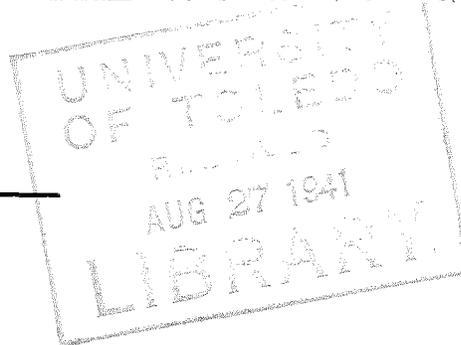


# MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION

ON

27

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE WORLD CRISIS



### NOTE

The next few months will, in all probability, bring with them momentous happenings in the international scene. The threatened German offensive against Britain may be launched at any time, while the results of German diplomatic endeavour in the Balkans may become startlingly evident in the near future. In any case, we take this opportunity of reminding our American subscribers that the coming issues of the Memorandum are likely to be of unusual interest.

We shall be glad indeed to send details regarding the Memorandum, and the aims of the Imperial Policy Group, together with a specimen copy, to subscribers' friends or business acquaintances, who are looking for authoritative, real information on international affairs.

*February, 1941.*

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## A CONTEMPORARY CHRONICLE

It is sometimes difficult to balance perfectly in a contemporary account of world affairs, all the favourable and adverse factors influencing the policies of the various belligerents and neutrals. The passions of war must influence even the most detached of us. Moreover, during the troubled history of this Island we have so often surmounted crises from which there seemed no escape, that most of us adopt an easy optimism, however dark the situation may be. Many of us are too inclined to dismiss all save the favourable factors as the natural vicissitudes of war.

None can dispute that both before the outbreak of war and during the first 8 months of the struggle, the nation as a whole disastrously miscalculated the formidable character of Germany's strength, the potency of her diplomatic arrangements, as well as the strength of our own Allies and the intentions of some neutral States. We made a wholly inadequate effort in preparation for the struggle, and after it had broken out, planned our strategy upon a series of gross miscalculations. The blame for this must to a large extent rest upon those who were directly associated with the conduct of our statecraft. Yet the responsibility was by no means wholly theirs. The nation was often far more sanguine than the Government itself, and by the exercise of its democratic prerogatives pressed policies which were ill-conceived, and which bore almost no relation to the facts and opportunities of the situation.

A merciful Providence saw fit to bring us through grievous dangers without a major disaster into a phase which gave us a chance to appreciate the situation afresh and to plan our strategy anew. Much still depends upon our ability to face the facts which now confront us, in order that we may completely overcome the remaining obstacles in our path towards final success.

Of all the literature of the world conflict, our reviews have perhaps been amongst the frankest and the most outspoken. Now that we are on the eve of a new and critical series of events, we mean to stand staunchly by the principle we have tried to uphold, namely, that the British public is at its best when taken into the confidence of its Government, its leaders, and its publicists. We are perhaps the only country in the world—with the exception of America—which makes its best effort when all the facts are stripped of their coverings and placed before the public in their full reality, and which also so often drifts into dangers through sheer lethargy.

But, to present a clear picture is no easy task in a situation as complex as the present one. Without in the least desiring falsely to encourage public opinion or unduly to depress it, the chronicler may well lay too much stress on some favourable event, or too little upon some apparently transitory reverse. The most casual things often turn the course of history, and it is not given to most of us to see very far along the road which lies ahead. However exact and precise our information may be, however shrewd a man's judgment, or however deep his knowledge of Europe, it is given to none to foresee exactly all the events which may intervene and perhaps throw out the most carefully calculated plans based upon the most superior resources. History is full of warnings to those who believe that a mere calculation of forces alone decides the destiny of nations. The past teaches how the most absurd of minor incidents have upset and frustrated the plans of the world's greatest conquerors and shrewdest diplomatists.

It is our hope that these Memoranda will serve two main purposes: first, to assist the country to grasp the magnitude of the problem we have to solve, and thus induce its maximum effort; and secondly, that in due time they will help to throw light upon the struggles and problems of this generation as they appeared in the actual hour of crisis, for the benefit of those who must continue the ceaseless task of leadership which has been allotted to our race. We can and must never lay that leadership aside unless we are prepared cynically to abandon the world to a hopeless chaos.

