The defeat of Britain was to be followed by the conquest of Russia: as it was, the Soviet forces came to the very edge of disaster in 1941 and 1942 and it is hardly likely they would have survived the attack of a Germany which had defeated Britain, had no need to defend its rear, and had all the seas wide open to supply its armies. The defeat of Russia was to be followed by a triple attack on the credulous and half-armed United States—from Japan on the West, from all-Nazi Europe on the East, and from Latin-American allies already being prepared in the South. This vast, but not impracticable programme was thwarted by British resistance.

There were already many broken nations sheltering behind the British shield. For many months, before the reading of the evening news, the British Broadcasting Corporation played, after the British National anthem, the songs of all the other states whose governments had a ghostly existence in London. It was a long procession, as pathetic as it was gallant: Holland, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Abyssinia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France: soon joined by Yugoslavia and Greece. Few of them realized how thin the shield was. After Dunkirk (says John Brophy) there were in Britain "about one and a half infantry divisions, a few brigades of field artillery, and only sixty tanks." There was also, it is true, the Home Guard, a volunteer force which in a few weeks numbered over a million men prepared to deal with the parachutists who had wrecked Dutch and Belgian resistance; but they were armed (if at all) only with shot guns, until the late autumn when 800,000 American rifles arrived. The Navy, indeed, was as formidable as ever; but the Royal Air Force was grossly outnumbered by the Luftwaffe.

Hitler fixed the date for the invasion of Britain—it was September 21st, 1940—and the first step, which was to be the destruction of the British Air Force, began on August 8th. Heinkel and Dornier bombers, Junker dive-bombers, and Messerschmidt fighters swept over south-eastern England. They were met by a small number of Spitfires and Hurricanes, aided by some elderly Defiants. So few were the defenders that no continuous patrols could be maintained: the crews must wait for the attackers, nor, when they were discovered, could the full force (such as it was) be sent up; squadrons must be held back to meet the third and fourth waves that the lavish invader could send. The Luftwaffe plan was five-fold: to destroy the coastal convoys that fed Britain, to sink or immobilize the Navy, to drive the R.A.F. from the sky, to paralyse the ports, and to

wreck all the aerodromes from which planes could rise to bomb the invading flotillas. On August 12th, for example, 200 aircraft in waves attacked Dover, 150 Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. The fight went on through August and September into October. Streaks of white smoke across the bright blue Kent skies, the quick rattle of machine-guns, sudden dull explosions, swaying white parachutes with men clinging to them, blazing machines crashing into hillsides were all that men on the ground could see. But in September the issue was decided: the R.A.F. had driven the Luftwaffe from the daytime skies. The Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, whose speeches were in themselves part of the defences of Britain, said of the pilots "never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

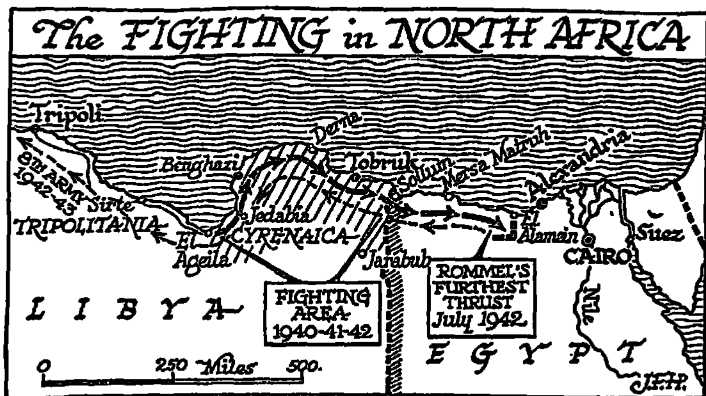
In October, the Luftwaffe turned to a fresh technique. (The invasion had been adjourned; the flat-bottomed barges, like Napoleon's, had been dispersed.) It had been foreshadowed; abandoning the attempt to wreck airfields and destroy the R.A.F. the Germans had on September 7th raided the London docks, and the blaze could be seen twenty miles away. Throughout the winter, raids at night, when the R.A.F. could not find them, were carried out by the German pilots. The centre of Coventry was destroyed on November 15th (the Germans delightedly invented a verb, "to coventrate"). Ninety-six separate raids were made on London; one, on December 29th, burning out the whole centre of the City. Fifty thousand high explosive bombs and uncounted incendiaries fell on the city. At first, some strategic plan seemed to direct the attacks; railways, stations, gasworks, waterworks, sewage plants, docks and power-stations were aimed at; later the impulse seemed to be random anger. "Magnetic" mines, which rose from the sea-bed to sink steel ships that passed, made harbours useless until at the end of November a mine was found intact, pulled apart and examined; as a result a process called "degaussing" was devised which defeated this device.

Winston Churchill

Misfortune makes new bed-fellows. The Germans had expected that their attack would produce the same results as elsewhere—indeed, they broadcast on the assumption that this had been so, and that streams of terrified refugees were packing the roads north from London; "Lord Haw-Haw" (William Joyce) kindly advised them that North Wales was their only safe refuge. But in fact the children had been removed in an orderly manner and billeted, with some grumbling but on the whole efficiently, on country householders; no crowds of refugees followed them. In London and the provincial cities all classes sheltered in the same air-raid shelters; moreover, Acts had been passed which enforced an equality which two years before would have been denounced as unforgivably socialistic. All property, including the land, was placed under government control, by Acts passed immediately after the Churchill government took over. Banks were taken under control; foreign investments taken over; employers' books were opened to inspection; orders could be issued to enforce production of anything that was required. War profits were to be taxed; war damages were to be universally shared. Labour agreed to be directed, and this conscription was shortly extended to women too. There had been no such complete enrolment of all citizens since the days of Sparta, two and a half thousand years ago.

