



# A GREATER BRITAIN

A Counterfactual History

Ed Thomas



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## Foreword

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The modern attitude towards Oswald Mosley in Britain is a fundamentally self-satisfied one. The failure of British fascism is a comforting reminder that the United Kingdom is a special case; unlike on the continent, Westminster with her long parliamentary tradition, moderate political discourse and stable party structure was fundamentally infertile ground for fascist beliefs or anything approaching them. Put simply, fascism is somehow alien to the phlegmatic and sensible Englishman.

This moral certainty is often expressed in a very British way; mockery. The uniforms, jackboots and ceremony of the Blackshirts and by extension the fascist movement in general are often seen as something worthy of ridicule. As PG Wodehouse had Bertie Wooster say to the thinly-disguised Oswald Mosley figure Roderick Spode in "The Code of the Woosters";

*The trouble with you, Spode, is that just because you have succeeded in inducing a handful of half-wits to disfigure the London scene by going about in black shorts, you think you're someone. You hear them shouting 'Heil, Spode!' and you imagine it is the Voice of the People. That is where you make your bloomer. What the Voice of the People is saying is: 'Look at that frightful ass Spode swanking about in footer bags! Did you ever in your puff see such a perfect perisher?'*



Popular anecdotes indulge this comfortable stereotype. One story goes that when a Lancashire fascist boarded a bus in uniform, many passengers offered him money assuming he was the conductor; others relate the story of when a band of Fascists kidnapped the communist leader Harry Pollitt on a train in Liverpool, apparently intending to punish him by forcing him to spend a weekend in North Wales.

Even when Mosley's political thought is taken seriously, it is dismissed as having had no influence, or for that matter substance. Wodehouse's Spode, for example, is essentially a human gorilla devoid of anything beyond animal cunning. Bernard Levin wrote in the Times in the late 1970s that "*The Fascist movement of the time offered little but Blackshirts and Jew-baiting*", and Oswald Mosley himself is remembered more in popular consciousness as a jackbooted thug rather than a serious politician, at home in a street-fight rather than in Parliament. The dismissal of Mosley as a violent thug deeply offended the man himself. As he commented in his autobiography *My Life*,

*"Why should a man with this electoral record suddenly take leave of his senses and with much trouble and some expense assemble the largest audiences seen in Britain, not for the purpose of persuading them, but of beating them up?"*

From the vantage point of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is easy to regard Mosley's entire career from the perspective of hindsight, characterising him as an extremist fool and brawler with few serious solutions to offer for the problems Britain then faced. But this is not how Mosley was viewed at the time. In the 1920s Mosley was the rising star of the British political scene, a man marked for greatness along with other young MPs such as Harold MacMillan, Aneurin Bevan and Anthony Eden. One journalist described him as "*The most polished speaker in the House of Commons*"; a contemporary account of his rapturous reception at a

Labour Party meeting described how “*a young man with the face of the ruling class in Great Britain but the gait of a Douglas Fairbanks thrust himself forwards... The song ‘for he’s a jolly good fellow’ greeted [Mosley] from two thousand throats.*”

Mosley’s views also had popular purchase. In 1930 he was elected to Labour’s National Executive Council and his ‘Mosley Manifesto’ was only narrowly defeated in a vote by the Party faithful. His mixture of Keynesian, ILP Socialist and protectionist policies appealed to a broad cross-section of the Party, and had he been a more patient man than the Labour leadership could have been his for the taking.

As we know, things did not turn out that way; Mosley abandoned Labour in a fit of pique and subsequently began his long journey to the political fringes and infamy. But what if things had been different?

On one level, this seems like a frivolous question. Yet counterfactual, or alternative, history can play an important role in the understanding of history, as well as providing entertainment. Several prominent historians such as Niall Ferguson, John Keegan and James McPherson have edited and contributed to compilations of counterfactual history essays, and recently the 'Quarterly Journal of Military History' published an entire issue devoted to the subject. Counterfactuals are also commonly employed by economists to estimate the effects of specific policies and programmes. This practice is not without its critics however. The Marxist historian E. H. Carr dismissed the idea as '*a mere parlour game*' while his contemporary and fellow Communist E. P. Thompson went even further, lambasting the concept of counterfactual history as '*Geschichtswissenschaft, unhistorical shit*'.

Is this judgement fair? It depends on the counterfactual. All too often, they can become a wish-fulfilment exercise,

where the politically motivated can look at the consequences had decisions been taken in the way that they had hoped for. The anti-clericalist Charles Renouvier's 1876 novel *Uchronie* is a classic example of this problem. This book presents a counterfactual history of Europe where Christianity fails to establish itself, leading to an entirely peaceful and secular Utopia. While entertaining in itself, Renouvier's work cannot be described as plausible. Arguably it is a perfect example of the '*parlour game*' Carr sneered at.

Counterfactuals do not have to be approached this way however. Properly researched and rationally approached, a counterfactual can be used to pare away hindsight and discern both the likelihood of certain events and the background forces that influence them; to use a historical example, if the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had not been assassinated, would the First World War still have broken out? An excellent example of this approach is Professor Robert Fogel's Nobel prize-winning study on the economic impact of the advent of rail transportation; Fogel painstakingly constructed a counterfactual model in which the railways were not built, and then compared the results with the real data.

Academic counterfactuals can be of use then, but what about literary ones? By their nature they tend to value entertainment over historical rigour; this need not be a problem however if they touch on an important truth. The effect of a good counterfactual is to encourage the reader to take a step back from their natural pre-conceptions and avoid thinking of historical personalities in lazy, two-dimensional terms; what sort of chain of events could leave future generations thinking of Winston Churchill as a villain, or George Washington a tyrant?

