning rapidity. Overnight the Regency was overthrown, and King Peter proclaimed the reigning Monarch. M. Svetkovitch and M. Markovitch, immediately upon their return from Vienna, were put under arrest. A new Government, headed by General Simovitch, took office. The actual coup was carried out by General Simovitch and a few officers of the Royal Guard and the Air Force. But it had the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. The populace went wild with joy, and patriotic demonstrations of loyalty to king and country, and sympathy for Britain and the U.S.A., took place unceasingly in every town and village of Yugoslavia. But mingled with the popular joy was also the popular anger at what was considered to have been the previous regime's attempt at betrayal.

It was in this atmosphere that Prince Paul—who had gone to Brdo, on the German-Yugoslav frontier, as soon as the revolt took place, but had been turned back—returned to the Capital. General Simovitch hastened to meet him in order to save him from the fury of the people. The two men had a dramatic encounter just outside Belgrade. General Simovitch told the Prince that he would save him, but that he must immediately leave the country. He would not permit him to go north. For that way was Germany. But he could go south—to Athens. General Simovitch's chivalrous action must have heaped coals of fire on Prince Paul's head. For both men must have remembered at that moment how, just before the signing of the Axis Pact, when General Simovitch had warned Prince Paul of the consequences, the Prince had tried to have the General arrested. General Simovitch had received warning from M. Svetkovitch, who, troubled in his conscience by the part he was about to play, sought to make some kind of reparation by giving the General the opportunity to save himself. And now the man whom Prince Paul had sought to put under lock and key was in power, and the Prince was at his mercy. But General Simovitch disdained to take advantage of the change in their political fortunes. He was magnanimous to his fallen adversary. When, months later, I asked him in London what had prompted him to do this, he replied to me: "I was determined that the revolution should not be stained by the blood of vengeance."

At this, their last meeting, Prince Paul and General Simovitch probably understood each other thoroughly for the first time. The Prince must have been touched by the General's attitude, for he replied to him, with something of his old-time simple candour: "You have been proved right. You were the only one to tell me what would happen."

And with these words Prince Paul passed out of Yugoslav history.

He went first to Athens and later to "somewhere in the British Empire."

But before dropping the final curtain on the drama of Prince Paul, I would like to pose a few questions and endeavour to find their answers. For, in spite of the facts which have come into my hands since the Yugoslav debacle, and the incontrovertible evidence upon which I have based the chronicle of the last phase of the Pauline regime, there still remain certain aspects of the story which are difficult to understand fully.

There is, for instance, the paradox that although towards

the end Prince Paul was undoubtedly set upon going in with the Axis, nevertheless his Government—which meant himself—tried every sort of manoeuvre, every kind of delay tactic, and put forward reservation upon reservation. I suppose the answer can only be that when it came to taking the final decision Prince Paul became fearful of going too far. "He who sups with the Devil should use a long spoon." He should have remembered this at an earlier stage. It was his fault that he had not. But perhaps it mitigates his fault that he remembered it at all, although by then it was too late.

Furthermore, there is the paradox that while he made speeches warning would-be aggressors that Yugoslavia would fight for her independence and integrity, he neglected to place the country in a proper condition of defence. Under his regime the Army was ill-equipped, lacking in modern weapons, and with little or no mechanization. The Air Force had also been neglected, although General Simovitch, when at its head, had done miracles of reorganization. The Ministry of Defence was placed in the hands of a Yugoslav, "Blimp" General Peschitch, who was an old man and completely out of touch with the political and military realities of the day. The disposition of the armies was all wrong. They were drawn up in a thin cordon all round the country's long frontier, which meant that at every point of that frontier the defence was weak. There was no striking force. No *masse de manoeuvre*. No strategic conception. Last, but not least, the order for full mobilization was never given—not, that is to say, until after the fall of the regime, when it was too late.

The reasons for all this can, I think, be found only in the inertia and feebleness which are the natural accompaniment, in any country, to a policy of appeasement. Appeasers cannot fight. They do not know how to fight. And Prince Paul was an appeaser. He feared to do anything which might displease Hitler and Mussolini, lest they should regard it as a "provocation" and make it an excuse to launch an attack.

With such an atmosphere at the Palace, is it to be wondered at that the same atmosphere was to be found in the Prime Minister's Office, at the Foreign Office, and in the Defence Departments? When King Alexander—the "Warrior-King"—had ruled it was a very different thing. In his day there used to be a joke, which was not without its serious meaning, that if the Civil Departments of Government could do with the help of foreign advisers, the War Office needed no advice from anybody

and could well give advice to the War Departments of other countries. The old jibe about Balkan inefficiency had never applied to the Belgrade War Office—that is to say, not until Prince Paul's day.

I cannot help thinking that under the influence of the Pauline regime something of the traditional toughness and sturdy, simple, peasant-soldierly virtue of the Yugoslavs became diluted and weakened amongst some of the people in high places. There was a growth of social snobbery which was alien to the true character of the people. A superficial "Western" civilization may have been more in evidence. But this was a small gain against the loss of the old-time "will to fight" amongst the ruling classes.

That the will to fight and the old heroism were still alive in the mass of the people and those of their leaders who had re-mained faithful to the old ideals was to be demonstrated when, at the time of the Simovitch coup, the overwhelming majority decided to make a stand for national honour, even though they knew that the consequences might well be tragic. And it was to be demonstrated yet again when the Army put up its epic fight against overwhelming odds, both in numbers and equipment, when the German invasion took place.

But there can be no doubt that owing to the enfeebling atmosphere of the Regency, "Petainism" at the Defence Ministry was able to play its part in preventing the younger, more ardent and efficient military spirits, such as General Simovitch, from making the Army into a first-class fighting machine according to modern technical standards. The spirit of 1914—when the armies of Little Serbia hurled back for a time the might of an Empire—was still the true spirit of the Yugoslavs in 1941. But it was never given a chance until it was too late, because between the time of King Alexander's death and the Simovitch coup, the leadership of the country had been in the hands of men of smaller moral stature than was the case in 1914.

The same applies in the realm of diplomacy. When, in 1914, Little Serbia stood up to the might of the Central Empires, she was at least not isolated. She fought in company with the Triple Entente of Britain, France and Russia. In 1941, when the blow fell, she was diplomatically isolated. There was no time to concert measures of military co-operation between her forces and the Anglo-Greek forces. For, pursuing the mirage of "neutrality," Prince Paul turned a deaf ear to the Turkish counsels of a united Balkan Front. One by one Yugoslavia's neighbours were either struck down or brought within the Axis

fold, until at the end, Yugoslavia stood alone, isolated, encircled. This was the outcome of the policy of accommodation of the Axis. One cannot imagine a Pashitch, a Marinkovitch, a Yevtitch, a Nintchitch conducting such a policy of diplomatic suicide. But, then, those great names were of the time of King Alexander. The baleful influences at the Belgrade Foreign Office of the Stoyadinovitchs, the Svetkovitchs, and the Cincar Markovitchs were of the time of Prince Paul. One can imagine the sturdy fighting Serb peasant, standing four square on his land, and being asked what he thought of the Pauline government, and the political lackeys of which it was composed, and one can accurately assume what his reply would be. "But these are not real Serbs," he would say. And he would be right. For they had not the real Serbian spirit.

In all these things there is, I feel, additional proof, if such be needed, of the truth of my contention—made at the beginning of this chapter—that the case of Prince Paul was not that of a Quisling, a traitor, on the one hand, or that of a completely innocent victim of fate on the other. He was a man of mixed motives, obstinate in his weakness, and weak in his obstinacy. His path was strewn with good intentions. Yet he brought his country to calamity. In a word: he was a small man in a big job. The job was too much for him. He failed. And his failure had tragic consequences, both for his country and for himself. In his hour of failure he is paying dearly for his faults. And it is just that this should be so. For he has proved unworthy of the high task entrusted to him by King Alexander. But it is also just to remember that his failings were due to the frailty of the spirit, rather than to evil intent. History, I think, will take this view of him. Posterity will regard him critically, but will not judge him harshly. And so, in my own estimate of his story, I have not forborne to criticize, but neither have I forborne to seek the mitigating circumstances.

If Prince Paul should ever read the words I have written of him here, I hope he will realize both that they had to be written and that they were difficult to write. He liked my country as I did his. One day both our countries will be victorious over the common foe. And when that day comes, I believe that Prince Paul, for all that he did to the contrary, will be as glad as I shall be. And in that there will be mutual forgiveness.

CHAPTER VI WAR!

THE Simovitch coup having wrecked Hitler's Plan No. 1— i.e., the break-up of Yugoslavia after that country had been made a satellite of the Axis—the Fuehrer was obliged to put into operation Plan No. 2—i.e., the attack on Yugoslavia. The Simovitch coup had, however, thrown out of gear a much wider German plan. This was Hitler's scheme to make Yugoslavia an accessory to a vast strategic conception whereby Germany would launch a great pincer attack on Southern Russia and the Middle East.

Hitler had wanted to get Yugoslavia into the Axis camp so that he could send troops and war material through Yugoslav territory for his attack on Greece. He planned further to attack Turkey, and then to make two great enveloping movements, one against Russia in the Ukraine, the other against Britain in Egypt and Palestine. For this purpose the use of the Vardar Valley for the transit of his troops and war material was essential. Furthermore, it was essential to have a "friendly" Yugoslavia on his flank while his operations were taking place in Greece, Turkey, Southern Russia and the Middle East.

The Simovitch coup having denied Hitler the use of Yugoslavia for the purpose of this "Grand Design," and having thus caused him to postpone this ambitious project while he dealt with a campaign in Yugoslavia, this gave both Russia and ourselves a valuable breathing space. It enabled us, amongst other things, to mop up the Iraqi and Syrian troubles. It enabled Russia to complete further her defensive preparations. Both Russia and ourselves, therefore, owe Yugoslavia a debt of gratitude. Likewise Turkey. For if, as may perhaps be the case, Germany and Italy should attack Turkey by the time this book is in print, even so Turkey will have gained valuable months in which to improve her defences.

Hitler, then, decided to operate his Plan No. 2. Yugoslavia was to be liquidated forthwith. He accordingly gave the order that she should be attacked simultaneously by Germany and Italy, with follow-up attacks by Hungary and Bulgaria. Both the Hungarian and the Bulgarian jackals had been promised their "pound of flesh." So all was ready.

But just as zero hour was approaching, Mussolini began to

behave in a most extraordinary way. Being the junior partner - or rather, by this time, the office boy—in the Axis, and therefore compelled to subordinate his interests to those of Hitler, he had often been obliged to exhort Pavelitch and the other Ustachi hirelings to be patient. Pavelitch and his friends, their fingers itching for the power and loot which now seemed almost within their grasp, would express their impatience. But it would be explained to them that they must have just a little more patience. The time was almost ripe, but not quite. Berlin was not quite ready. Berlin had said this. Berlin had said that. It was necessary to co-ordinate German and Italian action. And so on. But now, when Berlin was ready, and it only remained for the Italian Army to move into Yugoslavia (taking Pavelitch and the Ustachi with them), as soon as Hitler gave the word for the German Army to march, Mussolini suddenly showed signs of last-moment hesitation.

He employed the time available between the Simovitch coup and the actual launching of the attack on Yugoslavia in feverish secret negotiations in Belgrade, combined with counsels of caution in Berlin. His Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to try and influence Hitler in favour of less violent methods, at least for the time being. His Minister in Belgrade was told to try and induce General Simovitch to be "reasonable" and agree to some kind of patched-up agreement.

The reason was that he feared that once Yugoslavia was in the war the Italian Army in Albania would be smashed by the Yugoslav Army. In this he was not far wrong. For in the hasty plans agreed upon at the last moment between the British, Greek and Yugoslav General Staffs, one of the principal roles allotted to the Yugoslavs was to smash the Italian Army in Albania, so that the Yugoslav Army in that quarter could link up with the Anglo-Greek armies and also relieve the Italian pressure on the Greeks to enable the latter to concentrate upon meeting the German attack. When the fighting started this very nearly did happen. The reason why this plan was frustrated was that the German attack upon South Serbia from Bulgaria was so rapid that it enabled the German and Italian armies to link up. Thus the Italian Army in Albania escaped the complete destruction at the hands of the Yugoslavs which otherwise would have been its fate.