But with all this the odds were against the British. Forty-four million British were opposed to 88 million Germans; and if to the 44 million islanders were added the Dominion supporters, Hitler could call upon the majority of the population of Europe. The Navy, indeed, was still unequalled; but one of the gravest limitations of seapower was shown by the news that 500,000 tons of shipping were sunk by Nazi submarines monthly early in 1941. Nevertheless, the Navy was active. On July 3rd, 1940, it sunk or seized at Oran the French Navy, which Marshal Pétain might have transferred to German control; and on November 13th at Taranto the Fleet Air Arm wrecked three battleships and four cruisers and auxiliaries of the Italian Navy which had been expected to control the Mediterranean. Next month, the British and Dominion forces in Egypt under General Wavell started an offensive against the Italian forces in Libya which resulted in the complete occupation of Cyrenaica and the capture of prisoners far outnumbering the whole attacking force.

But these exploits were not decisive. The British could, as they did, reconquer the whole of Abyssinia and restore the Emperor; they could sink half the Italian fleet at the battle of Cape Matapan in March, 1941; the balance was still against



them. While the ceaseless bombardment of the island continued, fresh land defeats came in the Near East. Mussolini, seeking another cheap victory, had at the end of October, 1940, invaded Greece from his colony Albania: to his great surprise his superior forces were steadily beaten by the smaller power which actually began to conquer Albania. After a while Hitler (as it then seemed) came leisurely to his ally's aid; to clear the way Hungary, Roumania, and Bulgaria were ordered to join the Axis: Prince Paul, the Regent of Yugoslavia, approved a Pact with Germany on March 25th. This the Yugoslavs would not have; two days later he was turned out and his boy nephew put on the throne as Peter II. On April 6th, with terrifying speed, the German armies attacked Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav army was unready and dispersed; Belgrade was partly destroyed in the usual terror-raid; by the 17th all resistance, except from some rather ineffective Serbian guerrillas headed by a Colonel Mihailovitch, was over.

The Germans now entered Greece. The panzers were a very different proposition from the Italian armies, and the Greeks called at once for British aid. All that could be spared from Wavell's forces—perhaps more than was wise—was sent, but once again German air superiority was victorious. Thermopylae might perhaps have been held; but the main Greek army cut off in Epirus surrendered and the mainland had to be evacuated. An attempt was made to hold Crete; this too was taken by air power. Moreover, while the Navy was rescuing British forces in Greece the Germans had shipped big reinforcements to Libya, and their army and the Italians, under General

Rommel, drove the weakened British out of practically all Wavell's conquests.

Momentarily, it looked as if the disaster would spread. Rashid Ali, a Nazi supporter, seized power from the feeble Regent of Irak, and was supplied with Nazi planes via the Syrian aerodromes under the control of the Vichy French. But for once the reply was swift: Rashid Ali made his first attack on May 2nd and by June 1st the British had taken Bagdad. In the next five weeks they had reconquered all Irak and also occupied Syria.

One grave anxiety had been removed. Britain was an over-populated island which lived only by its imports, paid for partly by overseas investments. These were being sold fast to purchase munitions, particularly in the States; and ruin was very near. President Roosevelt in 1939 had persuaded Congress to modify the Neutrality Act's embargo on arms by permitting "Cash and Carry" sales (which effectively meant sales to Britain and France only), but even to this, opposition was furious: Senator Borah declared it was the equivalent of taking up arms, Nye that nothing would be "ahead of America but hell," Clark that Britain and France were "the aggressors," Lundeen that the opportunity should be taken to enforce payment of the World War I debts or to seize the West Indies. In September, 1940, fifty over-age destroyers were sold to Britain in return for naval bases. Contemporaneously, an "American First" committee was incorporated in Chicago; it was noisy and apparently influential. Nevertheless, at the end of 1940 a "Lease-Lend" Bill was proposed, and carried through on March 11th, 1941. It effectively meant that the large stream of munitions coming through to Britain and her allies was free of charge.

But wars cannot be won with money; it was perhaps fortunate for the world that Hitler became impatient now. He had been meditating for some while starting on the second portion of his great war plan, leaving the first unfinished. In May his half-crazy second-in-command Hess even went secretly on a solo fight to Britain to see if the government could not be induced to co-operate. What was in his mind became suddenly clear at four o'clock in the morning of June 22nd, when along all the vast frontier the German armies charged into the territory of the Soviet Union.

The Russians seemed taken by surprise. Barely a week earlier Tass, their official agency, had announced "there could be no misunderstanding between the two countries." Certainly, their frontier forces were all driven back: in eleven days the

Germans had occupied an area larger than all France. But they then entered a deep zone of fortifications, loosely called "the Stalin Line" and stretching roughly along the 1938 frontier. Here the fighting became more stubborn; the fury of both sides

was unmatched and their equipment more equal. But the result was the same; in August the line was pierced in three places—in the north by the capture of Pskov on the way to Leningrad, in the centre by the capture of Vitebsk on the way to Smolensk, in the south by the capture of Zhitomir on the way to Kiev. Throughout the summer the same story of Russian defeats and retreats continued. Leningrad was blockaded, the Finns avenging

themselves by coming on it from the north; Smolensk was captured; in the south the Germans broke into the Ukraine, the great industrial and agricultural reserve of Russia, occupying almost everything west of the Dnieper.