Thinking in terms of counterfactuals challenges comfortable notions such as “time’s arrow” or the idea that the world which we live in is the most likely of all possible outcomes. It easy to forget that our own history contains more than its fair share of improbable events; to use one example, the history of the Falklands war would seem ridiculously jingoistic if written as a counterfactual! It allows the historian or interested reader to determine which events were random or avoidable, and which really were the result of TS Elliott’s “*vast impersonal forces*”.

In the case of Oswald Mosley, it demonstrates how a man vilified as the “*worst Briton of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*” in a recent poll could very easily have been regarded as one of the most influential politicians of his era; not through a drastic change in personality or a sweeping change affecting the whole nation, but by a single point of departure that gradually changes more and more as time passes. A famous nursery rhyme sums the effect up;

*For want of a nail the shoe was lost.  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.  
For want of a horse the rider was lost.  
For want of a rider the battle was lost.  
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.  
And all for the want of a nail.*

In Mosley’s case, his lost nail comes in the form of a handful of votes cast differently in the November 1924 General Election...



# Chapter 1

*"I feel the hand of History on my shoulder"*

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*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

...Six weeks before the election in November 1924 I entered the fight in Birmingham. I wanted to give some striking service to the party which had so well received me. The Chamberlains and their machine had ruled Birmingham for sixty years, first as Liberal-Radicals and then as Conservative-Unionists. Their party machine was at that time probably the strongest in the country. We had six weeks in which to smash it. I chose to fight Neville Chamberlain, who sat for the working-class constituency of Ladywood in the centre of the city; his brother Austen was the neighbouring M.P. and their names and abilities made them a formidable combination. Our own organisation had a paying membership of some two hundred, but when we started the canvass only three elderly women and two young men would accompany us....However, my raging speaking campaign, both indoor and outdoor, and the superb work done by Cimmie in leading the canvassing team, eventually turned the scales. It was a joyous day when in the courtyards running back from the streets in the Birmingham slums we saw the blue window cards coming down and the red going up....

...The count was a drama: there were two re-counts. First I was in by seven, then Chamberlain was in by six, and

finally I was in by fifty-three<sup>1</sup>. It was alleged by some of their people that votes had disappeared, and uproar broke out with men fighting in the crowded public gallery and people pointing to the floor as they bellowed – 'That one's got 'em in his pocket'. It appeared from our enquiry that their allegations could not be sustained. I was eventually declared the winner, and we left the Town Hall at six o'clock in the morning to find an enormous crowd in the square outside which had waited up all night to hear the result; they were singing the Red Flag. They seized me and carried me around with an enthusiasm which deeply moved me..."<sup>2</sup>

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"...Mosley's return to Parliament enabled him to further develop his ideas in the period while Labour was in opposition, and in 1925 he published a series of pamphlets outlining his economic views... He also devoted much time and effort towards securing Birmingham as a Labour stronghold, touring the constituency parties and overhauling their internal machinery- and in the process creating for himself a personal following. Mosley's actions in support of the workers during the General Strike also hugely enhanced his standing in the city, moving Bernard Shaw to write;

*"You will hear something more of Sir Oswald before you are through with him. I know you dislike him, because he looks like a man who has some physical courage and is going to do something; and that is a terrible thing. You instinctively hate him, because you do not know where he will land you."*

Mosley's effort was amply rewarded in 1929, when Birmingham saw a huge increase in the Labour vote and

Mosley saw his own majority jump into the thousands... A trip to America in the summer of 1926 also developed his theories; as he put it 'America had given me a vision, and I shall never forget the debt'... When the 1929 election brought Labour to power Mosley was offered the post of Lord Privy Seal<sup>3</sup>, effectively acting as a coordinator for the effort against unemployment. That Mosley was given such a trusted role shows how highly he was thought of by the Labour hierarchy at the time, and also amply demonstrated the growing following he was beginning to attract within the Party."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...Labour at last had the great opportunity in the victory of 1929, because we could be sure enough of Liberal support at least to deal with the immediate unemployment problem. Here was the chance to do what we had promised after long years of effort. What then was the result of all these exertions, requiring some personal sacrifice in leading an arduous existence of incessant struggle in a storm of abuse instead of the good life we so much enjoyed and for which we had ample means? The answer presents a degree of frivolity and indeed of absurdity which it is difficult to credit. Before I became a Minister I used to say that Bernard Shaw's caricatures of the mind, character and behaviour of politicians were hardly funny because they were too remote from reality. After a year in office I felt inclined to say: Shaw's plays are an understatement..."

I was not just the young man in a hurry, as they tried to pretend, or the advocate of 'wild-cat finance', in the phrase of Snowden. My plans were based on the new orthodoxy, of which they understood nothing, and had the backing not only of the dynamic genius of the older generation, Lloyd George – with all the immense authority of his peacetime



achievement in office and of his wartime administration-but of the master of the new economic thinking himself, J. Maynard Keynes."