Mussolini, frightened as to what would happen to his army in Albania, and apprehensive also that the Germans might take too big a hand in the operations and seize territories which

had been promised to Italy, sought at the last moment to arrange a compromise. He evidently thought that by adroit diplomatic handling the eventual breaking up of Yugoslavia, in a manner best suited to Italian interests, could be attained without undue military and political risks for Italy. At all events it is a fact that he was scared at the thought of the possible consequences for Italy, and more especially for her soldiers, of the Hitler plan for sudden and direct action at that particular moment. So he sent his Minister in Belgrade, Mameli, to General Simovitch with an offer of mediation by Rome between Belgrade and Berlin. An informal invitation was extended to General Simovitch to visit Rome. But the most astounding thing of all was that Mameli, on Mussolini's personal instructions, actually gave away to General Simovitch the German strategic plan for making a sudden "blitz" attack on Southern Serbia from Bulgaria. This was done in the hope of frightening the Yugoslavs into accepting the Italian offer of mediation.

It may be argued, of course, that Mussolini was just trying to waste the time of the Yugoslavs, so that, being fully occupied with these proposed negotiations, they would not be able to devote themselves entirely to making their defensive military dispositions. There are those who take this view. But the view expressed to me by the highest Yugoslav military and political authority is that Mussolini's main reason was the desire to substitute political for military action, at least for the time being, in order that his army in Albania might escape annihilation.

The fact remains that these propositions were put to Yugoslavia by Italy. They came to nothing. But it is of importance to note that they were actually made.

Mussolini's eleventh-hour manouvings were in any case doomed to failure. They would have been even if General Simovitch had paid serious heed to them, which he did not. For the German arrangements had already been completed. The long period of preparation was over, and the machine was ready to move.

Mussolini now realized that he must act quickly if he was to garner the fruits of his many years' plottings. So he told his Ustachi henchmen that they need no longer be patient. The hour was now really about to strike.

Even during his mediatory efforts in Belgrade he continued to give instructions to Pavelitch. Mediation, of course, had only been a question of method. He had never relinquished his

intention of breaking up Yugoslavia by one method or another, at one time or another.

On March 28th, one day after the Simovitch coup in Belgrade, Pavelitch and other Ustacha leaders were in Rome, for final discussions with the Italian Foreign Office as to the part they were to play in the work of detaching Croatia from Yugoslavia. They were seen by neutral diplomats on that day, in the ante-room at the Palazzo Chigi, waiting to be received by Ciano's assistant, Filipo Anfuzo.

The following day, March 29th, Berlin confirmed officially the understanding that Hitler would support the Mussolini-pavelitch action in Croatia with the "armed forces of the Reich."

As early as April 3rd Pavelitch had spoken on the Italian wireless station at Abazzia, giving it out that he was speaking from "Radio Velebete," in Dalmatia, and in this broadcast he had incited the Croats to revolt, saying that the day of their "liberation" was about to dawn. Even before this, from other Italian wireless stations and also from the German "Alpen-sender" at Graz, the Ustachi had made broadcasts aimed at undermining Croatian loyalty to the Yugoslav State.

At the same time Mikhailov had received his instructions from Ribbentrop. In the meantime, Bulgaria, promised compensation in both Yugoslavia and Greek Macedonia, and an outlet to the AEGean Sea, had allowed the German army of General von List to make its concentration on Bulgarian soil. This took place without let or hindrance on the part of the British. At a time when we should have been dropping bombs on General von List's headquarters, our Minister, Mr. Rendell, was waiting upon King Boris and his Ministers with diplomatic Notes asking for a "clarification" of the situation. As though it were not already crystal clear! Afterwards our Foreign Office complained that Mr. Rendell had been "mised" by King Boris. As though any journalist or any other ordinary person averagely well informed on Bulgarian affairs, let alone the Foreign Office, could not have seen that by this time King Boris and his Government were hand-in-glove with the Germans!

However, that is what happened. General von List was thus to make his famous lightning thrust from Bulgaria into South Serbia and—contrary to the prophecies of our own military pundits, who had believed he would go to Salonika by way of Stroumitza—turn down the Vardar, separating the Yugoslav from the Anglo-Greek armies. This enabled the Germans

(1) to smash Yugoslav resistance in the South; (2) to beat the Greeks; (3) to make a juncture with the Italians in Albania, and frustrate the British hopes of a Yugoslav drive against the Italians in Albania, to relieve the pressure on the Greeks and make possible a Yugoslav-Greek-British link-up via Albania-Greece; and (4) to launch a simultaneous attack on Northern Yugoslavia.

This sequence of events not only rescued the Italians from defeat at the hands of the Greeks; it also enabled them to realize their hopes in Yugoslavia with the minimum of effort. Yugoslavia was overwhelmed by the tremendous superiority in numbers and equipment of the German hordes sent against them. So swift and so crushing was the German hammer-blow that the Yugoslavs were not given time to develop fully their campaign against the Italians. In such fighting as took place between the Yugoslavs and the Italians, before the Germans finally smashed organized military resistance, the Italians got the worst of it. But before long the Italian, Bulgarian and Hungarian armies, following in the wake of the Germans, and aided and abetted by treachery in Croatia, were able to have "victories" without seriously fighting for them. The German eagle swooped. The Italian, Hungarian and Bulgarian jackals crept in behind.

In the story of the actual fighting which took place in Yugoslavia, it can be clearly seen how the combination of overwhelming force in attack from without, with Fifth Column action from within, struck down even the bravest resistance. It can also be seen how the many years of plotting with local disaffected elements on the part of Mussolini, and later of both Mussolini and Hitler, came to bear its evil fruit.

The Frankovtsi, under German and Italian instruction, had succeeded in placing their adherents in a number of key-positions in the Civil Service, the Police and the Army. Dr. Matchek, the Croat leader, who, although a pacifist by inclination, was fully prepared to support resistance if attack came, and who, especially since the Serbo-Croat rapprochement, was completely loyal to the idea of Yugoslav unity, discovered this when it was too late. He cleaned out the Croatian Quislings as best he could. But by then the harm was done. When the attack came the Quislings took action. Certain Croatian regiments mutinied. Confusion reigned. This enabled others amongst the Quislings to take traitorous action in the civil and police departments. The stage was set for the setting up of the Quislingist Croatia as soon as the German Army should enter.

The German attack came suddenly, without declaration of war, in the usual Nazi manner. It began with the terror airraids on Belgrade, when a third of the city was demolished and some fifteen thousand civilians massacred. The Germans did not bother about military objectives. They were out for general destruction and slaughter—for the psychological effect of terrorism. Then came the land attacks—lightning thrusts of mechanized divisions, accompanied by dive-bombers. As far as these land attacks were concerned, the Germans struck first in the south—in South Serbia (Yugoslav Macedonia). They did this both for the strategic reasons I have already referred to—to link up with the Italians in Albania, prevent a juncture of the Yugoslav and Anglo-Greek armies, and drive to Salonika down the Vardar—but they also did it in order to have on their side the elements of surprise. True, the Italians, when "mediating" in Belgrade, had dropped the hint that this would be the case. But the Germans were not to know this. But even though Belgrade had been forewarned, the fact remained that there was still some element of surprise. I mean that South Serbia, being mountainous, is not the sort of country which lends itself to mechanized "blitz" methods, and therefore most people thought that the first attack would come from the north, over the Croatian plains. But the Germans have a habit of doing the very thing which others think it will be too difficult for them to do. This happened when they came through the Ardennes in the Battle of France. It happened again in the Battle of Yugoslavia.

The Germans pushed their panzer divisions along the steep, winding mountain tracks. The Yugoslavs prepared to hold these passes with mountain artillery, acting on the same kind of tactic as that used by the Greeks—of disabling the first and the last units of the column and then mopping up the tanks between. An excellent method. But the German low-flying aircraft and dive-bombers mopped up the mountain batteries. The Yugoslavs lacked anti-aircraft guns. They lacked also sufficient aeroplanes. They could not bring into play fighter counter-attack. The R.A.F. went to their help. But some of our air bases were over the mountains and some over the seas. And communications, telephonic or otherwise, between us and our Allies were poor.

Thus, in spite of almost incredible bravery, the Yugoslav Army in the south was cut off from the Greeks on its flank. Many a time the Yugoslav soldiers attacked the tanks with rifles and bayonets. Practically with bare hands. But men, however

heroic, cannot overcome machines unless they, too, possess machines.

If in the south it was purely a matter of overwhelming odds in men and material, in the north, where the attack was next launched, it was a matter of the dovetailing of military and Fifth Column action. When the battle had been joined, news reached the Yugoslav Higher Command of mutiny in a Croat regiment. Dr. Matchek was ready to do his best to rally his disaffected countrymen. He went to Zagreb to make the attempt. But he failed. The rot had gone too far. Further mutinies in other Croat regiments followed, even as the Germans and Hungarians crossed the frontiers. Serbian officers, non-commissioned officers and men were arrested by the revolting Croats. Many Croat junior officers, and many of the Croat privates, remained loyal. Indeed, many of the Croat regiments fought loyally and stoutly, which was acknowledged in the German Press at the time. But even a minority in revolt can cause the greatest disintegration. The loyal Croat subalterns could not avail against the combination of the treachery of their senior officers, members of the Frankovtzi, and German armoured divisions.

The Slovenes, also loyal, were cut off by the Italian advance and the German push through Croatia. The Serbian divisions made a stand on the Kossovopolje-Valyevo line. But a Croat officer, either from incompetence or out of treachery, failed to carry out instructions he had received to blow up the bridge at Shabatz, near Belgrade. A German armoured division drove in behind the Serbian left flank, breaking the Sav Line and turning the Serbian main position. After that all was lost, in spite of the very highest courage.

The final act in the drama took place when, following in the wake of the German and Italian armies, Pavelitch and his associates arrived in Zagreb and there set up their Government of gunmen, while Mikhailov set up his gangster I.M.R.O. role in Yugoslav Macedonia. It was then that Pavelitch carried out his long-prepared plans. The "Ustacha" was formally proclaimed to be the totalitarian party, and Croatia was converted into an "Ustacha State," in the same sense that Italy is a Fascist State or Germany a Nazi State, and the letter "U" was superimposed on the Croatian flag. The "Old Comrades" of the Ustacha, who had played leading roles in the plot which led to the murder of King Alexander, were installed as Cabinet Ministers and diplomatic representatives abroad. Thus Lorkovitch became Foreign Minister; Budak, Minister of Instruction; Peritch, Minister at

Rome; and Kavaternik, "Marshal" of the Croatian Army. Various other Ustachi received jobs in the Army, Civil Service, Diplomatic Corps, Police administration and in provincial government offices.

Nominally under Italian aegis, because of the Hitler-Mussolini bargain to that effect, the new "independent" Croatia was to all practical purposes a German-run concern. Locally, however, it was placed in the hands of the Ustachi—who lost no time in justifying their claim to make it an "Ustacha State." The rule of the gunmen was ushered in with the "New Balkan Order." And the general cutting-up and sharing out of the Yugoslav corpse proceeded apace. Macedonia was handed over to Bulgaria and the terrorist Mihailov and I.M.R.O. bandits. Mussolini helped himself to Dalmatia, part of Slovenia and Montenegro. Hungary took the Banat and Bachka. Germany took part of Slovenia. She also became the real master in Croatia, although that "Kingdom" was ostensibly converted into an Italian sphere, with the Italian Duke of Spoleto as "King." Serbia proper was placed under German control. The Serbian provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina were handed over to the Pave-litch gang in Croatia.