Britain, which had immediately offered Russia a treaty of alliance, gave what help it could; so did the U.S.A., but it all was still small. The two English-speaking powers had endeavoured to clarify the objects of the war: at the beginning of the year President Roosevelt had spoken to Congress on the "four freedoms"—of speech and of worship, and from want and from fear. In August he met Premier Churchill at sea and they drafted and signed an "Atlantic Charter," to enforce these—less clear, on the whole, than President Wilson's 14 points but with the same intentions. Stalin endorsed it, adding "our aim is to help those nations struggling against Hitler's tyranny and then leave it to them quite freely to organize their life as they see fit—there must be no interference whatever in the internal affairs of other nations."

But words, any more than money, do not win wars. The German army stamped forwards. Kiev fell, Kharkov fell, all the Ukraine was occupied—the Russians burning or blowing up all they could as they left, to leave nothing for the conqueror. Savage brutality marked the German advance: in Western Europe the soldiers had (by the low standards now accepted) been fairly well behaved but they had no need to restrain themselves now. The Russian commanders Voroshilov and Budyenny were sent to the rear, but their successors were no luckier; the Don basin was occupied, the Crimea overrun, and the Germans were within nearly 20 miles of Moscow; government offices and foreign diplomats were sent to Kuibishev, 500 miles away.

Once again the Axis could not wait; it must pluck the fruit before it was ripe. On October 9th the Germans had, officially, and clearly believing it, announced that the Soviet armies were in dissolution. This now seemed to be proved to others than themselves, and the time to have arrived when the third phase of Axis conquest should commence. On December 7th, 1941, Japan attacked the American Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbour, sinking or putting out of action all eight of its battleships, three out of its seven cruisers, and three destroyers. America was now at war with the Axis.

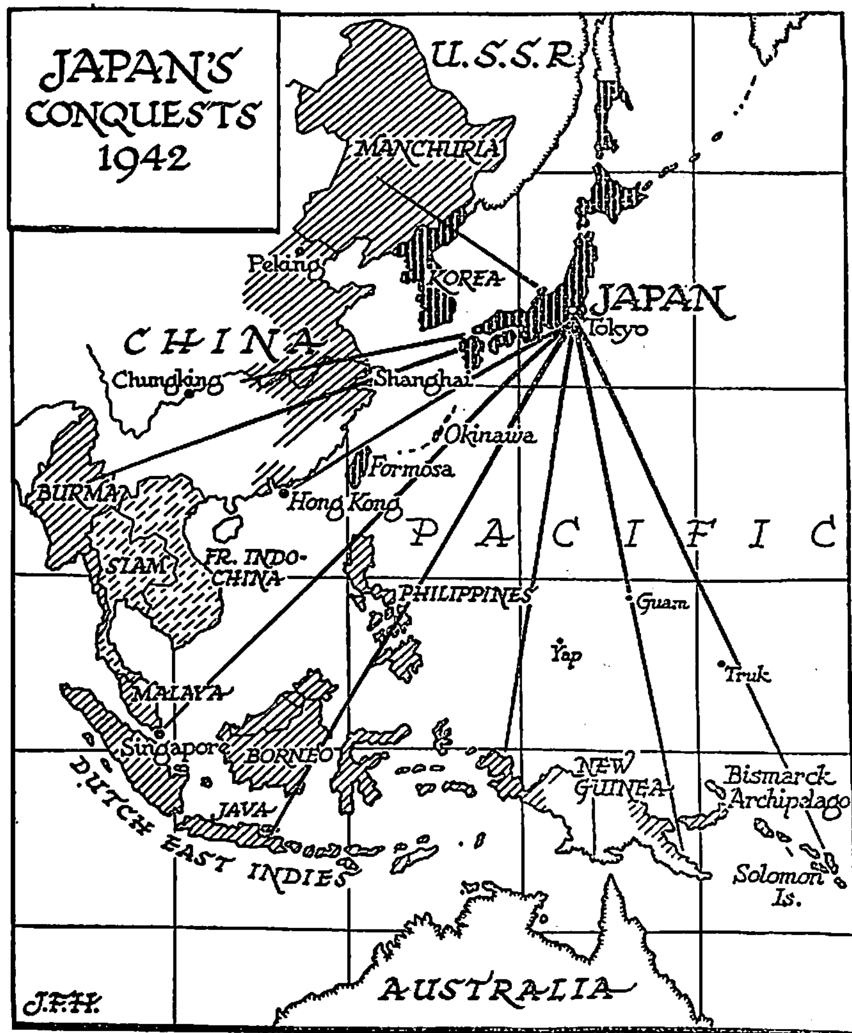
During the months that followed Allied fortunes were at their lowest. The remaining naval forces in the Pacific, assembled under a Dutch admiral, were sunk off Java; two great British ships, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, hurried to the East

Franklin Roosevelt

to save the situation, were sunk off Malaya for lack of air protection. The Philippines were conquered. Malaya was overrun and the great fortress of Singapore fell on February 15th, 1942. So far from aiding the Allies, the natives of south-eastern Asia were indifferent. Years of exploitation brought a foreseeable result: where they did not actively co-operate with the Japanese, they prevented (as at Penang) any efforts to "scorch the earth" as the Russians were doing. The only flash of hope came from Libya, where the British attacked Rommel in November and drove him right down to El Agheila, the turning-point to Tripolitania. But it was only a flash; in January he counter-attacked and reconquered everything to Derna.

More hope, though it was to prove ephemeral, came from Russia. The Germans were, strangely enough, not equipped for winter fighting and the hurried removal of Russian factories to sites beyond the Urals offset, to some extent, the loss of the Ukraine. General Timoshenko drove them back in the south, reaching Kharkov; Moscow was disengaged and Leningrad partially relieved. The news seemed overshadowed by the loss of another whole country: the British were bustled out of Burma, Rangoon falling on March 7th. In June the Germans attacked again in Libya; great hopes had been pinned on the reinforced 8th army with its new U.S. tanks, but it was driven back to El Alamein, Rommel promising he would "pursue the beaten British into the Nile Valley." Next month the Japanese were swarming over New Guinea on the way to Australia, and the Germans broke Russian resistance in the south. Sevastopol fell, Rostov fell, and the Nazi troops pushed forwards towards Grozhny and Stalingrad, threatening to stop oil supplies in the first case and to cut the Volga line of supply in the second.