## THE FAITH OF AN EMPIRE

Amongst simple Englishmen there has long endured a conviction that we have a responsibility transcending that which has fallen to the lot of other peoples. The only difference of opinion amongst the healthy minded has been about the best means by which we should fulfil our task. That we have often as a nation become involved in a labyrinth of by-ways, abandoning the high road which so clearly lay before us, none can doubt; but that in the main we have striven to serve the world with our genius for tolerant leadership, few will dispute. Perhaps the greatest tribute to our national achievements is that there is hardly a small nation anywhere which would not if it could willingly accept the Pax Britannica.

The great authority which we have won has been challenged by a revolutionary order which questions not only our leadership in Europe, but our right to command the oceans and remain the centre of a world-wide commonwealth of nations. The first blow was struck at our allies who

the characteristics of which have little changed with the passage of time. What now remains to be made clear is that we have the ability not only to defend ourselves, but to overcome the Powers which challenge us, and the capacity to clear away the ruins of a broken order and lay deep the foundations upon which can be erected a lasting one in which great and small nations alike can find their place in conditions not only tolerable, but of compelling attraction.

Almost every report which reaches England from the Continent in these last weeks tells of how more and more people believe that we shall succeed in defending our Island and our Empire, but that many still doubt whether we have it within our power to overcome and crush those who have brought about this war. They tell of still more people who want to know how we mean to resettle Europe at the end of the war.

Only a limited number of people are interested in the precise geographical frontiers which we think should be drawn at the end of the conflict. Everyone is profoundly concerned in our plans for the economic reconstruction of a Europe, which is in chaos. It must be admitted that until now we have given too little thought to this, and that we have not yet provided for the peoples of Europe a clear enough picture of our general intentions, nor have we preached a simple, clear philosophy which offers an alternative to those creeds of modern Europe which have captivated the youth of many nations.

A handful of intellectuals upon the Continent have a glimmering of our often ill-expressed but nevertheless deep and very real national creed. But the masses as a whole have little idea of it, in an age in which the peoples of all nations insist upon some faith which transcends economics and politics. Europe will never be won, and will certainly never be held, by the propagation of sound banking principles. The revolutionaries have understood this, and it is the secret of half their power.

The world is groping for some Faith which will lift it from the despondency into which gross materialism has plunged it, and from which false prophets have snatched transitory power. Only one Faith can finally transform chaos into order. It is vital that we as a nation should first renew our practise of it and then declare it in the very uttermost corners of the world. Before this supreme Force none other can prevail. The Roman Empire learned this and bowed before it. Those who brought modern civilisation first to Europe, and later to other continents, proved it. All our best national achievements were inspired by it. Every well-ordered act in our national and individual life is a witness to it. There is no real alternative faith or philosophy which in practise does not, in its final shape, reduce the individual to some form of bondage and eventually turn him into a creature of a soulless bureaucracy, a dark superstition.

The last four weeks have shown with exceptional clarity how complex is the problem facing the Axis. It arises from Germany's two great failures; the first, her failure to defeat Britain last Summer, and secondly, her inability in the Autumn and early Winter to induce Europe to accept unconditionally a scheme of reorganisation intended to give the appearance of a permanent settlement, and at the same time, of check-mating Britain in the military sphere.

The Nazi leaders failed to grasp the fact, that in resorting to the second plan they inevitably admitted the failure of the first, and therefore led Europe to doubt the desirability of entering into irrevocable commitments with the Reich. Nevertheless the Germans very nearly pulled off a gigantic diplomatic success.

In our last three numbers we have examined at length the various plans which Germany devised and, the reasons for her failure to produce decisive results. The enemy has been obliged drastically to reorganise his plans. Nor have events helped. The first Greek victories were followed by others. Early British successes in Africa developed into major victories. The internal difficulties of Italy have distinctly increased, while for a moment French resistance to German demands looked almost belligerent.