*(Taken from "British Unemployment, 1919-1939; a study in policy" by Andrew Jones, CUP 1985)*

"Mosley's inclusion within the Cabinet initially seemed to promise victory for the radical reformers, but these hopes were soon dashed. The proponents of economic orthodoxy were firmly entrenched in their control of policy, and Snowden's installation as Chancellor meant that almost any proposal he did not personally approve of could be easily buried... Proposal after proposal was ignored by MacDonald and vetoed by Snowden on cost grounds, and by the early months of 1930 Mosley found himself utterly sick and disillusioned with his role in Government. His last attempt to ram home his own policy came in May, when he submitted a detailed memorandum to the Cabinet outlining a complete policy shift towards radical interventionism and Keynesian economics. It received a frosty reception, especially from Snowden.... The document was then leaked to the press, possibly by Mosley, although he denied this... Angered by accusations of underhand activities and frustrated by the lack of progress he was making, Mosley resigned on the 16<sup>th</sup> May, remarking to a friend; "they wanted me to think the unthinkable, and now they criticise me for it!" The long decline of the Labour Government had begun."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...The reception of my resignation speech by Lloyd George, Churchill and other speakers in the subsequent debate is well known, but a selection of letters I received

from members of all parties may add something. They have never been published before, though none of them was marked private. They reveal the welcome from all sides of the House to an effort at action after years of drift;

*'Your speech was the best I have ever heard in the House, and I imagine must be one of the best of parliamentary performances.'* — Brendan Bracken.

*'The best and most constructive speech I have heard in the House. It was fair and it was splendid.'* — Clement Davies.

*'It was, I suppose, the greatest parliamentary tour de force this generation will hear.'* — Robert Boothby.

*'A really great parliamentary performance ... I was enormously impressed by it... I don't believe there is anyone else in this House who could have done it.'* — Violet Bonham-Carter.

*'May a great admirer express his great admiration.'* — John Simon.

Finally, the letter which pleased the speaker most came from his mother in the gallery, saying that *'people of all shades of opinion'* thought it *'the finest speech heard in the House for twenty years'*.

I depart from the usual practice, to which we English rightly adhere, for reasons I gave before; the whole requires an occasional immodesty. Certainly my life was abruptly changed, at least for a happy interval, by the effect of that speech. I had now moved from the left to the centre of British politics, where in underlying though sometimes unrecognised truth I have remained ever since. As Dalton wrote later: *'Men and women went to Mosley because something had to be done to save society'*. The centre and

even the right looked towards me, as well as all the more realistic and ardent spirits of the Labour Party...."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This is the Point of Departure from our Timeline (OTL) - Chamberlain won by 77 votes, here he's either not as lucky or the counting isn't as rigorous.

<sup>2</sup>This is all genuine Mosley, tweaked here and there to fit the changed circumstances.

<sup>3</sup>OTL he got Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and JH Thomas got Privy Seal. Here, Mosley's enhanced standing within the party means that he gets a more prestigious job- although it's not enough to let him actually enact any of the stuff that he'd like to.

<sup>4</sup>This is all pretty much verbatim from Mosley's OTL biography- the man really does remind me of Enoch Powell in his complete lack of self-doubt...

## Chapter 2

*"I did not come into politics to change the Labour Party. I came into politics to change the country."*

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*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"Mosley's resignation speech- a parliamentary triumph- was a long-premeditated claim to leadership designed to appeal to the political centre. Henceforth he constantly spoke about "energetic leadership" and "decisiveness". Working with an increasingly significant parliamentary following, Mosley continued to emphasise his original policy of Keynesian monetary reform, loan-financed public works and massive "state action", all of which would be accompanied by a general reorganisation of the cabinet and civil service intended to improve governmental efficiency...

...interestingly considering his later criticism of the concept of "National Government" in 1931, in his period out of office Mosley was careful to cultivate contacts with figures from across the political spectrum- Macmillan and Oliver Stanley from the Conservatives, and the likes of Nicholson and Sinclair from the Liberals. There was even talk of a cross-party "young alliance" against the older generation of politicians, although this was a pipedream and inevitably came to nothing... Such talk does demonstrate however that Mosley's radicalism was part of the general post-war shift in British politics, as the rising stars of the 1920's

increasingly chafed at the relaxed style of their Edwardian forebears...”

*(Taken from “The Crisis of 1931” by George Barlow, Picador 1990)*

“From May 1930, Mosley formed another small group of parliamentary rebels, and attempted to use the extra-parliamentary Party to impose his policies upon the cabinet... To some extent, these pressures could be ignored or contained. The TUC, ILP and Mosleyites tended to be mutually antipathetic, although from November the latter two had forged links and attempted to coordinate their efforts, albeit in an ineffectual way...”

Criticisms from all three groups aggravated existing uneasiness within the Labour party. While Party loyalty and the recognition of parliamentary difficulties kept discontent in check to a certain extent, ministers were subjected to a constant stream of complaint from the Parliamentary Party, the NEC and Party committees... The near success of a Mosleyite motion at the Party conference in October<sup>1</sup> and its originator’s subsequent election to the NEC confirmed both Party discontent with Government unemployment policy and the existence of a major potential threat to the leadership...”

“After his victories at the Party conference, Mosley found himself in a position that his impulsive nature naturally rebelled against... He could be reasonably confident in the fact that he commanded great support in the Labour Party, and his confidants constantly rammed home the point that all he needed to do to progress was to continue his opposition to MacDonalld and patiently wait until the Government drifted into a crisis...”