The British had made an attempt to rally the Indian people to their support. In March Sir Stafford Cripps was sent out to offer the Indian Congress Dominion status after the war, with the right of secession; a constitution to be drafted by the Indians themselves; an executive Council immediately with the powers



of a British Cabinet, the Viceroy's powers being held in reserve like the King's. But Mr. Gandhi sneered "this is a post-dated cheque on a bank that is obviously crashing." Congress in July resolved on "a mass struggle" against the British; no resistance except soul-force would be opposed to the Japanese.

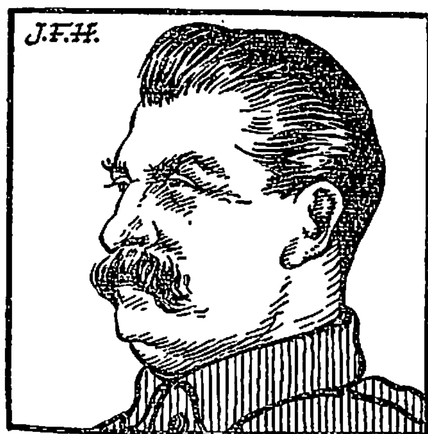
As if to mark their certainty of victory, the Germans in June had punished the death of Heydrich, the governor of Czechoslovakia, by killing 300 people and completely destroying the village of Lidice. But this murderousness was in fact a sign of

weakness: ever since "Colonel Britton" in July, 1941 had announced on the British wireless the mobilization of the "V. army," resistance had been growing against the Germans. It was to be heartened by the news in the late summer, when at last the organization of Allied resources poured munitions into Britain and Russia. United States troops attacked the Japanese on Guadalcanal in the Pacific in August; it was a slow and bloody fight, but it was an attack; and in New Guinea the Japanese were pushed back to the sea. Though the Germans reached the Caucasus and hoisted the swastika on Mount Elbruz, the highest peak in Europe, they found it difficult to take Stalingrad; the Russian defence was unexpectedly obstinate.

Then, in November, 1942, there seemed to come a sudden crack. At half-past six on the morning of October 23rd, after long preparation, General Montgomery's 8th Army attacked Rommel in Libya; the Axis air forces were swept from the skies; in the first days of November the battle of El Alamein was won and for the first time the world saw a Nazi army running helter-skelter, not to stop for hundreds of miles. The Soviet armies counter-attacked in South Russia; Stalingrad did not fall and the German force attacking it was encircled; and in January the world was to see for the first time a Nazi army marched off into captivity.

A week after Montgomery's attack, American and British troops unexpectedly landed at Casablanca, Algiers, and Oran; after some half-hearted resistance by Pétain troops a new front was established. The Allied difficulties were at first mainly political: the American commander-in-chief, General Eisenhower, first accepted as ruler a Pétainist admiral, Darlan, and after he was assassinated a more reputable General, Giraud; Giraud's elevation was much resented by de Gaulle, a general who since July, 1940, had been organizing French resistance from London. Eventually, de Gaulle's authority was recognized but the ill-feeling left had a marked effect upon French policy in the future. Meanwhile, the Germans under von Arnim had had time to organize themselves in Tunisia; it was not until May 7th, 1943, that his forces and Rommel's, driven together as into a pen, surrendered, and another great German army went to the prison camps. By now, too, the British Isles were no longer the victims of heavy bombardment; the R.A.F. by night and the U.S.A.A.F. by day were pounding and breaking German and European cities and military objectives, doing wide damage which may have helped (the question is still debated) greatly to shorten the war.

Submarine sinkings, however, remained alarming, and although the Russian armies were now becoming fully equipped the Stalingrad victory was not followed by any German debacle. The summer's fighting was to-and-fro—Russians advancing and being pushed back, and Germans doing the same; by August the Russians had a distinct advantage, especially in the South. Meanwhile the Western Allies, hopping from Africa, had conquered Sicily in July and entered Europe by the Italian "toe"; Mussolini, the first to fall, had been turned out of power on July 25th. Roosevelt and Churchill (who at Casablanca in January issued a statement demanding "unconditional surrender") now at Quebec received and accepted an Italian offer to change sides; but the ball seems to have been fumbled. The German reaction was the faster. The British forces who tried to take over the Greek islands abandoned by the Italians were once again defeated by German air power; very little ground was gained even in Italy, and an American landing farther up the coast at Salerno was for a while in great danger the Germans even rescued Mussolini and set up a "Fascist Republic" in the north.



J.V. Stalin

The time had come to prevent dissensions between the Allies. The Russians had, nominally, dissolved the Communist International in May, but the month before (with an eye to the future) they had broken with the exiled Polish government in London. In many parts of Europe the Communist resistants were on poor terms with the others: in Yugoslavia indeed they were fighting, the active Communist Tito against the inert Royalist Mihailovitch. After consultations with Chiang Kai-Shek in Cairo, Roosevelt and Churchill met Stalin at Teheran in Persia at the end of November for the first of three conferences whose decisions are still partly unknown. Later events seemed to show that the institution of a "United Nations" organization after the war was decided upon here and that the military arrangements included an eventual Russian declaration of war on Japan, and the Russian right to liberate East Europe themselves up to and including Prague. A co-ordination