A final and complete assessment of the military aspect of the story is not yet possible, as there are still insufficient data available. In summing up at this short distance from events it is but possible to make the following recapitulations:

Yugoslavia's resistance, in the purely military sense, never stood a chance. The weakness of the previous regime, that of Prince Paul, had prevented mobilization taking place in time. When General Simovitch took over there was not sufficient time left to carry out mobilization fully. The Germans saw to that. Equally serious, the previous regime had neglected to supply the army with sufficient modern equipment. The Army was undermechanized and its air arm was too small. Britain had not helped in Yugoslav rearmament. At least, not to any appreciable extent. For one thing we had our hands full in supplying the Turks and Greeks. For another we were not sure, during the latter part of the Pauline regime, on which side Yugoslavia would finally stand. I do not think that we are entirely above criticism in this respect. But neither was the then Yugoslav Government. After the Simovitch coup all possible aid from Britain and the U.S.A. was promised. But Germany smashed the Yugoslav armies before anything of this help could arrive. A treaty had been made between Belgrade and Moscow, but that also was too

late for it to be of any practical value. During the last days of the Pauline regime we had proposed, but Belgrade had rejected, Anglo-Yugoslav staff talks. After General Simovitch took over, some sort of Anglo-Yugoslav military exchanges hurriedly took place. It was as the outcome of these exchanges that the plan was hastily devised for the Yugoslavs to attack the Italians in Albania. But it was all a case of eleventh-hour improvisation. None of this could avail—even as prodigious Serbian bravery could not avail—against the enemy's careful preparations, his overwhelming superiority in numbers and equipment, and his use of the Fifth Column weapon.

One cannot say too much to emphasize the bravery. That it was as fine as ever in Serbian history is shown by the way, after the collapse of organized military resistance, the Serbs continued with guerilla fighting. But equally one cannot say too much to emphasize that under the conditions of modern warfare bravery by itself is not enough.

The Yugoslav resistance rendered a great service both to Britain and to Russia, because it had forced Hitler to postpone his plan for a great pincer movement in Russia and the Middle East, the plan which he had hoped to operate last March. But it could not, in the nature of things, prevent Hitler from driving us out of the Balkans.

For, with organized Yugoslav military resistance broken, the German and Italian armies swept over Greece, and drove the British and Imperial armies—after the latter, in company with the Greeks, had put up a gallant resistance against overwhelming odds—into the sea, and thence to Crete, and from thence again into the sea.

Thus had the German-Italian plot against Yugoslavia served its purpose in the furtherance of the bigger German-Italian plan to drive us from our last foothold on the Continent.

It stands out clearly that the Yugoslav debacle was the logical outcome of all that had gone before—the Marseilles murder, Mussolini's plottings with the Ustacha, Hitler's and Mussolini's joint plan for the encirclement and dismemberment of Yugoslavia, and, last but not least the way the Western Powers, Britain and France, had failed to realize the full meaning and import of these things.

These days war, like peace, is one and indivisible. That is the final lesson of the Yugoslav story, in relation to the wider aspects of the war.

CHAPTER VII YUGOSLAV QUISLINGS

YUGOSLAVIA had fewer Quislings amongst her rulers than most of the countries brought low by Hitler. The majority of the Yugoslav Quislings were amongst the Croatian Ustachi living in exile abroad. The Quislings inside the country were to be found not so much amongst the leading politicians—most of the bad men in this galere were weaklings rather than rogues—as amongst the secondary people such as the Croatian Frankovtsi and some of the Croatian intelligentsia and big business men. Of these—the people who caused mutinies when Yugoslavia was attacked—there were not more than ten thousand out of a population of millions of loyalists. Undoubtedly they made up by organization what they lacked in numbers.

The majority of the population in Yugoslavia is made up of peasantry, and the peasants, whether Serbian, Croatian or Slovene, are essentially sound. The bad elements came from the so-called upper classes of Zagreb and Belgrade. In the case of Zagreb, it was the old story of the magnates being willing to support foreign domination provided that by so doing they could retain their privileges as against the rights of the peasant masses. The big business men thought they could get something out of it. The intelligentsia and the older officer class amongst the Frankovtsi were mainly people of thwarted ambition. They were annoyed at the time of the Serbo-Croat rapprochement because they could not themselves have the pickings of the best jobs. The middle-aged Conservative elements in the Frankovtsi were so lacking in realism that they tried to delude themselves that their old "Austrianism" could be reconciled with Hitler's New Order in the Balkans. Even now they do not seem to have realized that to the Nazis the very thought of the old "Kaiserlich und Koniglich" idea is as a red flag to a bull. Some of the younger student elements amongst the Frankovtsi are now being instructed by their new Nazi mentors in the fantastic theory that the Croats are not Slavs but Teuton Ostrogoths who somehow or other lost their original German speech during the Dark Ages. The Ustachi, of course, are not concerned with romantic ideas or ethnological fantasy. Their leaders are lawyer-politicians who failed to make their mark in conventional politics. Their follow-

ing is composed mainly of men who are either criminals or fanatics, or a mixture of both.

But it must be remembered that the legitimate representatives of Croatian thought and feeling—men like Dr. Matchek and Dr. Kosutitch, who are at present in concentration camps in Germany, or men like the Croat members of General Simovitch's Free Yugoslav Government in London—were loyal to the ideal of Yugoslav unity and integrity. These men were the representation of the Croat Peasant Party and that Party represented more than ninety per cent of Croatian feeling. On the other hand, the Ustachi, who at present have the real control, represent nothing more than the extreme wing of the Frankovtsi, and the Frankovtsi, as a political party, never made any real impression on the country in the days when it was part of the old party system. This may be judged from the fact that at the last General Election before King Alexander's dictatorship abolished elections, the Frankovtsi succeeded in obtaining only one seat in Parliament out of the seventy-three Croatian constituencies.

As regards the Serbian upper class—or rather the Belgrade nouveaux riches—these were of a much later creation than their opposite numbers in Croatia. They began to emerge during the latter part of the Alexandrine epoch and developed their wealth and position during the years of the Pauline regime. They were for the most part men who put their own interests first, or who, like Prince Paul, interpreted the national interests in terms of their own interests. From this class came the political weaklings like M. Svetkovitch, and the political cyphers and time-servers like M. Cincar Markovitch. They were not intentional Quislings, or actual traitors. But they, in common with the Prince Regent, conducted policies which were based on staving off war at any cost in order that the financial blessings of peace could be retained. They have to bear a heavy share of the responsibility for the tragic happenings which eventually took place.

M. Svetkovitch has since shown himself to have been a better man than Cincar Markovitch. For whereas, since the Axis occupation, the former has kept himself quite apart from things, the latter has been sunning himself at Carlsbad. It is true that he is not holding any post under the occupying authorities. Still he is the recipient of German hospitality—presumably as a slight recompense for his policy of weakness and subservience towards Germany at the time of his tenure of the Yugoslav Foreign Office during the regime of Prince Paul.

Like the Court at the time of the Regency, they exuded an

atmosphere of false "Westernization." They were out of touch with the main current of feeling amongst the people. The people had remained democratic, simple, strong, patriotic. Their rulers had become autocratic, sophisticated, weak and unpatriotic.

The most unpleasant product of this nouveau-riche type amongst the politicians of this epoch was Milan Stoyadinovitch, sometimes known as "Lucky Milan"; sometimes nicknamed "Stoyer."

No record of the fall of Yugoslavia would be complete without a chapter devoted to "Stoyer," for his share in the responsibility for Yugoslavia's eventual fall was not a light one. He was the arch-example of the Serb gone wrong. He was all that the true and typical Serbian spirit is not. The only typical Serbian characteristic in him was his "toughness." But he was "tough" not in his country's interest, but in his own.

It is not, I think, without significance that Stoyadinovitch entered politics through finance. He had studied banking and economics in London in his youth. Later he became Director of the British Trade Corporation Bank in Belgrade. He went to the Ministry of Finance. Then he took up politics, and was very quickly successful. He had plenty of ability, a forceful personality, and a "strong" physical presence.

Stoyadinovitch had held the post of Minister of Finance in a number of governments. Prince Paul made him Premier, after the fall of the Yevtitch Government following the death of King Alexander, with a mandate to settle the Serbo-Croat dispute. For a while Stoyadinovitch maintained a liberal attitude. But with success came a development towards autocracy. Power and wealth went hand in hand with him. He liked them both, and always wanted more of both. For a while he was popular, mainly because for some years good harvests happened to coincide with his terms of office. Hence he was dubbed "Lucky Milan"! But the older and more respectable political elements distrusted him. I recall an occasion when "Stoyer" was addressing a public meeting in Belgrade. I was listening to it over the wireless at a luncheon party. We could hear the crowd shouting, at regular intervals, the Serbian equivalent to "Hear! Hear!" I turned to my host and commented that the speech seemed to be getting a popular reception. "Oh," said my host, "don't take any notice of those Hears! Hears!—Stoyer pays his claue a dinar a shout!"

I met him a number of times in Belgrade and elsewhere. I remember him in his double capacity of Premier and Foreign

Minister, addressing the crowd from the terrace of the Hotel Carlton at Bratislava, Slovakia, on the occasion of the last meeting of the Little Entente. In the street below the Czechoslovak Sokols were drawn up, wearing their national costumes, carrying lanterns, and singing national patriotic songs. On the terrace of the Carlton stood the Czechoslovak, Roumanian and Yugoslav Foreign Ministers. The speeches of the first two—couched in the usual conventional phraseology—received their due measure of cheering from the crowd below. But Stoyadinovitch's oration received a really tremendous ovation. It was mainly due to his compelling physical presence, combined with his strong personality and considerable oratorical gift. I was standing near him at the time and was able to get a good view of what happened. He strode to the balustrade of the terrace and, shooting out his right arm in a dramatic gesture, boomed out in his powerful voice the following rousing words:

"Have no fear! When the hour of danger strikes, I shall be with you."

But when the hour did strike for the Czechoslovaks, not so very long afterwards, Stoyadinovitch was not with them. Instead, he was appeasing the Axis. He followed the London-Paris line which led to Munich.

I recall another episode which illustrates in particular Stoyadinovitch's great vanity. I had interviewed him in Belgrade. After we had talked for some time, during which he had said a number of interesting things, but nothing of any outstanding importance, or of a sensational nature, he told me that it was just a private conversation and not for publication. I was determined not to agree to this. For I had not made the journey from London to Belgrade for my newspaper just to have a private talk. So I leapt to my feet and said to him: "Mr. President, I am sorry, but believe me this will be published; indeed it is almost in print at this very moment." Whereupon Stoyadinovitch, amused, it seemed, by the situation, smiled affably and said: "All right, but let me see your copy before you wire it to London." I agreed. I then went back to my hotel and typed out the interview, to which I gave an introduction, on the following lines:

"Dr. Milan Stoyadinovitch, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia, entered politics through banking, and the brilliant talents he displayed in finance and economics have been brought to the service of his country, now that he has taken control of the helm of State."

I submitted the typescript of the interview to him. He read the introduction, and passed the whole interview for publication without reading any further.

It was, of course, quite true that he had considerable financial talents, and that he did bring them to the service of the State. Unfortunately even more did he bring them to the service of himself. But I was obliged to write this flattering opening paragraph—which got cut out of the published version—to get the manuscript passed.

As time went on, Stoyadinovitch, from being the hope of liberal-minded people in Yugoslavia, became more and more reactionary, more and more dictatorial, and, at the same time, more and more wealthy. He pinned his faith on the Axis Powers, because he believed that France was out of the running as a Great Power and that Britain was not interested in South-Eastern Europe. On both points he was, at the time, undoubtedly accurate. And in view of this, it cannot be said that he was altogether blameworthy for desiring not to get into trouble with the Axis Powers, which were both powerful and near at hand. But he carried this policy to extremes, and, under his premiership, Yugoslavia became an economic vassal to Germany and a political subsidiary of both Germany and Italy. He went to these extremes from a mixture of motives: Political opportunism combined with personal advantage to launch him on this path.

As time went on "Stoyer" began to see in Hitler's overlordship the best way for himself becoming the local Dictator. It meant power, personal power, and all the trappings of such power according to the new Fascist technique. And, also in accordance with this technique, it meant the accumulation of wealth. "Stoyer" became very rich, and the best (or rather worst) example of the new Serbian nouveau riche.