Mosley's impatience was never far beneath the surface however, and in an ill-advised speech at Edgebaston in February 1931 he lashed out at the cabinet, calling Snowden a "dull, lethargic mediocrity" amongst other terms. His comments angered many within the party and enraged the Government, who saw his criticism as ungentlemanly and a direct challenge to the Prime Minister. In April Mosley's impatience reached its peak, when he even went as far as seriously considering abandoning the Labour party and forming a movement of his own<sup>2</sup>... While Mosley was quickly dissuaded from his quixotic plan by being convinced that his grass-roots support would not follow him outside Labour, the incident shows how his instincts even at this stage were towards decisive action, even to the point of being self-defeating. It was a character trait that would dog Mosley throughout his political career..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"MAY REPORT, THE:** Report issued in July 1931 by the Economy Committee on National Expenditure, chaired by Sir George May. The committee warned that in 1932 the Government would have a budget deficit of £120 Million, a gap that would have to be closed by radical budget cuts. Publication of the report caused an economic and political crisis in Britain, and led directly to the fall of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Government as the retrenchment proposals irrevocably split the cabinet."

*(Taken from "The Crisis of 1931" by George Barlow, Picador 1990)*

"After an 'impassioned appeal' by MacDonald for acceptance of his proposals, each Cabinet Minister was asked to express his or her view. In the event, ten ministers

supported the unemployment benefit cut... Ten were opposed. With such an even split, the Cabinet immediately agreed upon resignation. It was decided that the King should immediately be informed, and advised to summon a Baldwin-Samuel-MacDonald conference the following morning...MacDonald arrived at the palace at 10.15 pm, looking "scared and unbalanced". The King urged him not to resign, but instead to consider the national alternative, although he admitted that it seemed unlikely that the Conservatives and Liberals would acquiesce to such an arrangement<sup>3</sup>...

...Macdonald then telephoned from the palace to arrange a meeting that evening with Baldwin and Samuel, before returning to Downing St.... The Conservatives and Liberals arrived around 11 pm. Baldwin had brought Chamberlain, who attempted to convince the uncertain MacDonald to remain in a "National Government". Although MacDonald would likely have few parliamentary supporters, he could 'command strong support in the country'... Samuel strongly supported Chamberlain, while Baldwin said nothing. Only after the meeting when pressed by Chamberlain did he express approval, adding that he had remained silent because the appeal to MacDonald seemed hopeless.... Ironically it was Baldwin's attitude that finally decided Macdonald. Interpreting his silence as indicating disapproval<sup>4</sup>, MacDonald despondently informed the palace that he intended to resign the following day, and the prospect of a Conservative-Liberal emergency Government became a reality on the 25<sup>th</sup>..."

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"The resignation of MacDonald and the abrupt entry of Labour into opposition necessitated a general

reorganisation of the Party. At a meeting called on the 25<sup>th</sup> August MacDonald's resignation was accepted. The contest for the Party's leadership seemed destined to be between youth and experience, the extroverted radical Mosley being pitted against Arthur Henderson, a veteran widely regarded as a 'safe pair of hands'.

In the event however, the long-promised showdown between Labour's establishment and radical wings never materialised. Henderson was naturally inclined not to seek the leadership<sup>5</sup>, and his belief that the Party could not be reformed in time to avoid a crushing defeat at the next election made him go as far as to tell friends that the position would be a 'poisoned chalice'. Against the advice of his allies then Henderson indicated to Mosley on the evening of the 30<sup>th</sup> that he would not contest the leadership. The following day the Party returned Mosley as leader by a huge margin... Amongst the general jubilation a single delegate rose and began shouting 'An English Hitler!' He was swiftly silenced by his neighbours<sup>6</sup>..."

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<sup>1</sup>OTL: Mosley put his 'manifesto' to the Labour conference of 1930- it was rejected by a relatively narrow margin of 1,046,000 for compared to 1,251,000 against. In this Timeline (ITTL) Mosley's greater influence and popularity in the Party is enough to make things closer, 1,112,000 for to 1,185,000 against.

<sup>2</sup>Of course, in February 1931 OTL Mosley did exactly this, setting up the "New Party". ITTL he has rather better advice, and realises that he has a far greater chance of achieving his objectives within the Labour movement.

<sup>3</sup>OTL, George V overplayed the receptiveness of Baldwin towards National Government, which made Macdonald feel that it was a practical alternative. Here the King is a more reliable messenger, which discourages a Prime Minister already far more aware of the potential party schism he could cause than OTL.

<sup>4</sup>The meeting occurred OTL, but here MacDonald is already more inclined to dismiss National Government as unworkable, which colours his perceptions somewhat.



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<sup>5</sup>OTL the only reason he did it really was because he felt he was the only option in the dire straits Labour found itself. That's not the case ITTL.

<sup>6</sup>No, the heckler was not an 8-year old Jewish kid from Frankfurt.... I can promise however that Walter will make a conference-based cameo towards the end of the TL.

## Chapter 3

*“Power without principle is barren, but principle without power is futile.”*

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*(Taken from “The Crisis of 1931” by George Barlow, Picador 1990)*

“When Parliament reconvened after the summer recess, it was to a completely changed political situation, and to a looming crisis. The new Government was determined to stay on the gold standard, and Government MP after Government MP stood to declare their financial orthodoxy. The opposition response was muted. Mosley used his first Commons speech as leader to ram home his scepticism about Government policy; “why is the Government so worried about inflation in a period where prices are sharply falling?” he asked, to an uneasy silence from the opposition benches behind him... Labour disquiet was soon swallowed by outrage however. After Mosley’s speech the former Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald rose from the backbenches and pointedly gave his blessing to the new Government, first to a stunned silence and then to boos and shouts of ‘Judas!’ from around him and cheers from the Government benches<sup>1</sup>... for a time there was thought to be a real possibility that MacDonald would join the new Government; however this was never more than a persistent rumour, and one quashed by MacDonald’s own decision to retire at the next election.”