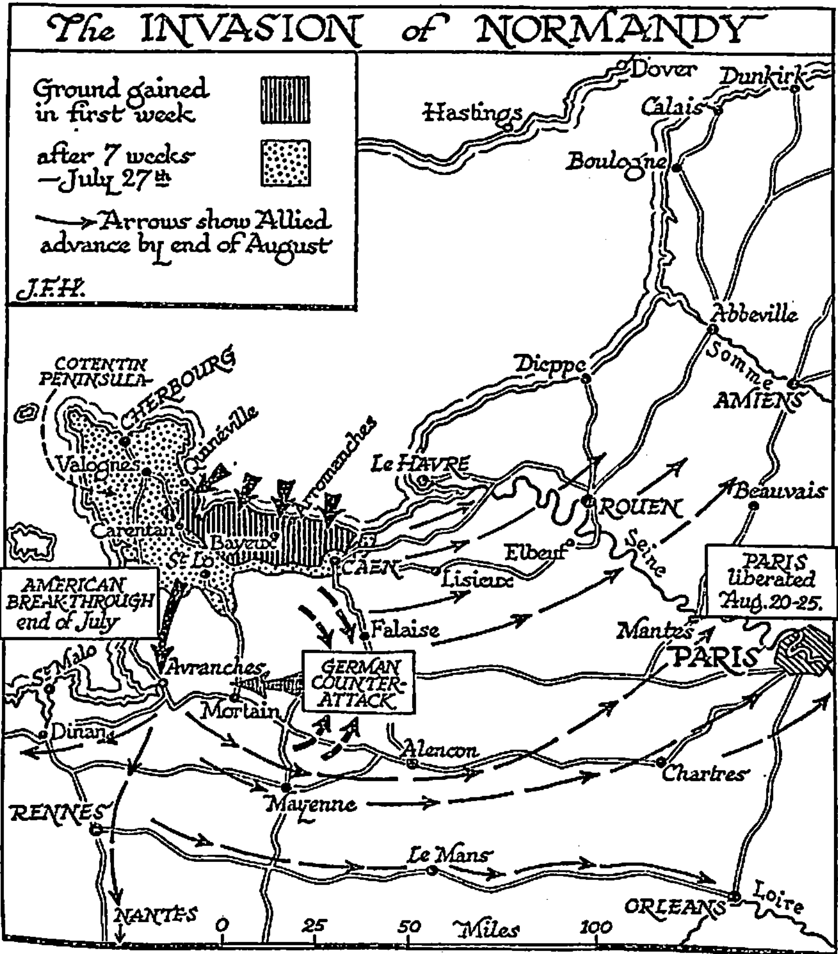
of resistance was arranged, involving the abandonment of Mihailovitch.

The turn from 1943 to 1944 saw the turn in the fortunes of the war. The Russians attacked all along the line and this time their gains were not lost again. Zhitomir was taken, Pskov was taken, Leningrad was relieved, Nikopol was taken, Odessa was taken; the Sovet forces were back to the 1938 border, and soon over it. The "Gustav line" was broken at Cassino in Italy and after some nerve-racking days at a beach-head at Anzio, American troops entered Rome on June 4th. In the Far East, Japanese naval supremacy had been ended in March, 1943, by the U.S. navy in the battle of the Bismarck Sea: the slow but effective MacArthur–Nimitz "island-hopping" technique thus made possible had now cleared New Guinea and the Solomons and led to an attack on the formidable fortress-island of Truk. British and Chinese troops both entered Burma and at last began to drive the Japanese back.

But all this was overshadowed on the morning of June 6th by an event that will continue to be discussed as long as military history is written. The Western armies landed in France.

Long prepared, often adjourned (one actual false start was made), the gigantic expedition took place in a short lull in the worst storms June had seen in the Channel for twenty years. Despite the great armaments assembled, the landings were very hazardous: they are listed by the supreme commander, the American general, Eisenhower, as one of the three crucial periods of his campaign. The "West-wall" had been declared impenetrable, and a gallant attack on it at Dieppe in 1942, largely by Canadians, had been disastrous. Eisenhower had 37 divisions under his hand, but von Rundstedt, his opponent, had 60. But bombing by 171 squadrons wrecked so many airfields, railways, and bridges that von Rundstedt could not collect his forces when he had realized where the main blow was being struck. Rejecting the Cotentin and the Pas de Calais where they were expected, the Allies had landed on the open beaches of Normandy, dropping parachute troops before them and bringing two artificial harbours called "mulberries." There were three separate landings, soon merged into one, the eastern end being manned by the British, the western by the Americans. Rommel (the commanders in the field were to begin with once again Rommel and Montgomery) concentrated all his armour and his best infantry at the east, round Caen, to save Paris and the Seine basin, and protect the sites from which the Germans were now bombarding Britain with pilotless aircraft ("V. 1"s) which blew

up the buildings which they struck—followed later by others faster than sound ("V. 2"s) which fell on to their objectives from the upper air. Progress here was bloody and slow, but the United States troops pushed steadily westwards, until they first



cut off the Cotentin peninsula and then captured Cherbourg, at last securing a big natural port. At the end of July they forced their way round the corner into Brittany by taking Avranches, opening the way for General Patton's army to fan out into its famous drive across north France. The French "Forces of the Interior" leapt to arms to meet him, and German rule began to fall to pieces. Dinan was taken on August 2nd,

Rennes on the 4th, Mayenne on the 6th, Le Mans on the 9th, Nantes and Angers on the 10th—the Germans hurriedly fleeing into the fortified ports of Brest, St. Nazaire, St. Malo, and Lorient.

But this sensational advance seemed to the Germans to give them a chance: if Avranches could be retaken, Patton would be cut right off and immobilized. A powerful panzer attack was launched against it on August 7th. It was checked by the 12th, and the German generals held on too long. The whirling advance of Patton had now turned their positions into a long enclosed salient in the area of Falaise, which became what was hideously but correctly called a "killing ground." A few relics of the 5th and 7th panzer armies fled towards the bridgeless Seine; by the 22nd the rest of the German armies were dead or captive.