The process showed itself in his physical appearance. As his power and wealth increased, so did his girth. I remember seeing a newsreel of him, in Belgrade, during an election campaign in 1938. The film featured him at various stages of his career, and each subsequent year showed him looking fatter, much to the ironic amusement of the cinema audience.

After a time he began to assume the circus tricks of the modern dictator. He designed gaudy uniforms for himself. And he rode about in a luxurious high-powered car, preceded by uniformed outriders on noisy motor-cycles. He took to giving a salute—and receiving the same thing from his "bodyguard" —which was a cross between the Nazi and the Fascist salutes.

The newsreel, in the Belgrade cinema, to which I have alluded above, showed him receiving these salutes. The audience positively gurgled with delight—ironic delight. For the Serbs are basically a democratic people. They also have a highly developed sense of irony. They greeted him on the screen with shouts of Vodja (Leader). But they repeated the word very quickly. Now, repeated rapidly like this, the word comes out, phonetically, with the syllables reversed, i.e. Djavo (which means "Devil").

In internal politics he at first seemed to show signs of being willing to seek a rapprochement between the Serbs and Croats. He did for some time allow the Croats a good deal of rope. But in time he hardened up. But he not only hardened in regard to the Croat question. He also imposed his dictatorial will upon his own Serbs. Any democratically minded person who dared to oppose him was very soon labelled "Communist." But it was in the realm of external policy that he did the most harm. During the days of Austria's struggle for independence against Nazi Germany, Stoyadinovitch took a pro-German and anti-Austrian line. He cooled off towards the Czechs. He let the Little Entente fall into ruin. He weakened the Balkan Pact grouping. He and Prince Paul played the "neutrality" line, which, in the long run, could only mean vassalage to the Axis, and more especially to Germany.

Stoyadinovitch entered into the Pact of Friendship with Italy and made the economic agreements with Germany. Under his regime some of the leading Belgrade papers became pro-German in tone. His censorship department saw to that. And Axis money did the rest.

He paid visits to Berlin and Rome. It must have been on one of these visits to Berlin that Hitler put the proposition to him that he should become the Yugoslav Fuehrer with Hitler as the Overlord. For towards the latter part of his regime it was evident that Berlin regarded him as "Germany's man" in Yugoslavia. There was even a report that Hitler had discussed with him a plan for shifting Prince Paul from the Regency, and the proclamation of himself as the Head of the State, under Nazi aegis. Apparently, Prince Paul, although amenable to the Axis, was not sufficiently an Axis man for Hitler's liking. Stoyadinovitch would have gone all out, whereas Prince Paul was inclined to hedge. Prince Paul became subservient to the Axis out of negativism, because of the weaknesses of his character. Stoyadinovitch became subservient to the Axis because of the positive, but perverted, strength of his character.

There is no doubt that towards the end Prince Paul came to fear him. He came to see in him a rival, somebody who might oust him from his position. And he also realized that whereas his own pro-Germanism, based on what he thought to be expediency, had its reservations, Stoyadinovitch's pro-Germanism based upon the purely personal motives of power and wealth, might well have no reservations at all. And so it came about that to the surprise of all Europe, Prince Paul suddenly "dropped the pilot." The dynamic Stoyadinovitch was sacked. The static Svetkovitch was given his job. Svetkovitch could be relied upon, which could never have been the case with Stoyadinovitch, to carry out the Prince's will and policy in the most dutiful manner. Which, of course, he did. Acting on behalf of his Royal Chief, Svetkovitch carried through the Serbo-Croat rapprochement, in itself a good thing, however open to criticism the method may have been. He also carried out the Regent's pro-Axis policy, and the policy of "neutrality," which, under the circumstances, was much the same thing. But there was no fear of his ever exceeding the terms of his brief. Prince Paul felt much safer with him than he had with his predecessor.

But "Stoyer" never forgave the Prince for having removed him from office. He proceeded, accordingly, to hatch plots against the Regent. And he entered into even closer relations with Berlin, and became the Quisling-elect of Yugoslavia. Prince Paul then had him placed under "district arrest." That is to say he was confined to the district in which he had his country house in Slovenia.

Finally, towards the end, when the Axis avalanche was about to fall on Yugoslavia, Prince Paul put Stoyadinovitch under close arrest. He was hauled out of his carriage on the railway train in Slovenia, and handed over to the British. The exact reasons which, at the eleventh hour, prompted this drastic action on the part of the Prince Regent are not known. It will probably be many moons before the whole story comes out. But it is obvious enough that disquieting information must have come to the ears of Prince Paul which made him feel that "Stoyer" was up to something which booted no good either for the country or for the Regency. Stoyadinovitch was accordingly handed over to us, and removed firstly to Egypt, and later to a more distant part of the British Empire, where he still is. Thus ended the career of "Lucky Milan." His luck had held good for many a year. But in the end it deserted him.

Stoyadinovitch, I must repeat, had personality, ability, and

strength. He had all the attributes which, used in the right way and for the right ends, might have made of him a notable figure in Yugoslav history. But he used his abilities and his strength for unworthy ends. Greed, vanity and power-lust between them constituted his undoing. He was the arch-example of how bad it is when people depart from the essential virtues of their stock. Being a nouveau riche is bad for people of peasant origins. It causes them to lose the good qualities of the peasant and to retain the bad ones. This was certainly true in the case of Stoyadinovitch.

He will go down in history as that (happily) rare thing—a Serbian Quisling. The Serbs, as a race, do not run to this breed. And this makes the Stoyadinovitch phenomenon all the more startling, and, indeed, shocking, to anybody who, like the present writer, has known the Serbs intimately and for a long period. Let it always be remembered that, with the exception of the grafters and place hunters who followed "Stoyer" in the hope of feathering their own nests, the Yugoslav people repudiated both the man and his policy.

Another Serbian Quisling was Milan Acimovitch, who held the portfolio of the Interior in Stoyadinovitch's Government. Acimovitch used to go on frequent confidential missions to Berlin on behalf of Stoyadinovitch. After the Axis occupation he took a leading part preaching the doctrine of "accepting the inevitable." With his activities in this connection, I deal more freely in the chapter entitled "Yugoslavia Dismembered."

It is apposite to remark at this juncture, however, that most of the Serbian Quislings turned out to be men who came from Stoyadinovitch's intimate circle of friends.

They had the "Stoyer" stamp on them.

In repudiating Stoyadinovitch, the Yugoslav people had also repudiated his friends and abettors.

CHAPTER VIII YUGOSLAVIA DISMEMBERED

WHAT I have to say here about partitioned Yugoslavia under the Axis yoke necessitates the reservation that, by the time this book is in print, events may take place which will modify the situation described in these pages. But a

general survey taken at the time of writing is possible, and it is this which I shall now attempt.

One thing, however, must be said first, and that is that the guerilla fighting which continued after the collapse of organized military resistance, and which is still continuing, is likely to increase both in scope and intensity as time goes on. Revolt against the Nazi oppressors in the great concentration camp which is Hitler's "New Europe" is becoming stronger every day. It is the case in all the occupied territories. But nowhere is it stronger than in Yugoslavia. The activities of the Serbian patriot bands are on a bigger scale and of a more violent nature than are the corresponding patriotic activities in the other occupied countries. These activities take the form of actual guerilla fighting in the mountains and forests and sabotage in the towns and villages. The Axis Armies of Occupation, the German Gestapo, the Croatian Ustachi terror bands, between them are not able to stamp out the Chetnic revolt. Hangings, shootings, tortures, concentration camps, mass expulsions—in fact all the usual brutal Nazi methods of repression cannot kill the spirit of patriotism and revolt. And this resistance will in the long run have its effect upon the other suppressed peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe. It will light a torch throughout the occupied Slav lands which will one day cause the Nazi superstructure to collapse in flames.

With regard to the actual occupation, the New Order may be "new" but there is certainly very little evidence of "order." For instance, the new Croatian State, while nominally under Italian overlordship and while nominally in Italian military occupation, is in fact in a very confused condition, in which the various Axis interests overlap. Croatia is supposed to be an independent State with an Italian king, in the person of the Duke of Spoleto, who has assumed the title of King Aymone. At the time of writing the "King" is still at Milan, and he has delayed his entry into his "kingdom" until such time as its reconstruction—political, economic and administrative—has been completed. As, however, conditions in Croatia worsen every day, the absent sovereign may have to wait a very long time for the completion of this reconstruction.

The official army of occupation in Croatia is the Italian Army. It is not called an occupation. It is referred to as the "co-operation" of the Italian with the Croatian Army. Actually the German Army controls many of the key points. The Italian military writ ceases to run east of Karlovtaz, and in Zagreb, while the

Italian troops occupy the city, German troops hold the aerodrome.

The Government is in the hands of the Pavelitch gang, the Ustachi. And the Ustachi are Mussolini's hirelings. But to secure a reinsurance for Germany, Hitler has insisted that included in the administration should be Dr. Butch, the leader of the pro-German wing of the Frankovtsi.

The rank and file of the Ustacha have been formed into storm trooper bands and political police, and they collaborate with Himmler's Gestapo. Their ranks have been added to by the recruitment of common criminals specially let out of prison for the purpose. Criminals have also been released from prison to take up appointments in the local administrations, and some have become mayors.

Some of the more romantically minded amongst the Frankovtsi amused themselves, during the earlier days of Croatian "independence" in designing the new crown and the crown jewels. The real bosses—Pavelitch and his Ustachi—have had little time for this kind of thing. Their main concern has been, and still is, to hold down their jobs at any cost, and this they are doing by terrorism, murder and corruption. Pavelitch, as I have said elsewhere in this book, has proclaimed Croatia to be an "Ustacha State," and the Ustacha forms the State Party (just as in the case of the Fascist Party in Italy, and the Nazi Party in Germany); and a big "U" is now superimposed upon the Croatian flag. His regime has opposed to it the overwhelming mass of the peasantry—who are the supporters of Croatian Peasant Party, now suppressed—and who make up some ninety per cent of the population. Their principal leaders, Dr. Matchek and Dr. Kosutitch, have been removed to concentration camps in Germany.

The Pavelitch regime has only a limited amount of support—composed of some careerists in the towns, and, of course, the criminal rabble of the rank-and-file Ustachi. The supporters of the regime are willing to commit any crime in order to hold down their jobs. Without the backing of the Axis armies of occupation and the Gestapo, the Pavelitch regime would collapse overnight.

The real power behind the scene is Himmler, who carried out a policy of "divide and rule." He encourages the Ustachi thugs to shoot, hang and beat up Croats opposed to the Pavelitch regime, but even more does he encourage them to shoot, hang and beat up the Serbs. In the Croatian towns "Serbs, Jews and

Gipsies" are lumped together as inferior races not fitted to have equal rights with the "Herrenvolk" and its Croatian hirelings; as races which should be exterminated. They all three have to wear distinctive armlets and are not allowed to enter trams or cafes in Zagreb and other Croatian towns. The idea is to foster hatred between Serbs and Croats with a view to preventing by these means any rebirth of Serbo-Croat collaboration for the Yugoslav idea. The Croats as a whole remain loyal to the Yugoslav idea. But it may be readily understood that the rank-and-file Serbs, hearing of the Ustacha outrages against the Serbian people as a whole, not unnaturally are tempted to regard all Croats as their enemies. Which, of course, is just what the Germans want. There is, therefore, cold political calculation behind Hitler's instructions to the Ustachi to persecute with particular ferocity the Serbs. It is sadism. But not just sadism for its own sake. It is both sadism for its own sake and for a definite, political purpose.

In Bosnia, now included in Croatia, similar tactics are employed—only in this case it is a matter of trying to set Christians and Moslems one against the other.