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"Mosley's insistence on his anti-gold standard position in early September began to cause serious divisions within the Party. Even the far-Left began to question his vehement belief in the total wrong-headedness of Government policy, though many Labour MPs were distinguished by their total lack of economic knowledge and followed Mosley on trust. By the third week of September Labour's perceived saviour of a month before appeared to be courting disaster, amid mounting moves by sections of the Party to "stop the train wreck". The Unions in particular were beginning to turn against Mosley, going as far as to send demonstrators to meetings at which Mosley spoke..."<sup>2</sup>

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...Our meetings had been orderly except for a lively heckling, which helps rather than hinders a speaker. But the climate changed completely when a Union man threw eggs at me during a speech in Newcastle... John Strachey reported afterwards that following the incident I remarked that 'This is the crowd which has prevented anything being done in England since the war'. This is true, but it is clear that I did not mean they were merely averse to change. What I meant then and mean now is that the long-experienced and entirely dedicated agents and warriors of the vested interests always play on the anarchy inherent in sections of Labour to secure the confusion, disillusion which is essential to their long-term plan. In a crisis they will attempt to prevent any major reform or ordered progress through the medium of the Labour Party."

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"On the 20<sup>th</sup> September however Mosley's gamble paid off handsomely. The Cabinet was left with no choice but to accept the Bank of England's advice to suspend fixed-price gold sales, and so the Government finally "did what it was formed not to do". To the surprise of all those who had been predicting disaster, the apocalyptic results of the move resolutely failed to materialise... Several days after the gold standard was dropped, Snowden's prediction of unemployment rising to ten million and the Pound halving in value seemed utterly ridiculous, and Mosley's economic judgement was completely vindicated... Two weeks later, the Labour conference gave Mosley a rapturous reception. Against all odds he had hugely embarrassed the Government and had been able to position the Labour Party as a genuine alternative to the economic orthodoxy espoused by all the other parties save the Lloyd-Georgites... In a speech to delegates Mosley was in a bullish mood."

*(Extracts from Oswald Mosley's speech to the Labour conference, October 1931)*

"...Let us make no mistake; let us have no concealment at all. This Movement is a revolutionary Movement, a Movement which seeks no compromise, a Movement that will stand for no unity with the Parties of betrayal. We stand for the union of the British people in a system consistent with our traditions, but a system purged and cleansed of this corruption. Our Movement, therefore, is a Movement of revolution, a Movement which will be given its power by the declared will of the British people, not merely with their consent, but with a passion of enthusiasm..."

...We remind the British people of something that nowadays we seem to forget: that we possess an Empire which contains one-quarter of the globe, one-fifth of its inhabitants, which contains within it every single raw material, every material resource that mankind can possibly desire; that the output of our machinery can be enormously increased, and even multiplied.... Not a single technician in industry either can deny that granted a market for which to produce, within Britain and the Empire alone, without any reliance on outside supplies, within the Empire alone, we can enormously increase our present, production and wealth....

We must exclude from Britain and the Empire the flood of cheap sweated goods which drag down our standard of life. Behind that insulation, by Law of the corporate system, we shall raise wages over the whole field of industry and give to the British people at last the power to consume the goods which the British people produce. The Finance and Credit system of the country will no longer be used for the creation of foreign competition and other purposes inimical to the British people. The Finance and Credit of Britain at last will be used for the purposes of the British people as laid down by British Government!"<sup>3</sup>

*(Taken from "The Crisis of 1931" by George Barlow, Picador 1990)*

"...As Labour met in Scarborough, the Government was deciding to dissolve itself. Baldwin judged that the immediate crisis was over and saw no reason to prolong a coalition when in his view an entirely Conservative administration was achievable at the polls. The Samuelite Liberals for their part were uneasy about being part of a Government with a predilection towards protectionism, and were in any case convinced that an election would put

them in a far more advantageous position for negotiating with whichever new administration that was formed. Accordingly, on October 5<sup>th</sup> Baldwin asked the King for the dissolution of Parliament..."

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"The calling of new elections in the autumn of 1931 seemed to promise a further re-alignment in British politics. All parties were confident of improving their situation; Baldwin was certain that voters would reject Labour by enough of a margin to secure a straight Tory majority, while Mosley felt that he had repaired enough of the damage caused to Labour by their time in office to be in with a chance of Government. For their part, even the Liberal factions looked forward to increasing their shares of the vote and influencing any new administration..."

In the febrile atmosphere of the campaign, Mosley's energy and drive came to the fore. He was determined to pre-empt Conservative attacks on the Labour Government's record by repudiating the administration's legacy in its entirety;

*"Mr Chamberlain says that the former Government's failure speaks for itself, and I am inclined to agree... Indeed, I concur so completely with his views that our former Chancellor Mr Snowden says that this party has 'run mad'! The facts do speak for themselves, and the fact that Messers Snowden and MacDonald appear to wish the Conservative Party well in the forthcoming election is a fact that speaks very loudly indeed to me..."*

...On the 11<sup>th</sup> October Labour launched its manifesto, the grandly-titled "Britain arise". The document was a hugely radical one compared to its 1929 predecessor; it was essentially the "Mosley Manifesto" of the year before

adopted as official Opposition policy. Making a speech marking the launch, Mosley waved a copy of the document in the air and made the break with the past explicit;

*"We are not the party of the 'old women' who dithered and procrastinated while crisis loomed. The 'old gang' have even got over the pretence of fighting each other now. They are all in one camp, huddled together. This is not their party any longer. This is a New Labour party!"*

*(Taken from "The Crisis of 1931" by George Barlow, Picador 1990)*

"...The Conservative election campaign was a savage one. Despite Mosley's (largely successful) attempts to distance himself from the MacDonald administration the Labour Party was constantly attacked as being manifestly incompetent at best and criminally negligent at worst. Labour policy was described as 'naked Bolshevism' that would ruin the country, and Mosley himself was characterised as a disingenuous aristocrat who swapped his Rolls-Royce for an old Ford and his frock coat for a boiler suit as he went out canvassing... On the eve of polling, both sides were confident of victory. Labour canvassers had reported the best response in years, especially from working class Conservatives who seemed to have been won over by Mosley's combination of patriotism and interventionism. The Conservatives by contrast had found that voters were unwilling to reward Labour for the mistakes of the last Parliament..."