Meanwhile Patton's drive had swept on: Chartres, Dreux, Mantes on Seine, Orleans, Fontainebleau, and Troyes all fell within a fortnight; and a fresh landing had been made in the South between Marseilles and Toulon which chased the Germans up the Rhone. But to a great extent France freed herself: Eisenhower estimated the value of the Resistance forces as "fifteen divisions;" the Germans ran because they had to, for all the country round them had suddenly become armed enemy territory. Paris freed itself by a revolt organized by the police, on August 9th, before the Allies arrived on the 25th.

Now came the turn of the British and Canadians; in a northward sweep which stilled one by one the great ramps from which the "V. 1"s were flying out towards Britain, they poured across Northern France and Belgium. On August 30th the British were at Beauvais, next day at Amiens, then—day by day—at Arras, Tournai, Brussels, Antwerp, and Louvain. The Canadians and British on September 1st took Dieppe and Rouen; in the next four days they invested Le Havre, Boulogne, and Calais; on the 6th they took Ostend. But now the great rush seemed to end; United States troops advanced to Luxembourg, French to the Rhine through the Vosges, but an attempt to carry on the invasion into Holland led to the loss of three-quarters of a British parachute force at Arnhem. The first German city to fall, Aachen on the extreme border, was taken on October 21st; but heavy rains fell in November and the Allied armies seemed to have exhausted their impetus.

In eastern Europe the news also had been good, but there were some shadows. A heavy blow to the German armies had been struck in July by the recapture of Minsk; Vilna followed and in August Russian troops crossed the East Prussian border near Mariampol; in Warsaw the Polish resistance-forces rose in revolt

to meet them. But the Russians failed to come to their aid; after three months of desperate struggle the Warsaw fighters were exterminated. The weight of the Soviet attack was shifted south; King Michael of Roumania arrested his local Führer and changed sides; Bulgaria surrendered; Marshal Tito freed Yugoslavia; the Red Army entered Hungary. (Greece was freed by the British.)

In the Far East the Japanese fleet was shattered in the battle of the Philippines, and American troops landed on one of the islands (Leyte); British forces were slowly driving the Japanese back in Burma, but the going was very hard.

The winter of 1944 saw the last panzer attack in history. Fourteen infantry and ten panzer divisions, parachute troops and a restored Luftwaffe on December 12th attacked the Americans in the traditional area of the Ardennes. They broke through on a 45-mile front; the right and left of General Bradley's army were torn apart; the 101st U.S. Airborne division was cut off in Bastogne on the way to Sedan; the Germans advanced 60 miles, almost to the Meuse. But they were first held and then driven back; a little more than a month later they were back where they were before, minus tanks, planes and oil that they badly needed.

From then on the German ruin was precipitate. In January, 1945, the Russians overran all Poland and Lithuania, entering Silesia and soon being a bare 30 miles from Berlin. In the West the Germans decided to fight west of the Rhine—the third crucial disaster in Eisenhower's opinion (the second being Falaise); by the first week in March they were crushed again and only the thin barrier of the Rhine remained. A second conference between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, in February, at Yalta, co-ordinated plans for the final attack and for political settlement of Europe and the Far East—successfully in the first case. Indeed German military resistance was now only due to the will of one man, Adolf Hitler. An attempt to assassinate him on July 20th, 1944, had failed, and while he still spoke the Nazis would still resist. But he could not alter the course of history; the Western armies were over the Rhine in March, the Ruhr was surrounded and soon after captured with its defenders. The Russians entered Vienna on April 13th, and shortly afterwards surrounded Berlin with the Führer within it; Patton drove towards Czechoslovakia, stopping short of Prague; and the British reached the Elbe. On that river on April 25th the Russian 58th Guards met the 69th U.S. Division, and the Reich was cut in half.

It had been expected that Hitler would retire by air to a "redoubt" in the Alps where a last stand could be made, but he did not do so. Crazier than ever in his last days, and feeding

himself to the end with delusions about German armies advancing to rescue him, he decided on a more melodramatic end; as the Russians fought their way to his air-raid shelter in Berlin he committed suicide on the last day of April with Eva Braun, and their bodies were afterwards burnt by his order. Two days before, Mussolini had been shot with his mistress by Italian partisans, and hanged upside-down in the street.

The news ended resistance. On May 2nd Berlin surrendered; so did all the German armies in Italy; two days later the armies in Holland, North-west Germany and Denmark did the same: on the 7th a general surrender was signed by Jodl, the German Chief-of-Staff. Nothing remained now to be done in Germany, except to co-ordinate the actions of the conquerors. As they overran the Reich, and had seen Belsen, Dachau, Auschwitz and the other concentration camps, the Allies had realized that, unlike those of the First World War, the stories of German crimes and savagery had been much below the truth. They met at Potsdam on July 17th, but there were strange faces at the conference. One of the architects of victory had died on the day the Allies reached the Elbe, and an anxious President Truman took Roosevelt's place. In the middle of the conference Churchill, who had linked his fortunes with the Conservatives, disappeared: a general election had replaced him by C. R. Attlee, the leader of the Labour Party. Stalin, alone, remained, immovable and inscrutable.

East Prussia was divided between Poland and Russia. Silesia and Pomerania up to and beyond Stettin were taken by Poland, in compensation for a large slice of her eastern territory which Russia had already seized. The rest of Germany—that is, nearly all of it to the west of the Oder and the Western Neisse—was divided into four zones of occupation, an American, a British, a French and a Russian, and so was Austria. The capitals, Berlin and Vienna, were wholly surrounded by the Russian zones of their two countries, but they were occupied—and were to be jointly governed—by all of the four occupying powers.