In Slovenia there is an equally confused situation. Nominally Slovenia has been carved up between Germany and Italy. But even in the Italian part the Germans are very much in evidence. Thus, while Italian troops hold Ljubljana, the capital, German troops hold the power station and the water-works. In the Northern strip, around Maribor, now renamed Marburg, the Germans are just expelling the Slovenes and settling Germans in their place. The expelled Slovenes have had to go to Croatia, there to live on land from which the Serbs have been expelled. As in Croatia, so in Slovenia, the German policy is "divide and rule"—in both provinces it is a case of the Germans seeking to cause trouble between Croat and Serb, and Slovene and Croat, in order to prevent the three coming together and making common cause against their oppressors.

In South Serbia (Yugoslav Macedonia) the Gestapo indulges in yet another form of this divide and rule technique. This consists of setting Serb and Bulgar against each other. Himmler and his gang know very well that the ordinary Serbian peasant and the ordinary Bulgarian peasant have much in common; and that there is no natural animosity between them. For Serbo-Bulgarian mutual hatred has been a matter of dynasties and governments, not of peoples. The two races speak languages which have similarities. They have the same religion. And they both

have a common feeling of sympathy for Russia, for, whatever the regime in that country, Russia remains for the Balkan Slavs the "Great Slav Mother." Germany does not want to see any kind of Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement under the aegis of Russia. Hence Himmler's policy of causing bad blood between the Serbo-phil and Bulgarophil Macedonians. Himmler is carrying out this policy by much the same means as he employed in Croatia. Just as in Croatia he has let loose the Croatian Ustachi against the Serbs, so in Macedonia he has let loose the Macaedo-Bulgarian I.M.R.O. terrorists against the Serbs. He has given the I.M.R.O. bandits a free hand to hang, shoot, torture, rape and burn to their hearts' content.

The Bulgarian Government is not altogether enchanted with this situation, because it would prefer to avoid undue trouble from its new subjects in Macedonia. Hence the regular Bulgarian forces in occupation there have been behaving with at least some degree of restraint. But any moderation on the part of the Bulgarian Army is more than made up for by the ferocity of the I.M.R.O. Mihailov, the I.M.R.O. chief and the uncrowned king of Macedonia, has set up gangster rule. Those of the Serbs and Serbophil Macedonians he has not exterminated, he has subjected to mass expulsions; and Serbs married to local husbands or wives have been compulsorily divorced. It was not for nothing that before the opening of the Axis campaign in the Balkans Ribbentrop kept Mihailov in cold storage ready for the day when Yugoslavia should be carved up. Mihailov, like Pavelitch, followed in the wake of the Axis armies. Now he is Himmler's principal local collaborator. He also has other uses—potential uses for the Germans. For should the Bulgarian Government ever fail to toe the line to Germany as completely as the Nazis may desire, Himmler would not hesitate to put the I.M.R.O. up to a little assassination work in Bulgaria proper. For the I.M.R.O. this would be like the old days when, in between murdering Serbs and having vendettas amongst themselves, they used to bump off some Bulgarians, too, including members of the Bulgarian Governmental services in Sofia. If it should ever be considered necessary by Berlin to blackmail King Boris or his Ministers, then Mihailov and his merry men of the I.M.R.O. can always be used as the threat. One day they can be used as something more than a threat. And should that happen, the I.M.R.O. boys will always be willing to oblige. For they enjoy killing for its own sake. They are the real professionals. Compared with them even the Ustachi look like amateurs.

In Serbia proper the real rulers are the German military command and the Gestapo. At first they used as their channels of administration Serbian commissars—organized by Milan Acimovitch, Stoyadinovitch's friend. But these commissars had no real power. They were only the office boys of the German governors. In Serbia, as elsewhere, the population is kept down by terrorism, concentration camps and murder.

More recently there has been a new development. The Germans, despairing over the way the Serbian "Chetnics" have been carrying on the war, not only in Serbia proper and in Montenegro, but also in Croatia, decided to try and stop this by making use of some kind of Serbian Government. They accordingly decided to convert Serbia from a merely occupied territory into a protectorate, and to set up a Quisling Government there which could appeal to the Chetnics to stop fighting.

Milan Acimovitch undertook the task of forming such a Government. He went to General Milan Neditch, an ex-Minister of War, who had been put in a concentration camp, and offered him, on behalf of the Germans, personal liberty—on condition that he would lead a Quisling Government. General Neditch agreed. He subsequently formed such a Government, with himself as Premier and Acimovitch as Minister of the Interior. His Government then issued a proclamation calling upon the Chetnic guerillas to cease fighting against the Axis. The appeal fell on deaf ears, for the guerilla warfare increased, not declined in intensity after this appeal.

The Neditch Government is like the Hacha Government in Czechoslovakia. It has no real authority. Like the Government of commissars before it, the new Government of Ministers is really only a Government of office boys. The real authority is the German military command and the Gestapo.

As regards General Neditch—well, he is yet another of the Petain brand. He is old. He is *passee*. He does not represent the real Serbian military spirit, which is now exemplified by General Simovitch.

General Milan Neditch was Minister for War before General Peshitch. Most people at the time thought he was strongly anti-Axis. But it turned out after his dismissal that he was secretly pro-Axis. His brother, General Dragutin Neditch, who is the more intelligent of the two, was also pro-Axis and influenced him. Not unlike the old Marshal Petain, General Milan Neditch was obsessed by the Bolshevik bogey. When he was offered the puppet premiership of occupied Serbia he accepted on the grounds

of "better even Hitler than Bolshevism." He seems to have thought that the continued resistance of the Chetnics to the Germans would lead to a state of civil war and "Communist" agitation, "like in Spain," as he would put it. At the back of his mind was the firmly implanted thought that Germany was in any case invincible, and that therefore it was necessary to accept the inevitability of Nazi overlordship.

When, before the war, Prince Paul sacked him, and replaced him with the senile Peshitch, many people felt at the time that this was a pro-Axis move on the part of the Regent. It now turns out to have been nothing of the kind. For it would seem that General Neditch's defeatism was too much even for Prince Paul. But, unfortunately, the choice of a successor was not a propitious one, for General Peshitch was both old and incompetent.

Perhaps the fairest thing which may be said of General Neditch is that he is a typical example of "Blimpism"—the kind of Blimpism which has Bolshevism on the brain, and falls an easy victim to the Nazi make-believe of the "crusade against Bolshevism." Petain and Weygand fell for it in France. And who shall say that there are not people of the same mentality in Britain?

I believe that in Whitehall there are to be found credulous civilian and military officials who believe that Neditch is "not so bad"; who think that he will not be an easy tool to be used by the Germans. They should quickly rid themselves of any such wishful thinking. Such illusions about Neditch are as absurd as the hopes which some people in our political and official circles have placed in Weygand. These obstinate and one-track-minded Continental Blimps will not be able to make any effective resistance to Hitler, even if they should want to do so, which is by no means proven. They can be nothing more than marionettes dancing to the strings which Hitler pulls.

Italy has taken the Dalmatian coast and Montenegro under her direct occupation, and this territory extends towards the Bulgarian zone of occupation. Italian and Bulgarian interests overlap and conflict. Italian rule in Montenegro is in name rather than in fact, for in the mountainous country the Chetnics have it mostly their way, and the Italian soldiers do not dare to go outside the few towns.

Of all the occupying forces the Italians are perhaps the least hated. For they endeavour to behave with more humanity than the others in the hope of obtaining Yugoslav support for their

pretensions as against those of their allies who are also their rivals. The most hated of all are the Croatian Ustachi and the Macaedo-Bulgarian I.M.R.O. Next on the list come the Germans. Then the Hungarians and Bulgarians. Finally, the Italians.

This, at any rate, was the ratio of hate during the earlier part of the occupation. More recently there have been signs that the Italians, finding it more and more difficult to hold down their parts of the occupied territories, have been emulating to some extent the Germans and have resorted to terroristic methods such as dive-bombing villages. But they lack the German efficiency and also the German material for this kind of thing. For atrocities of this kind—the wiping out of whole villages and communities by dive-bombing and artillery—the Germans hold the record.

Trouble is now brewing between Mussolini and his Ustachi hirelings. For Italy's recent action in occupying the Croatian part of the Dalmatian coast has deprived Croatia of her seaboard. This has re-awakened old Italo-Croatian animosities. Moreover, it is interesting to note that not so long ago the inspired Italian Press started attacking Pavelitch and his clique, labelling them "terrorists." One may well ask: "Why should Mussolini suddenly start rounding on his own henchmen like this?" It would be a mistake to imagine that the Italian Government has suddenly become ashamed of its own employees in Croatia. Rather is the explanation to be sought in something quite different. For it is most likely that this is the prelude to Italy attempting to take over the Government of Croatia in a more direct way. In this case it may well suit Mussolini's book first to discredit Pavelitch and his gang, so as to be able to have the excuse of "restoring order" by Italian bayonets. In such case, Mussolini would be able to say, in effect, to Pavelitch: "You have failed to make order out of chaos, and so now I must do the job myself."

This, however, might lead to serious differences between Hitler and Mussolini. For, as I have pointed out before, although Italy may be the formal overlord in Croatia, Germany is the real master. And as Germany is also the master of Italy, Mussolini's prospects of outwitting Hitler in Croatia would not seem to be too rosy.

The Hungarians have also behaved with considerable brutality towards the Serbs. Recently they have come into conflict with the Croats, too, and even the Pavelitch regime has protested to

Berlin that Hungary is trying to infringe Croatian rights. There has also been trouble between the Croats and the Italians in Dalmatia.

It will be seen, therefore, that perfect harmony by no means exists between the Axis rivals and their various satellites. It is evident that this New Balkan Order is completely rootless and artificial and that it cannot survive. It will collapse as soon as it receives its first really heavy blow. When the collapse comes there will be rivers of blood. For, as Dr. Nintchitch, the Foreign Minister, said to me in London recently: "We shall have accounts to settle." Pavelitch and the other Quislings-cum-assassins will then be meted out a "punishment which fits the crime." Mr. Churchill, in one of his stirring broadcasts this year, declared that after our victory we should bring all the Quislings to trial. For the murderer Pavelitch, for the murderer Mihailov there can be only one sentence—the sentence of death.

All the countries at present occupying Yugoslavia—whether they be actual members of the Axis or only satellites of the Axis — are treating the local population in a most dastardly manner. Some of the occupying forces are behaving slightly better than others, but even the best is below the worst of past standards of conduct.

The crimes of all the occupying countries—satellites like Hungary and Bulgaria, no less than principals like Germany and Italy—will have to be remembered, and punished, when, after the Allied victory shall have been achieved, justice will be meted out.

CHAPTER IX

SPIRIT OF KING ALEXANDER LIVES ON IN KING PETER

JUST before King Alexander's departure for Marseilles a conversation took place between him and Mestrovitch, the great Yugoslav sculptor. Mestrovitch was a patriotic Croat as well as a patriotic Yugoslav. He had not always seen eye to eye with the King on policy. But the two men had a mutual esteem. During their last conversation Mestrovitch begged King Alexander to take more precautions for his safety. For Mestro-

vitch feared that perhaps the terrorists would try to take the Monarch's life. Perhaps there was something of tragedy in the very atmosphere on the eve of the voyage to Marseilles. More than one person at the time had premonitions that something terrible might happen. Mestrovitch expressed his concern. But King Alexander, who was always fearless, and scorned to be careful, replied: "I know it may happen at any moment. We must be ready for it. They are wrong if they think that by killing me they can kill Yugoslavia. I am only a man. Many have built before me. It will only be stronger if I fall for it."

King Alexander was right in the sense that his murder at Marseilles did have the effect of uniting all sections of the country on a general patriotic basis. But he was wrong if one takes the longer view. For his removal from the direction of Yugoslav affairs meant the removal of a really strong man; and of the only man with the authority and purpose to carry through not only internal unifying measures but also a wider unification of the Balkans against outside aggression. The killing of King Alexander made it easier for the Revisionist Powers eventually to break up Yugoslavia. This was the note upon which I began this book, and upon which I will draw it to a close.