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<sup>1</sup>OTL MacDonald decided that if he was not going to be part of a National Government then he would give his blessing to a Tory/Liberal coalition- this is what he's doing here, made more pressing in his mind because he believes a Mosley government and a swing from financial orthodoxy would lead to national disaster.

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<sup>2</sup>OTL, Labour was wedded to the financial orthodoxy for a lot longer-here, Mosley's really pushing the Keynesian approach. Large sections of the Party still are taking some convincing though.

<sup>3</sup>This is all OTL Mosley, tweaked slightly



## Chapter 4

*"This Party will, ultimately, be judged on its ability to deliver on its promise."*

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*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"1931 ELECTION:** The 1931 election was held in the autumn of that year after Stanley Baldwin's Conservative-Liberal emergency Government dissolved itself. After a hard-fought campaign that both major parties were confident of winning, the result was another hung parliament. Labour lost seats to the Conservatives, but not enough to enable a majority administration. As consequence, Baldwin was reluctantly forced to enter into coalition with the Samuelite Liberals for a second time.

The results were as follows:

**Conservative:** 291 (+31)

Labour: 257 (-30)

Liberal (Samuelite): 31 (+1)

Liberal (Simonite): 27 (-2)<sup>1</sup>

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"...The continuation of a hung Parliament after the General Election united almost every major political figure in disappointment. Baldwin found himself in a situation practically unchanged from before the election... he still had to depend on the Liberals for survival, but the protectionist lobby in his Party was becoming increasingly vocal. For Mosley's part, he regarded the results of the election as a personal humiliation. He felt that the victory that was in his grasp had been snatched away by the machinations of the press barons, and three days after the election he condemned the national media;

*"In Britain we have censorship given not to any Government, but censorship in the hands of money, and censorship used, by money, to sell to the people false news, to sell to the people lies, to push the vested interests, to raise the interest of the faction and the section above those of the people and of the nation"*

Over the following six months however Mosley's attitude towards the press would shift remarkably..."

*(Taken from "Conservatives in the 1930s" by Robert Lodge, OUP 1991)*

"...Almost as soon as Baldwin's new Government was formed it began to strain under the weight of its own contradictions... The Conservative dilemma was simple; the Government required the support of the Liberals to survive, but the free-traders could never accept the protectionist agenda that seemed all but certain to be Baldwin's policy...<sup>2</sup>

In one of the many ironies of British politics in the inter-war years, the arch anti-coalitionist Baldwin found himself obliged to lead a fundamentally divided coalition Government with militants on both sides of the protection issue. For a time though, it seemed like the fears of many within the Party were unfounded and that somehow a balance could be struck. Baldwin's attempts to forestall the tariff issue were largely successful at first, as he committed himself to a review of foreign trade policy to appease the protectionists, and then privately informed the Liberals that the review would find in favour of the status quo...<sup>3</sup>

In the spring of 1932 however, the lid could no longer be kept on the tariff issue. Preparations for the postponed Imperial conference in Ottawa were well-underway, and the fragile understanding hammered out by Baldwin was finally shattered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, when the die-hard protectionist Henry Page-Croft submitted a Private Member's Bill calling for a ten-percent tariff on many non-Imperial imports. The bill caused uproar in the Commons as protectionist Tories cheered their spokesman and waved their order papers at the Government front-bench, while the incensed Liberal coalitionists angrily passed notes to the Prime Minister...

By the following week Page-Croft's intervention had been quashed by the whips, but the damage had been done. The bill had utterly laid open the extent of backbench opinion against free-trade, and alienated both the Samuelite Liberals and their potential replacements the Simonites... Perhaps more ominously the affair impelled Lord Beaverbrook, the perennial thorn in Baldwin's side, to re-open his long-running campaign for Imperial preference and change within the Conservative party..."

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"As the spring of 1932 wore on it became increasingly obvious to Mosley and the Party as a whole that despite their disappointing performance in the autumn elections Labour remained in an extremely strong position... The Opposition merely had to wait for Baldwin's Government to implode, a task made even easier by Labour's own vehement support for Imperial preference. In a series of speeches in April and May Mosley rammed home the notion that only Labour could be trusted to enact proper protection, or 'insulation' as he preferred; any Conservative administration would merely bring in a watered-down set of reforms, if any at all... By implying on April 14<sup>th</sup> that Labour would vote for any protectionist motion tabled by Tory dissidents, Dalton handed a powerful weapon to the rebels and dismayed the Liberals..."

*(Taken from "Conservatives in the 1930s" by Robert Lodge, OUP 1991)*

"...By resurrecting the 'Empire Crusade', Beaverbrook intended to justify his previous efforts and avenge earlier setbacks. He was aware that Baldwin was in a potentially impossible situation, and was determined to 'go out more violently than ever', forcing Baldwin to 'give in or give up'. Increasingly he meant the latter... Beaverbrook was aware that a coalition Government involving the Liberals could never provide the policies he was determined to see enacted, and over the course of the spring of 1932 came to the conclusion that only through the Government's collapse could the 'masses who want to wipe out the present Conservative hierarchy' be persuaded to take action.