But if there was no more fighting to be done in Germany, the war was not over. The drama in Europe had played the Far Eastern struggle off the stage; the Burma forces bitterly called themselves "the forgotten army." British and Indian forces had reopened the land road to China in January; in March they had retaken Mandalay and the Burmese irregulars under Aung San had crossed over from the Japanese side to the Allies; on May 5th Rangoon was taken and Buama was freed. In the Pacific the U.S. soldiers and marines found that the vanishing of the

Japanese navy made no difference to the desperate fury with which the Japanese defended the vital Pacific islands. The liberation of the Philippines was not completed until July 5th. The defenders of the island of Iwojima fought from February 19th to March 15th; those of Okinawa, an island even more menacingly near to Japan, fought with almost crazy recklessness from April 1st for nearly three months. Japan seemed to have a great deal of energy left and a Russian declaration of war still to be a thing much to be desired.

But in fact Japan was far more exhausted than she appeared, and the use of the most alarming of all "new weapons" was to bring her to a sudden surrender. Early in the war, warned, among others, by Professor Einstein of what the Nazis were doing, the Allies had been endeavouring to "split the atom" and so release the ultimate energy of the universe. American, Canadian, and British scientists had worked on the problem and on July 16th, 1945, at six in the morning in a desert in New Mexico, an "atom bomb" had been successfully exploded. Whether this mechanism should be used or not depended, effectively, upon the new American President; he decided, as he said afterwards, that two hundred thousand American lives might be saved if it was, and probably even more of other nations. An atom bomb after what was, perhaps, a perfunctory warning, was dropped on the Japanese port of Hiroshima on August 6th. Broadly speaking, it destroyed the whole city and all living things therein. A similar result followed from the dropping of another atom bomb on Nagasaki three days later. (Between the two, the Russians had declared war on Japan and entered Manchuria; it seemed now a matter of small importance.) On August 14th the Japanese Emperor surrendered unconditionally, and next day Mr Truman and Mr. Attlee announced that "V.J. Day," the ending of the Second World War, might at last be officially celebrated.

CHAPTER 40

AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

§ 1. *The United Nations.*
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§ 1

The United Nations.

THE victors in the war met together in San Francisco in April 1945, in appearance united, and in appearance determined to omit from the constitution of the " United Nations ", an organization which was to replace the old League of Nations, the flaws which had led its predecessor to ruin. The founding conference of the United Nations made it more all-embracing; every state which had taken part in the war on Germany was included, even the Argentine, which only qualified by a few days and was fairly openly Nazi in sympathies. The protest by the Russians against its admission was made the less impressive by their kidnapping by a trick sixteen Polish leaders, which resulted in there being no delegation at all from the country in whose defence the Second World War had nominally been begun. What the elaborate machinery on which the Powers agreed did not, and perhaps could not, allow for was something that had never troubled the old League—the determination of a single member state, supported by a number of satellites, not to use the organization for peace, but for aggression—a " cold war "—against other members. This, however, was in the future; when Mr. Churchill in 1946 at the town of Fulton in the U.S.A. declared that Russian policy was solely aimed at securing the fruits of war without waging war he was generally disbelieved. And though the ensuing years were to record a story of frustration of the main object of the United Nations, it is nevertheless true that its subsidiary organs did invaluable work. It was clear that the world needed an international organization; it might reasonably be said that, frustrated in its direct endeavour, humanity could nevertheless be seen trying to secure it in all possible by-ways.

The Charter of the new organization, as approved at San

Francisco, set up, apart from the secretariat, five main departments. These were: the General Assembly of Nations, which it was hoped would in time become something like a world Parliament; the Security Council, which was to be an Executive or Cabinet for political affairs; the Economic and Social Council; the Trusteeship Council; and the International Court of Justice, whose names explain their purposes. There were also specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Office, Food and Agriculture, Science and Education ("Unesco"), Relief and Rehabilitation ("Unrra"), followed later by the World Health Organization, the Emergency Food Council, and other bodies. Attention was soon concentrated on the failures of the Security Council, which were to be written large in history; but the operation of these other bodies was of enormous importance, not only in keeping alive the concept of international unity, but in the mere saving of human life. Millions of people had occasion, knowing it or not, to thank them. Incidental mention of their work may be made on later pages, but there is no room for their detailed history. Behind the depressing story of frustration, there was a background of steady and partly appreciated work of rehabilitation and recovery by these agencies.

The central body, the Security Council, had one great flaw, the "built-in" veto. As in the Polish parliament of the 18th century any of the "permanent members" could forbid a decision taken by the majority, without reason given. Six impermanent seats on the Council were occupied by lesser powers, elected for two years. The permanent members were five, the "Great Powers" of the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France and China. The list was even in 1945 unrealistic—the last two had no claim to be called Great Powers, in the pre-war sense, and the third was on the verge of losing it. Of the two giants Russia soon began to veto systematically any proposition which was not to the advantage of international Communist policy. By the time that these vetoes passed the number of eighty it had become clear that the central organism of the United Nations was paralysed; it had no more than a propaganda use. One exception only was later to be recorded, the Korean decision taken in Russia's temporary absence. But Russian intransigeance was not immediately obvious; at the first U.N. Assembly, in London in 1946, the Persian delegate to the Assembly formally complained that Russian troops were supporting a separatist, philo-Communist revolt in the northern province of Azerbaijan. The Russian delegation was able to reply tru[illegible]lly that the troops had now been withdrawn.