A good deal of criticism was brought against King Alexander during his lifetime. Some of it was justified. Much of it was not. He made mistakes. It was a mistake to suppress democratic institutions, although the breakdown of the parliamentary regime which had caused him to institute his dictatorship did at all events provide him with some justification. Towards the end of his life, however, he admitted that he had been mistaken, and declared that he intended to make a return to democracy. But whatever his mistakes—and where is there a ruler or a man who has not made them?—he was a great king. He has been called "The Warrior King," the "King Unifier" and the "Martyr King." All three descriptions are correct. He was all these things. He had fought for his country. He had unified it. He would have unified the Balkans had he lived longer. And he died for his country.

In foreign policy he was particularly wise and enlightened. He did not make mistakes in this field. Indeed, he showed himself many a time to be possessed of the higher statesmanship.

For all these reasons his enemies preferred him dead to alive. For all these reasons they had him killed.

Prince Paul, who followed after him in the governance of his

country, was not of the same fibre. He failed where King Alexander would have succeeded.

But the Alexandrine tradition will be born again in the person of the late King's son, the present King Peter II, who is now at the head of the Free Yugoslav Government in London, and who, after the Allied victory, will enter into his kingdom in Yugoslavia.

King Peter's mother, the Queen-Mother Marija, has seen to it that her son has been brought up in accordance with the great tradition of his father. By the wish of both his parents, his education has been both Yugoslav and British. At the time of writing he has just celebrated his eighteenth birthday and thus attained his majority. He will one day lead his people to victory even as his father had done before him. And he will remember his father's last words: "Cuvajte mi Jugoslaviju!" Protect for me Yugoslavia! When that day comes, as assuredly it will, the body of Yugoslavia will be resurrected. For its soul has never been killed. And then the results of the foul plot for the destruction of Yugoslavia, which I have recorded in these pages, will be undone, and the criminals who made the plot will be brought to justice. Through the mouth of our Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, we have given this pledge, and it is a pledge which we shall redeem. And by so doing we shall make reparation for the neglect and blindness on our part in the past which prevented us from seeing in time the dangers which confronted the Yugoslavs, and thereby confronted us.

Allies in the last great war. Allies again in this even greater war. We shall march together to victory.

POSTSCRIPT BYZANTIUM IN LONDON

I HAVE entitled this section "Byzantium in London" because it tells the story of the political intrigues and propaganda conducted in this country by agents and propagandists of the revisionist Powers during the period between the middle nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties. What in Central and South-Eastern Europe would be described as "cafe politics" became "drawing-room politics" here. This was not only the

age of the saxophone and the cocktail. It was also the age of "international affairs." The more frivolous sought escape in the night clubs. The more "serious" by meddling in the affairs of other countries.

The Balkan peoples, in particular, were "so interesting, my dear." Flash back: the scene is a Kensington drawing-room. The Catholic Society for International Relations is holding a meeting on behalf of the "suppressed Croats" at the house of Lady Winifred Elwes. I introduce my wife. "And what are you?" asks our hostess. "Yugoslav," replies my wife. "Oh, how interesting," retorts Lady Winifred, and adds: "And your husband, is he Yugoslav, too?" "No, he is English," my wife informs her. "Oh" (a long-drawn-out and disappointed "Oh") comes from Lady Winifred, who promptly turns her back on me, because, after all, the English, like the poor, are always with us.

As Lord Vansittart wrote in an article not so long ago, people here during that period could not see things simply. They got lost in sentimentalities and details and side issues. He was referring to the confused and sentimental outlook at that time which so many people had about Germany—the people who could see Germany's Western face but not her Eastern one; the people who believed that there were "two Germanys," and that the good Germany would emerge if only we removed that wicked Treaty of Versailles. Much the same sort of thing obtained in regard to the other ex-enemy countries. The ex-enemies were all "so interesting, my dear." Even Yugoslavs, according to Lady Winifred Elwes. But generally the Yugoslavs, and more especially the Serbs, were interesting in a villainous sort of way, because they had not the ex-enemy passport to our sympathy. But Hungarians and Bulgarians, and Italians, too (as soon as Italy assumed the championship of Danubian revisionism), were interesting in the nicer sense.

All this was the background of a politico-social activity in London at this time which offered wonderful opportunities of exploitation to the ex-enemy and revisionist propaganda. It was a Balkanized London. It was Byzantium in London. It was a scene in which the silly activities of silly people provided the cover for the highly intelligent activities of the ex-enemy agents. Here was a whole galaxy of Britishers eager and willing to play the ex-enemy game: some for reasons of social snobbery, some because it was an amusing game, some because they had a muddled and misguided idealism. But there were also those who did it for profit—social, careerist or monetary.

Is it to be wondered at that political agitators from the Danube were attracted to London like bees to the honey-pot?

Elsewhere in this book I have described how three Croatian extremists came to London in an endeavour to enlist the sympathies of the then British Government in the cause of Croatian separatism. But it should not be imagined that this was an isolated instance. For during the post-last war period a number of Balkan agitators used to visit London. Some of them were respectable opposition politicians. Others were political bandits. Both could always be assured of a warm welcome in certain London circles—the bogus variety no less than the genuine article; indeed, sometimes it was a case of the more bogus the better. For frequently these were the more picturesque, and they consequently appealed more strongly to the aspiring political hostesses of Kensington. These ladies, unlike their more fortunate sisters of Mayfair and Belgravia, were not able to presume to entertain Ambassadors and Ministers, and perforce had to be contented with Second Secretaries of Legations, which was better than nothing, but not very exciting after all, and to them a bogus politician from the Balkans seemed quite a catch.

These ladies were generally interested in the causes of the smaller ex-enemy States or in "suppressed" minorities in the victorious States. The victorious States, not having any "causes," because all they wanted to do was to preserve the status quo, were not, of course, so interesting as the ex-enemy States, and so their nationals found their way less frequently to the drawing-rooms of Queen's Gate and Cadogan Square. Furthermore, it was often a case of the smallness of the State, or its representative, in relation to the self-importance of the hostess. Upper middle-class English ladies in Kensington Gore were apt to be socially dwarfed in the presence of the French Ambassador, but they could cut quite impressive social capers when entertaining somebody of corresponding rank to, say, the Albanian Under-Minister for Finance, or, better still, the leader of the suppressed Hungarian or Bulgarian minority somewhere or other.

All this is not meant to provide a chapter of light relief to a book dealing with tragic events. I am writing only the truth, the most solemn truth, and if perhaps it may sometimes have its comic aspect, I can only say that tragedy often affects the mask of comedy.

For it is a fact that during the period in question London became a place of Balkan and other European partisanship. In certain circles one was either a phil or a phobe. Preferably an

ex-enemy phil and an ex-ally phobe. Especially, as frequently was the case, if one had "travelled" in Eastern Europe and been given a reception by the ex-enemy Governments which accorded better with one's vanity than the reception one had received at the hands of the ex-Allied ones.

There was the particularly outstanding case of the bogus Balkanite and the credulous society lady. I refer to "Prince" Milo, of Montenegro, a member of the clan of Negush in Montenegro, who assumed the role of the rightful "pretender" to the Montenegrin throne, of which, he said, he had been robbed by the absorption of Montenegro in Yugoslavia. He managed to play this role in London for several years. His patroness believed in him, and she helped to launch him socially. He was tall and handsome, and invariably wore national costume. Moreover, he had an "Adjutant" who walked behind him carrying the "crown" on a red cushion. The "prince," being of the "blood royal," would enter and leave his carriage in front of the ladies! It was all very well done. Indeed, so well done was it that he managed to get himself invited to quite serious Society functions, and to have his name mentioned, complete with "title," in the list of guests published in the more serious newspapers. It was only after some years of weary protests on the part of the Yugoslav Legation in London that the Foreign Office stepped in and tardily requested the newspapers not to refer to the gentleman in the future as the Prince of Montenegro.

"Prince" Milo was a source of irritation to the Yugoslavs, but he was not able to do any serious harm. Much more sinister was the organized revisionist propaganda conducted in London in those days by the Germans, Italians, Hungarians and Bulgarians. The propagandists of these countries made quite a lot of use of the drawing-rooms of the ladies of Kensington Gore, and also of the ladies of Mayfair and Belgravia. But they did not stop at this. They gained adherents in Parliamentary and Press circles. They published articles, gave lectures, and wrote letters to the Press.

The great majority of the British people knew little and cared less about international politics, but the few who were interested were more so than was healthy. Thus it happened that there were British people here who became more Bulgarian than the Bulgarians, or more Magyar than the Magyars. This being "more royalist than the king" was no new phenomenon. But it was particularly in evidence during this period. In this connection I remember once attending a lecture on the Serbo-Bulgarian

question at no less distinguished an institution than the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The battle between the British phils and phobs became very intense. So much so that when I made a mild joke about the Macaedo-Bulgarian komitadjis, a pro-Bulgarian English lady denounced me in no uncertain terms, and, saying that she could not remain in the same room with a person such as I, promptly removed herself. I remember that this called from me the remark: "There are no comitadjis left in the Balkans; they are all gathered together in this room."

Much of this, as may be gathered from the foregoing, was fantastic, absurd and even amusing. But it had its sinister side. For, as I have said, even the fools contributed to the dangers of it all, because, being so foolish, they provided the silly facade behind which people who were by no means foolish were able to promote their propagandist designs. Serious people, seeing only the fools, overlooked the rogues.

The revisionist propagandists were able technicians, and they were well supported financially by their Governments. They made several kinds of approaches here. They appealed to reactionary sentiment on the one hand and liberal feeling on the other. Their principal bait for the British reactionaries was fear of the Bolshevist Bogey. They would explain that their particular country (which invariably had a nice conservative regime) was the sole barrier against Bolshevism in Eastern Europe. It was truly amazing, that anti-Bolshevist barrier stunt. I had come up against the "barrier" in every country I had visited from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In each one, apparently, was the "barrier." As I went eastwards the Barrier against Bolshevism receded steadily before me, always in an eastwardly direction. As one wag (it was Gedye, at that time Vienna correspondent of the Daily Telegraph) put it to me at the time: "I suppose that if one were to reach Moscow, one would find that jolly old Barrier Against Bolshevism still in the process of shifting further towards the East, until it were finally discovered somewhere on the extremity of Mongolia."

With the Liberal elements here, however, they had a different line of country. This was the alleged sufferings of the supposedly ill-treated "national minorities." This minorities stuff was invariably a winner. It appealed to two instincts in the English character, one quite worthy, the other not so worthy. The first; was our quite genuine, if unduly sentimental, desire to help the underdog, without first enquiring if he were a nice dog. The other was the capacity of some of us to salve our consciences

for neglecting the unpicturesque poor of the East End of London by taking an interest in the picturesque poor of the East End of Europe. As Omar's immortal line has it: "Oh, the brave music of a distant drum!"

All this kind of thing, of course, appealed especially to those amongst us who had convinced themselves, or had permitted the enemies to convince them, that all the ills of post-last war Europe were due to the Versailles Peace Treaty.

The Germans had conducted a long and intensive propaganda for years before Hitler appeared on the scenes—to the effect that Versailles was the root of all evil. This caused the Hungarians to do the same with Trianon, and the Bulgarians with Neuilly. There was also St. Germain, but the Austrians did not plug this unduly, as they were mainly concerned in securing the economic continuity of their country, and were less concerned about territorial questions at that time.

The Versailles complex, together with the minorities complex, created therefore a championship of Treaty revision in various circles of society here. There was also—in the case of British pro-Hungarianism—a certain element of "Gentlemen versus Players." The Magyars had big estates and rode horses. They were "just like us." Or rather that was what the Magyars told their British friends. And they believed it. It was true, of course, that the Magyars, no less than the British, had a landed gentry. But it was not true that they were just like us. As for our sentimental Liberals, it seemed to be good enough for them that the Germans, Hungarians and Bulgarians had lost the war. So that when a Serbian Army officer once asked me how his country could regain our affections, I said to him, "Oh, by losing the next war, I suppose," to which he replied: "But that is too high a price to pay." That officer is dead now. If he had lived to see the events of to-day, he would have received proof that there was some truth in my somewhat bitter jest.