There was also the matter of Labour... Despite his manifest distrust of the Left Beaverbrook had a favourable opinion of

Mosley, and approved of his patriotic emphasis on 'insulation' within the Empire. In early May the two men met and Beaverbrook's opinions were confirmed, as he later recalled; "I sensed that in Mosley there was a man who we could do business with... He was a man of action, and had the interests of the Empire at heart". While at this stage Beaverbrook still thought in terms of securing a protectionist Conservative Government his previous horror at the prospect of Labour in power was considerably diminished, and in the early summer he even went as far as to float the concept of a 'National Party' comprising of a union of the Mosleyite Labour members and the Tory protectionists..."

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

For his part, Mosley's meeting with Beaverbrook produced a complete change in his attitude towards the press. Realising that he did have potential allies on Fleet St., Mosley began a concerted effort to cultivate contacts in the media, even going as far as to meet Lord Rothermere in early June. While neither party found the other entirely agreeable Rothermere approved of Mosley's focus on the Empire, and in the early summer of 1932 there was a noticeable shift in the tone Labour was talked of in the comment columns and editorials of British journalism..."<sup>4</sup>

*(Taken from "Conservatives in the 1930s" by Robert Lodge, OUP 1991)*

"...In the end, the final expiration of the short-lived coalition came in late May, when the sudden death of the Liberal MP Donald Maclean<sup>5</sup> necessitated a by-election in the constituency of North Cornwall. The seat was relatively marginal and could be won by the Conservatives, but

Baldwin decided that to appease the already grumbling Liberal element in the coalition it should remain uncontested by the Conservative party... Baldwin reckoned without the connivance of his enemies however, and on June 2<sup>nd</sup> it emerged that a young Tory named Alan-Lennox-Boyd<sup>6</sup> would stand in North Cornwall as an "Independent Conservative" candidate, sponsored by Beaverbrook. The following day the Labour party announced that it would not contest the seat, and requested its voters to align with Lennox-Boyd as the only candidate for 'protection'...

...The North Cornwall campaign was a bitter one, as the Liberals poured every resource they could into the constituency, while Beaverbrook and Rothermere's publishing Empires produced editorial after editorial extolling the virtues of their candidate. Baldwin's already shaky authority was undermined further when on the eve of the poll Leo Amery and a group of Tory protectionists visited the area and made speeches on behalf of Lennox-Boyd... By this stage the result of the count was immaterial as the damage had already been done. Feeling betrayed and angry, Samuel's Liberals resigned their posts on the morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>, hours before the news that Lennox-Boyd had been elected by a hair's breadth majority...

...After desultory negotiations with the Simonite Liberals collapsed that afternoon, Baldwin found himself forced to admit that he could not form any effective Government. He went to the palace in the evening and requested the dissolution of Parliament for almost the second time in six months..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"The election campaign of 1932 was short, vicious and decisive. Both Labour and the Conservatives realised that a straight majority had to be secured for any new administration to survive, and relentlessly harried the Liberals for their remaining seats... Baldwin had been released from the fetters of coalition and was free to campaign on a platform of Imperial Preference, but his actions over the previous six months had discredited him in the eyes of many protectionists and it seemed unlikely that any wing of the Conservative Party would fully trust him again...

On the Labour side, Mosley fought a relentlessly energetic campaign, under the slogan 'New Labour, New Britain'. He continued to emphasise the break with the past in the hope of obtaining votes from working-class Tories wary of socialism but supportive of protection, social reform and the Empire; a strategy that began to cause increasing concern to the Conservatives... by the final week of the campaign it seemed like Labour were on course to victory, despite Tory attempts to stoke up fears of the 'red menace'; In a bloodcurdling speech in Newcastle for example the Ulster MP William Allen claimed that 'behind Labour members who made statesmanlike speeches there are great masses of subversive and bloodthirsty savages who want to deluge this land of ours in blood'<sup>7</sup>..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...Protection was made the main issue of the 1932 election by Baldwin, after the collapse of his coalition on the issue. Mr. Amery, the chief apostle of protection, came to Ladywood with a great flourish to introduce a new Conservative candidate against me. We exchanged amities:

he called me a 'Bolshevik', and I called him 'the busy little drummer boy in the jingo brass band'. Then followed a serious and well-reasoned debate on protection before a highly expert audience...

...for me the highlight of the campaign came when I addressed a large crowd from the steps of Birmingham's council house on the eve of polling... all the fighting was over, but a huge audience was assembled, all of whom I had to try to convince and some of whom I had to lift to further heights of enthusiasm. It was a tremendous effort of the mind, will and spirit for the sake of the cause in which I passionately believed. That period of waiting before a speech is a time of awe. In the end, the moment comes and you go over the top. All the intellect, the faith, the preparation of the spirit, is then of no avail without the effort of the will..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"1932 ELECTION:** The 1932 election was held in the summer of that year as the Conservative/Liberal Government established the previous autumn collapsed following the North Cornwall By-Election. The campaign was a vicious one, marked by Conservative disunity over the free trade issue and the growing slump in support for the Tories amongst the working classes. The result was a major swing away from the Conservatives and Liberals, producing the first ever majority Labour Government...