In order to tide over this uncomfortable period, enemy propagandists have been suggesting that the Autumn and Winter of 1940 can, in relation to Britain, be likened to the similar period of 1939 in relation to France. But the story has carried little weight on the Continent. Everyone in Europe well knows that, following the collapse of Poland, Germany made no immediate attempt to attack France. Nearly all shrewd observers knew at the time, that Germany's passivity in the West during those 8 months was deliberately calculated and planned. It did not follow an attempted offensive which had signally failed.

In the case of Britain, however, an actual attempt to overcome the Island was in fact made, and failed. The comparative lull of the Autumn and Winter was not chosen by Germany but was forced upon her.

distinctly limited period. But he has done so. He has promised that the war will end before next Christmas. If he fails, it will be taken ill by his people and interpreted as a failure of first importance. It is true, that at the beginning of the war he talked about plans for a long one. But all that has been forgotten in the light of later assurances.

Mr. Churchill, on the other hand, has been at pains to tell us he can promise no precise date for victory. He has not attempted to guarantee an end to the conflict this year. Psychologically, then, on this point Britain is in a far stronger position than the enemy. Hitler, moreover, has not only promised that the war shall end this year, but that with the cessation of hostilities Germany will find herself mistress of Europe, with British influence absolutely excluded from Continental affairs. German diplomatists in various neutral capitals, and in some occupied territories, have been explaining this rather elaborately—committing themselves up to the hilt.

It is notable that, fundamentally, despite periodic fluctuations in policy, Germany is sticking to her original conceptions. She is fighting for the hegemony of Europe, and declares that she will never lay down her sword until she has it. That is the old policy which Hitler has propounded over and over again, and to which Britain is resolutely opposed.

### THE NEW PLAN

Following the collapse of Germany's second plan, and during the first phase of the Italian failure, there was in Berlin a very distinct moment of hesitation as to what the next step should be. During this time nothing really important was attempted or achieved, except in the sphere of Anglo-Russian relations, which for the moment was the only aspect of German policy which showed much promise. We have reason to believe, however, that the enemy has now adopted four cardinal points which are intended to form the basis of his forthcoming effort to end the war on his own terms. It is very important for us to grasp them, because they provide the key to what (barring accidents) Germany will undoubtedly attempt.

### FRANCE

The first point is to make another and a much more pressing attempt to bring about the preliminaries of a settlement with the French. In his desire to achieve this Hitler has undoubtedly shown some shrewdness because, as we have often stated, no general European settlement can have the slightest appearance of reality unless it includes, and has the acquiescence of, the French nation. It is still possible that there will be a breakdown in Franco-German relations, because the Nazi leaders are temperamentally inclined to press too hard and ask too much. If such a breach occurs it will adversely affect German diplomacy throughout Europe, and will bring new advantages to the Allies. Of this Hitler is perfectly aware. Yet events, or his more extreme supporters may lead him into a quarrel with Vichy.

If he presses Marshal Petain too far, there is a very good chance that General Weygand will bring the French Empire over to the Allies on instructions from Vichy, which at this moment would prove a shattering blow to the already harassed Italians.

On the other hand, Marshal Petain does not want to resume hostilities either in metropolitan France or in the Empire. He would like to see an eventual limited British success, and German influence in world affairs gradually lessening, but he would rather see the latter come about over a period of time, and not as the result of an armed conflict in which they (the French) are obliged to take part once again. The Marshal is convinced that if any lasting revival of France is to be brought about it must be gradual, and it must be under his leadership and those of a like mind. Renewed war would, in his opinion, once again let loose the forces which he so profoundly distrusts. His policy, therefore, is to arrange a far-reaching compromise with the Germans, if that is possible, without sacrificing certain specific interests which he believes involve the honour and the comfort of France. Many of his colleagues are of the same opinion, though some are more anti-British than others, and not a few are very distinctly more pro-German than the Marshal. M. Laval is, we know, the extreme example of the latter type, and he would undoubtedly like to go to the length of actually assisting the Germans in the war against us.

These differences have led to a good deal of internal confusion in French politics, with first one faction and then another gaining the upper hand. All this has excessively irritated both the Germans and Petain. During the first two or three weeks of January Hitler's agents became more and more threatening. The nature of their complaints has been illuminating, and has shown very clearly that in France there is a powerful body of opinion which is strongly opposed to any further surrender. The German-controlled Paris radio has been pouring out abuse on those in Vichy who