The Germans started this revisionist propaganda, and the Italians followed on. Italy was not a vanquished or ex-enemy Power. On the contrary she was one of the victorious Allies in the last war. But being disgruntled at not having got so much out of the Peace Treaties as she had hoped, she styled herself a revisionist Power and ranged herself on the side of the "Have-nots" against the "Haves." Within the broad framework of this German and Italian propaganda came the Hungarian and Bulgarian propagandas, with Italy actively supporting the Hungarians and the Bulgarians.

As the result of all this propaganda various societies and groups were formed. There was the Anglo-German Club, which, after Hitler, became the Anglo-German Fellowship. There was also a Hungarian Group in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords. The Bulgarians did not have to form any new group, because they had an organization ready to hand in the Balkan Committee. The Italians had various groups of people working for their cause.

The Balkan Committee was an especially interesting case, because while it called itself "Balkan" it was in reality just "Bulgarian." It had been formed years ago, as the result of the Gladstonian championship of Bulgaria during the days when that country was most prominently in the news of Balkan Christian revolts against the Turks. It was more or less "Balkan" when it began. But in the course of time it came to look upon the Balkans purely in terms of Bulgaria. Its most prominent members were pro-Bulgarians. I never knew of any pro-Serb occupying any leading position on it.

There were also a number of other organizations, notably the Near and Middle East Association. This society had been formed for the benefit of people here who took an interest in the peoples and politics of the Near and Middle East. It did not start with any particular Balkan phil or phobe sentiment, except that it was especially interested in the Moslem world. But in the course of time this society no less than the more august Balkan Committee, developed a pro-Bulgarian and anti-Serbian attitude. It gradually extended its range from the Near and Middle East to include Italy and Central Europe. Therefore it became, amongst other things, pro-Hungarian and pro-Italian, and generally anti-Little Entente.

All this showed that the revisionist agents and propagandists had done their work well. But they were no less active in press circles than they had been in parliamentary and organizational circles. A number of papers and periodicals began in time to show sympathies for the ex-enemy States, and to criticize the Little Entente countries, especially Yugoslavia. And as regards Yugoslavia, it was the Serbs in particular who came in for these strictures. The Croats being in opposition, found more favour here. Astute revisionist propagandists, especially the Italians and Hungarians, were not slow to see the point of all this. The Hungarians, in particular, started to show a quite touching brotherly concern for the Croats (a concern which they had never shown in the days when Croatia had been under Hungarian rule).

It later became the business of the revisionist press services to "invite" British journalists, and also British amateur "experts," to visit, at the expense of the Governments concerned, this or that revisionist country. These British visitors invariably fell for the kind of politico-social propaganda to which they were subjected on these trips. Even when the countries concerned had reactionary regimes, and their visitors happened to be British Labour men. I knew of more than one case in which British Socialists were so flattered at being entertained by real counts and barons that they would return home full of the sorrows of their hosts and filled with the holy fire of desire to right these wrongs at the expense of neighbouring countries which, although more democratic, had made the mistake of not having been beaten in the last war.

In addition to this kind of activity there was a very carefully organized news machine, centred—for the purpose of geographical convenience—mainly in Vienna. A number of little news agencies, subsidized by revisionist Governments, sprang up at that time in the Austrian capital. These provided local "tips" to some of the correspondents of British and American newspapers who covered the Balkans from Vienna. Their methods were engaging. If there had been, say, a riot in Zagreb, in Yugoslavia, in which a dozen demonstrators had been killed and a score wounded, these "news" channels would report that a score had been killed and a hundred wounded.

When I was in charge of the Foreign Department of a certain great London daily (now no more) I once visited our Vienna correspondent. He told me that he made use of these local agencies. He admitted that they would exaggerate the figures of dead and wounded in such a case as I have given above. They would do so because they were in all probability receiving money for their services from the Hungarian Press Bureau; and their information came to Vienna from Yugoslavia via Budapest, anyway. My correspondent also said that they invariably got the news over well ahead of the official Yugoslav news sources, and that while they would overstate, the official Yugoslav sources would understate. I asked him what he did in such cases. "Oh," he replied, "I just halved the figure. Like that it is probably not too far off the mark."

The method used by my colleague was far from perfect, but it probably did not work too badly. Unfortunately in some cases less conscientious correspondents did not even bother to do this, and just took the stuff as it stood and sent it off to their

papers in London or New York. Or else they took their information from the more biased Viennese papers, which in turn were not above "touching" interested governments for their services.

Here then was a combination of things: the press, Parliament, organizations and societies, and London society hostesses. All were brought into play. All were used.

So intense and widespread did this sort of thing become at one time, that it was almost prejudicial to be considered a pro-Little Entente journalist. The "right thing to do" was to be pro-revisionist and pro-ex-enemy. One almost had to excuse oneself for standing up for the one-time Allied cause, the cause for which one's own country had fought in the last war, the cause for which one had oneself worn khaki and shouldered a rifle in Flanders or Macedonia. I can recall how, in my own case, when I used to attend meetings of some of these societies, and tried to defend our ex-allies from the attacks of the ex-enemy propagandists, I was regarded askance by my own compatriots. To make it worse, I had a Yugoslav wife. Apparently it was all right if one had married a Hungarian or a Bulgarian. But a Yugoslav! And, to make it worse still in my case, a Serbian Yugoslav, someone actually born in Belgrade. I remember at one of these receptions being approached by Mrs. C. A. Mac-Cartney, the Bulgarian wife of an Englishman prominent in circles interested in Danubian politics (including minorities). Said the lady to me: "Everybody knows why you are pro-Serbian; you married a Serbian." To which I replied: "Well, and your husband married you, didn't he?"

Then there was the City. The "City" which was always wrong about European politics. The bankers who preferred to lend money to financially unstable and politically doubtful ex-enemy States in Central Europe, rather than to moderately sized British firms. Why? Because in the latter case the interest was only a miserable five per cent. Whereas in the former there was as much as eight and a half to be obtained. In the long run our financiers were dished, because the Central European States in question defaulted. This was called "frozen credits," although evaporated credits would have been a more accurate description. However, the City backed the ex-enemy horses, and did it under the altruistic guise of "reconstructing" Europe. I remember a certain British member of Parliament, of the Right, Sir Thomas Moore, stating at a meeting on Hungary held by the Near and Middle East Association, that it was nice to think how we British had shown our sympathy for Hungary's cause by granting her

loans. To which I replied: "At eight and a half per cent!" A remark which the speaker did not seem to appreciate, and which the Chairman frowned upon. Mr. Montague Norman was the arch-apostle of this kind of policy. He was above all keen on the "reconstruction" of Germany. In a word: the Bank of England and the City started in the financial world the appeasement policy which later to be followed in the political world by Downing Street. The City, as I have said, was always wrong in these things. The City trusted Dr. Schacht, the President of the Reichsbank. Mr. Norman and Dr. Schacht used to be friends and to pay each other visits. Dr. Schacht afterwards became Hitler's financial wizard. He was as responsible as anyone for the way Germany defrauded us financially. The Foreign Office, to its credit, did frequently warn the City that in Dr. Schacht they had a tartar! But the City knew better. Said the City: "He is one of us." Perhaps he was!

So that added to the reactionary anti-Bolshevist complex and the liberal pro-minority and "poor-ex-enemy" complex, there was the City's eight and a half per cent complex! Again, one can only say that the revisionist agents and propagandists had done their work well. "Reconstruction of Germany!" "Justice for Hungary!" "Fair play for Bulgaria!" How they must have laughed when they saw how well these slogans went down here, I too can laugh—with a rather wry laugh, I am afraid—when I look back upon all this bolstering up of Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, and all this criticism of the Little Entente States in general and Yugoslavia in particular. For observe the line-up to-day! Observe who is with us and who is against us now!

I remember attending a meeting in London at which "justice for Hungary"—at the expense of Czechoslovakia, Roumania and Yugoslavia—was being urged by Britishers, in the presence of the Hungarian Minister. A good deal of sentimental twaddle was talked. In the debate which followed the main speeches, I said that treaty revision would not come out of pious resolutions passed in London drawing-rooms, but from wars of revenge. They would succeed or not, I continued, insofar as the revisionist sword was sharp or blunt. Dr. Karl Silex, then a London correspondent for German papers, and subsequently to become one of the most prominent Nazi editors, then came up to me with great enthusiasm. He had always been polite to me, but never before had he shown this effusive friendship. "That's right, that's right," he said to me fervently, "war, war's the way." And then—doubtless having mistaken the exact slant of

my remark—he added: "You are perfectly right. All these others are fools. Are you going my way? Can I give you a lift?" A touching example of Teutonic downrightness mixed with Teutonic thickness of perception.

I am minded of yet other examples of this kind of thing. At a meeting of the Catholic Council for International Relations, the Hungarian Legation introduced Croat propaganda on the quite false pretence that it was a matter of Catholicism versus Orthodoxy. And once, at a meeting of the Near and Middle East Association, there stood on the same platform, Luigi Villari, Mussolini's special propagandist in London, Hordossy, the head of the Hungarian Frontier Revision League, Sir Edward Boyle of the Balkan Committee, whose mother was one of the heads of the Near and Middle East Association, and Mr. Ben Riley and Mr. Rhys Davies, the Labour M.P.s. The purpose of the meeting, as far as the Italian and Hungarian agents was concerned was revisionist propaganda at the expense of Yugoslavia. And I remember publicly expressing my disgust that two British Labour men should stand on the same platform and share the same propaganda with the agents of reactionary foreign regimes.

These two labourites for years kept up their support for the Hungarians as against the Yugoslavs. They also mixed themselves in internal Yugoslav affairs. They fell for Bulgarian propagandists in South Serbia (Yugoslav Macedonia), and attacked the Yugoslav administration there with all the enthusiasm of Bulgarians. They also went a hundred per cent pro-Croat and anti-Serb. It never seemed to occur to them that there was something to be said on both sides, and that the best thing to do was not to try and widen the gulf between Serbs and Croats but rather to try and lessen it. At the Royal Institute of International Affairs on one occasion, Mr. Rhys Davies, M.P., condemned the Serbs, and espoused the Croatian cause with much more violence than the Croat Peasant Party leaders themselves would have done.

Perhaps you will say, dear reader, that all this sounds like so many storms in a tea-cup. Not a bit of it. For you must realize that this kind of thing was persistent. Hitler tells us in *Mein Kampf* that effective propaganda consists in repeating the same thing over and over again. He also tells us that the bigger the lie the better. Well, this is what happened in the instance I have recorded above. The lie against Yugoslavia was repeated in season and out and until many people here began to believe it. Sometimes I used to appeal to Whitehall to intervene.

But unfortunately there was nothing against the law in these things, and the Foreign Office could do nothing about it. The Foreign Office used to say that after all these various societies and organizations did not cut any ice here. This was true in a sense. But the fact remains that they cut ice—even if fictionally so—in the countries which made use of them. In Budapest and Sofia it was thought that these organizations here were important. And if you think a thing is important, in a sense it becomes so. Subjective reality becomes objective reality.

When Count Bethlen spoke at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, a report of the proceedings reached Hungary and appeared in the Hungarian press, in spite of the Institute's very strict rule that its meetings were confidential until published later on in the Institute's own journal. This leakage was due to the fact that certain Hungarian "guests" had broken the rule and reported the whole thing straight away. As a result the Institute had to tighten up its regulations about foreign guests. Now the Royal Institute is an important body. This was known in Hungary. Imagine, then, the propaganda value inside Hungary of this particular leakage. It was unfair to the Institute and unfair to this country. But that did not worry the Hungarians who made as much capital out of it as possible. The whole thing was made to appear, quite inaccurately, as something expressing British support for the Hungarian revisionist cause, and the fact that it had taken place at the Royal Institute was represented as a sign of some kind of semi-official blessing. This, of course, was extremely encouraging to the Magyar revisionists and must have given them a fresh impetus for further endeavours along the same road.