Strange though it was to seem later, more criticism was offered of—or at least more attention was paid to—the vagaries of United States policy, no doubt because America seemed to be unquestionably the most powerful state in the world. In August 1945 President Truman suddenly cancelled "Lease-Lend", the financial system on which the war had been fought and won. Though this seemed to him and his compatriots a natural act—the war was over, wasn't it?—it had unforeseen and disastrous effects. It removed any possibility of bringing pressure upon Russia and it brought America's allies face to face with ruin, for they were not only exhausted at home, but, with their far-flung armies, extended to their utmost limit. The most sensational example was Britain; her existing expenditure overseas, not including munitions of war, was running at 2,000 million pounds per annum, of which exports brought in no more than £350 million and various temporary non-recurring receipts £450 million. The effect of this action rapidly became so obvious that the United States government took decisions to replace Lease-Lend by other means. A loan of 3,750 million dollars was granted to Great Britain at 2%, with however the impossible condition that sterling was to be made fully convertible within a year, and in 1947 General Marshall offered a wide and generous scheme for assistance to all devasted European countries, which became known as "Marshall Aid". The Soviet-dominated countries were forbidden to accept this; nevertheless, according to figures published in 1949 a gross total of $4,800 millions had been paid out by then. The Organization for European Economic Co-operation (O.E.E.C.) set up to deal with this, had very wide and valuable liberalizing effects.

The same General Marshall on behalf of the United States attempted to mediate in China botwen General Chiang Kai-Shek, the legitimate ruler, and the Communists who were in insurrection against him. The effort was abandoned in December 1946, as each side believed it could do better for itself by using armed force. More success was achieved by another American general, MacArthur, in command of the forces occupying Japan; a week or so earlier a new Japanese constitution, drafted under his impulse, had been promulgated. It was strictly democratic in character; it abjured war and prohibited the keeping of armed forces.

The power and confidence of the United States had a solid basis when its state was compared to that elsewhere. Other nations had been devastated to an extent that had not been known since the days of Genghiz Khan. There had not, except in Russia,

been slaughter as great as in the First World War, but the material destruction had been unparalleled. City after city had been destroyed; the centres of industrial towns and capitals were rubble. Factories were flat, dams were broken, railways wrecked, canals empty, mines flooded and even an ancient power station, if it was still working, was a priceless asset. But in the United States the war had been a great stimulant to production. Advances that would once have taken decades had had to be completed within a few months; there was no country in the world which was even remotely near to it in productive equipment. Nor were these riches based, as once, upon a resentful or oppressed working class; the " Okies " were as forgotten as the " Wobblies ". The strength of the labour unions, the matured results of the New Deal, and the better sense of the employers were resulting in prosperity being shared. The word " socialism " was repudiated by both great parties, Democrats and Republicans, but some parts at least of what came to be called a Welfare State were instituted. Workless men were no longer left to starve in " Hoovervilles " in the name of free enterprise; there were social services and social security. There were no nationalizations, and unemployment was not banished as it was in Britain, France and Scandinavia. But the unemployed (though the figures ran to millions) were, percentage-wise, few. Nor was it only the white man's welfare that was secured; contested at every point, the advance of the Negro was on the whole continuous in the war and post-war years.

American confidence had, as was believed, yet another firm basis. The United States had a weapon that no one else had—the atom bomb. The discovery of this terrifying weapon had been a joint Anglo-Canadian-American enterprise, but its production had for strategic reasons been confined to the States, and the Americans had kept the knowledge of its latest developments to themselves. It was not so secret as they believed. In both Britain and America there were men who were divulging information piece by piece to the Russians. The most dangerous of them were not ordinary spies; they were acting from conviction. The harvest of pre-war folly was now being reaped. Men who had come to maturity in the twenties and thirties had decided that American and British capitalism could offer only mass unemployment and war; they had believed that Russia offered a genuine alternative and they did not see (nor usually did their accusers) that Stalin's Russia was not Lenin's. But their importance was much exaggerated in the later furies of American politics; the traitors speeded up slightly, but did not cause, the

arming of Russia with the atom bomb and hydrogen bomb. For the Russians were not only investigating the problem themselves; they had captured and carried into captivity the highly skilled German scientists who at Peenemünde and elsewhere had been studying this and similar problems. They would have had the knowledge before long anyhow. The United States in 1946, while its monopoly still existed, offered in what was called "the Baruch plan" to share its knowledge with all nations provided that a completely effective international system of inspection to prevent the making of atom bombs was first set up. It was unpleasantly startled when the Russians rejected the proposal, demanding in a manner which it still seemed worth while calling impudent that the American bombs should be destroyed and the mere promise of the various states to make no more bombs should be accepted. They appeared to be taking a grotesque risk, but they were not. The Americans, they knew, would not attack them, and before long they expected to be able to produce their own atom bombs. When Mr. Molotov announced in 1947 that they had done so, he was bluffing; but after a brief while he was no longer bluffing. A Russian atom bomb was exploded in September 1949. No other nations by then possessed these bombs, except Britain; and she had but a few.

§ 2
The Vanishing of Empires.

The possession of atomic bombs by Britain was one of the remaining evidences that she was determined to be counted one of the Great Powers. It was becoming a more and more difficult claim to substantiate. The decade following the victory of 1945 was, among other things, the decade of the vanishing of Empires. Old-style imperialism was ended, and in Asia and Africa independent powers replaced colonies and dependencies (exccept, of course, where Communism ruled). The maps of the two continents, in 1939 and 1959, make a dramatic contrast.

The Empires which were dissolved were the British, French and Dutch; the Portuguese, the feeblest and most backward imperialists, somehow managed to cling on to their much smaller domains.

The downfall of the Dutch was the most complete. Their chief domain, the Dutch East Indies, had been completely overrun by the Japanese during the war, and no trace was left of