Besides, even if these organizations were not important in themselves, and some were not, nevertheless they were a channel for propaganda. And propaganda, even amongst a limited circle of people, can do much harm. The fact remains that the process of "giving a dog a bad name and hanging him" was very effectively applied to Yugoslavia during these years. All this had its very considered use for the revisionist Powers, because by blackening the name of Yugoslavia here they were enabled to further their plots against her without arousing general suspicion in this country. Admittedly the Foreign Office, and not groups of ordinary citizens, conducted our foreign policy, and the Foreign Office did not take kindly to these amateurs. But it is idle to say that public opinion of any kind does not have some influence on foreign policy.

I cannot remember any occasion when the Balkan Committee indulged in any activity which was even remotely sympathetic to Yugoslavia. As regards the Near and Middle East Association I can remember only four meetings over the number of years I was associated with it (and out of all the meetings devoted to the interests of other countries) which were sympathetic to Yugoslavia. One of these I conducted myself. But I can recall a long list of meetings devoted to the interests of the ex-enemy States and against the interests of Yugoslavia. A frequent and popular speaker at these meetings was Luigi Villari. Villari was a charming fellow. He spoke English fluently, for he had been Italian liaison officer with the British armies in the Balkans in the last war. He was a member of some of our most exclusive clubs. I liked him personally. But this has nothing to do with the main issue. He was Mussolini's megaphone here. I often battled with him in the press and on the platform. Villari's line, in his articles and letters, and his lectures at the Near and Middle East Association, was generally directed against Yugoslavia in one way or another. My attacks on him were not welcome at the Association. I remember that on one occasion, the Secretary, Mr. Boffin, approached me before the meeting began and said: "I hope you will not launch any violent attack, because we have the Italian Ambassador here to-night."

Perhaps it would not have mattered so much what the Balkan Committee and the Near and Middle East Association did or did not do. Not on their own account. But the more serious aspect of the matter was this: that the same "experts" one encountered in the circles associated with these two institutions were also represented in the really respectable and influential Royal Society of International Affairs at Chatham House. There was a sort of camarilla. A speaker at meetings at one of these bodies would be the Chairman of meetings at another of them. And so they were always able to make their presence felt and to spread their ideas. I am not referring to Dr. Seton-Watson, a real expert on the subject, whose past services to the South Slav cause have passed into history, and whose lectures at the Royal Institute were always of great value. There were some things upon which I could not see eye to eye with Dr. Seton-Watson, or with his one-time collaborator, Mr. Wickham Steed. But they were on my side—or rather I was on theirs—of the international fence. They were not pro-ex-enemy or pro-revisionist. On the contrary, they opposed revisionism. No, I am not alluding in this context

to Dr. Seton-Watson, but rather to Lord Buxton, Sir Edward Boyle, Mr. C. A. MacCartney, and also a number of lesser lights, like Miss Edith Durham, Mr. Ben Riley, and Mr. Rhys Davies and the like.

With Sir Edward Boyle I could always get along. I liked him. He was always genial in argument. And Lord Buxton was courtesy itself. Miss Durham, however, would not infrequently be vindictive in controversy. I disagreed with Sir Edward Boyle and Lord Buxton on most Balkan questions. But that is as far as it went. The case of Miss Durham was a different and rather special one. She was invariably violent in her methods of attack. A person of considerable gifts and a remarkable personality, she had devoted the greater part of her life to a campaign against the Serbs which she waged with incredible bitterness and an almost mystical fervour. She would be pro-anything so long as it was anti-Serb. She produced a book seeking to prove that the murder of the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914, had been plotted by the Serbian Government of the day. She gave lectures and wrote articles and sent letters to the press in which the motif was always the same: that the Serbs were the eternal villains of the piece. I fought her for years in the press and on the platform. Once we made an armistice. I promised to keep quiet so long as she did. But she fired the first shot in a renewed battle, and so we went it hammer and tongs for many years after. Needless to say Miss Durham was a favourite in Balkan Committee and Near and Middle East circles.

Miss Durham's book was extensively reviewed. Many newspapers—especially those of the Left—seized upon it to support their own thesis that not Germany but the Allied and Associated Powers were mainly to blame for the war of 1914-18. It received more attention in this country than the book on Sarajevo—but from the opposite angle—which Dr. Seton-Watson had written. The latter was the authoritative work. But not being in favour of the ex-enemy thesis it did not receive as much acclaim as Miss Durham's book.

At a lecture I once gave on King Alexander, not long after his death, Miss Durham made a speech in which she dragged in the Sarajevo murder and also the Alexander and Draga murders, and suggested that King Alexander had been responsible for killings in Yugoslavia, and therefore that he had only himself to thank for his own fatal end. I protested. And my chairman felt it his duty to order Miss Durham to desist.

Perhaps the most striking example of all occurred on the

occasion of the lecture on the Marseilles murder which was given by Dr. Seton-Watson at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on October 30th, 1934. The ex-enemy fans immediately adopted an attitude which was exactly in line with that to be adopted officially at Geneva—the line that it would not do to enquire too deeply into the origins of the Marseilles crime. I am not giving away any secrets by quoting what these people said, for it was all published in the Journal of the Institute, which was subsequently available to the public.

On this occasion Miss Durham said that she hoped that the assassin of King Alexander would not be blamed too much. This remark was actually made in the highly respectable atmosphere of Chatham House—not the sort of atmosphere in which one would expect to hear a plea of this kind made. And consider the type of person Miss Durham was so anxious to defend! Georgiev (alias Kelemen), henchman of Mihailov, the I.M.R.O. leader! Georgiev, who had murdered the Bulgarian politician, Dimov, in the streets of Sofia in 1926, escaped, and then committed another murder in 1931, was arrested, imprisoned, and then amnestied, and after that went to Hungary, there to become the link between the Ustacha and the I.M.R.O. and to train the Ustacha in terrorist actions.

Miss Durham further stated that she hoped that Dr. Seton-Watson's suggestion that full investigation of the circumstances and origins of the Marseilles murder should be made, would not be taken up, lest such an investigation should lead to international quarrels as to the countries which had protected the assassins!

Pleas that investigation should not be made were also made on this occasion by Mr. C. A. MacCartney and Sir William Goode. The latter, who for many years was the unofficial adviser to the Hungarian Government, said it was unfortunate that the blame was placed on two countries (Dr. Seton-Watson had very rightly named both Italy and Hungary), and expressed himself as astonished that Dr. Seton-Watson should have attributed the Marseilles crime to revisionism. He then went on to say that the assassin camp at Yanka Puszta was not an assassin camp at all. It was just a farmhouse inhabited by a few Croats who afterwards had to leave because they had not paid their rent. He quoted Hungarian authority for this remarkable statement.

Sometimes the various institutions in question would have as speakers really big fish from the ex-enemy countries. I cannot recall a Yugoslav of equal eminence ever being invited to speak. Once, when Count Bethlen was speaking at the Near

and Middle East Association, the chairman, with remarkable "objectivity," would not permit those of us who were in opposition to say anything except in the form of questions. Supporters of the Hungarian cause, however, were allowed to make set speeches.

The people I have dealt with above were mainly in the amateur "expert" class. But there were others who made a profession of it. There was one gentleman in particular who did very well financially out of this kind of thing. He was the type of man who would espouse any cause, provided it produced profits for himself. He had no political convictions in the matter. Only business considerations. Unfortunately the law of libel in this country is such that although my allegations are true, I am unable to mention his name. This man once offered his propagandist services to the Czechs for a modest fee. His offer was declined. He later offered his services to the Hungarians for a much larger fee, and he took on part of the pro-Hungarian revisionist propaganda in this country. At one of his lectures he actually wept over a map of "dismembered" Hungary. A colleague who knew him well remarked to me at the time: "X sheds tears at a guinea a tear! "

Naturally enough, those of us who believed that we had fought in a just cause and refused to play the ex-enemy game did not take these things lying down. We made our counterattacks. But during the period in question we were in the minority. We had to swim against the tide. And we did not make ourselves popular by so doing. For we were not "in the fashion." And not to be in the fashion has its disadvantages. It is interesting to recall that while certain papers of the Right supported the revisionist line for their own reasons, and certain papers of the Left did likewise for their own reasons, one paper in particular stood out against it with boldness and consistency, and that was the old Morning Post. Throughout this period, and later, after Hitler had come to power, the Morning Post adopted a more liberal attitude, in the best sense of the word, than the Liberal Press had done. It stoutly upheld the Allied cause and as stoutly condemned the revisionist cause. It was a great loss when it ceased publication.

But there was one exception as far as the Liberal Press was concerned, and that was the Westminster Gazette, of which paper I was then the Diplomatic Correspondent. In its columns I fired the first shot in the campaign against the revisionist movement here.

Sometimes the anti-revisionist forces here were able to fight the revisionist forces to a standstill. We had our victories, too. But whereas ours was necessarily an uphill fight, the friends of our enemies had it easy going: both because they were numerically stronger and had been able to infiltrate themselves into so many different organizations. In the course of time we were able to achieve some success in wearing them down, but it was a difficult and often thankless task. For, incredible as it may seem now, it is a fact that in those days it needed more courage to defend a cause which was one's own country's cause than it did to defend the cause of the ex-enemies. To such a fantastic pass had matters come at that time.

It must be realized, moreover, that this state of affairs was not accidental, but the outcome of a very carefully planned series of campaigns on the part of the ex-enemy and revisionist States, the main object of which was to alienate British sympathy from the Little Entente countries so that they could be attacked with impunity, without opposition from Britain, when the day should come.

It must be reported that Whitehall had no sympathy for these activities. It frowned upon them. Particularly did the Foreign Office harbour feelings of professional irritation with the antics of these amateurs. But it never got beyond irritation. Officialdom was powerless to do anything about it formally. But it could have brought private persuasion to bear. Instead, it just raised its eyebrows in deprecation and left it at that. Indeed, the favourite Whitehall attitude in all these things seemed to be that the best way to abolish any trouble was by pretending it did not exist. The great thing from the Foreign Office point of view was to let sleeping dogs lie. "Silence is golden" was the motto. Sometimes, admittedly, when the attention of the Foreign Office was drawn to some more than usually outrageous publication in the press, it would remonstrate with editors. But as the harm had already been done, it never seemed to make any difference.

Sometimes the Foreign Office would carry its policy of keeping things quiet to extreme limits, even against the wishes of some of its own diplomatic representatives. I recall one particular case. Sir William Howard Kennard, one of the best Ministers we ever sent to Belgrade, a man who really knew and understood Yugoslavia (and, having been Counsellor at Rome before he became Minister at Belgrade, really knew what Mussolini was up to into the bargain), confirmed to me a story my

paper had received concerning one of Mussolini's anti-Yugoslav intrigues. My Editor at the time decided to submit the story to the Foreign Office. I took it down to the News Department, which submitted it to the Central Department (which dealt with Yugoslav affairs). The Central Department asked the News Department to ask me not to publish the story. In a word: It might offend Mussolini. So let's all keep quiet about it. Never mind about the Yugoslavs. The Italians were stronger and bigger, and so they must not be angered. That was the basic idea. It was not stated. But that was what it was. Sir William Kennard asked me to publish. The Foreign Office asked me not to publish. My Editor, being a man of courage, decided to publish. And he was right. But the Foreign Office did not like it.

I could give countless instances of the strange things which went on in London in those days, but there is not room for all of them. I think that I have given a sufficient number of examples to show what was the general tenor at the time.

Now, of course, it is all very different. Many of the gentlemen who, in those days, were such ardent champions of the enemy's cause in its various manifestations, are now the most orthodox of patriots; and they now say and write all the right things as though butter would not melt in their mouths. But some of us have not forgotten the days when they used to express quite other views. We have watched their eleventh-hour conversion not without some ironic amusement. And we shall watch their attitude after the British and Allied victory in this war—at the moment when it comes to peace making and the reconstruction of Europe—with great care and attention. And we shall remind the world that these people had their share in the shaping of events in such a way that in this war the revisionist forces now ranged against us have been able to put up the greatest challenge of all time. Their share may not have been a very important one. But it counted for something. Every little helps. At least that is what our ex-enemies and enemies-to-be-again thought. And they knew what they were about. Hence it has been necessary to include in this book this postscript on "Byzantium in London."

THE END