The results were as follows:

**Labour:** 318 (+61)  
**Conservative:** 251 (-40)  
**Liberal:** 36 (-22)



## Independent: 1 (+1)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The 1931 election isn't the Labour rout of OTL for several reasons. Mosley's efforts at re-branding the party and turning it into a strong alternative to the Conservatives is one reason, as is MacDonald's absence from the scene- however, the big change is that there aren't the anti-Labour electoral pacts all over the country that there were OTL because of the National Government. In 1931 the Labour vote fell, but not catastrophically- it was astute playing of the British electoral system that hurt them so much.

<sup>2</sup>I feel very sorry for Baldwin in this TL- the election has given him perhaps the worst result possible and it would take a miracle for anyone to salvage anything successful from the situation. He's leading a party with sections that won't accept anything less than outright protectionism, while being in charge of a coalition that depends on the continuation of free-trade policies.

<sup>3</sup>OTL there were huge tensions within the National Government on the issue of protection, but the Liberal free-traders were utterly outnumbered by the vast new intake of Tory MPs and were outmanoeuvred by MacDonald. Here, they hold the key to the government's survival, so Baldwin has to bend over backwards to keep them onside.

<sup>4</sup>OTL of course Rothermere ended up supporting Mosley's BUF in 1934- which gave us the Mail's wonderful headline "Hurrah for the Blackshirts!". His politics remain the same ITTL, and while he finds Mosley's Labour roots a little pink for his liking he approves of is protectionism.

<sup>5</sup>The father of the Donald Maclean of Philby and Burgess fame- he died in 1932 OTL and precipitated a small crisis in the National Government

<sup>6</sup>Alan Lennox-Boyd was one of the many young Tories elected in the 1931 election OTL. He later went on to become Churchill's Transport Minister and Eden's Colonial Minister.

<sup>7</sup>OTL Allen was an ally of Mosley and a member of first the New Party, then the BUF. Here, his anti-communism is getting the better of him...

<sup>8</sup>Why these results? Well, voters are sick of weak governments amidst a general feeling of crisis, and turn against the Liberals so strongly because there's a general perception that they are blocking desperately-needed reforms. The Tories for their part are experiencing a haemorrhage of working-class voters to Labour, as Mosley's appeal to "Patriotism and Protection" with social reform has paid off.

## Chapter 5

*"The art of leadership is saying no, not saying yes. It is very easy to say yes."*

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*(Taken from "New Britain" by Oswald Mosley, Flag Press 1931)*

“...I believe in the following simple principles: (1) give a man a job to do; (2) give him the power to do it; (3) hold him responsible for doing it; (4) sack him if he does not do it. Labour principles, therefore, abhor the fugitive irresponsibility of a committee but do not descend into the morass of dictatorship. I have seen the committee system in action within our political system and have observed its consequence. If several men are in name responsible no one is, in fact, responsible, and no one can be held to account for failure... Everyone shelters behind his colleagues and disclaims personal responsibility; all wanted to do the right thing, but none could persuade their colleagues to do it. Not only does the committee system dissipate action in endless talk; it breeds cowardice and evasion in leadership in place of courage and responsibility. Therefore, in the building of our Movement and in the building of a Government I believe in the leadership principle, which means personal and individual responsibility...

...We have rationalised industry and most other aspects of life, but we have not rationalised the State. Sir Arthur Salter has said that "private society has developed no machinery which enables industry as a whole to contribute to the

formation of a general economic policy, and secure its application when adopted." It is this machinery of central direction which the Corporate State is designed to supply - and that, not as a sporadic effort in time of crisis, but as a continuous part of the machinery of Government..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...At the time there was much loose talk of 'business government' without any clear definition of what this term meant. I gave a definition in my first days in office: 'The proper relationship of Government to Parliament is that of company directors to shareholders— the shareholders should decide broad policy and then give the directors complete freedom to carry it out'. If 'business government' meant anything clear and practical, it meant Government given the power to act by the people's representatives in Parliament, in the same way as a board of directors is given that power by the shareholders, subject to their right to interrogate and if necessary dismiss the directors at a shareholders' meeting.

This makes a practical proposition of the term 'business government', which as a vague phrase is no aid to clear thinking. Otherwise, business government can only mean that Government should itself conduct the whole country directly, as management conducts a business; namely, universal nationalisation or interference, the last thing the business world wants. The job of Government is to make possible the job of industry, not to do it. This bedrock fact must stand out of the spate of nonsense now talked about Government and industry..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"...As soon as he entered Downing St, Mosley set about enacting the legislation he felt his country so desperately needed. Dalton was appointed Chancellor and Graham<sup>1</sup> Home Secretary, while the ever-dependable Henderson returned to the Foreign Office...The new Government's first move was to submit an Import Duties Bill to parliament, creating a strong tariff barrier and in the process setting out Britain's position on the protection issue to the Dominion Governments preparing to meet at Ottawa the following month<sup>2</sup>. The legislation sailed through Parliament with little difficulty, impelled both by the general sense of crisis and a large degree of support from the Tory backbenches, in disarray after the resignation of Baldwin...

...After dismantling generations of British economic policy in a stroke, Mosley's new Government used the summer recess to deal with its own internal structure. A key facet of Mosleyite political thought was the concept of the Government as corporation, and in a bid to improve governmental efficiency the administration's entire decision-making apparatus was overhauled..."

*(Taken from "The British presidency; Government in the Mosley period" by Ivan Henderson, Longman 1991)*

"Mosley's 'corporatism' was based upon the need to escape from established outlooks and orthodox practices, in order to release a pragmatic inventiveness that would lead to more workable ways to address immediate problems. Given these values and motive forces, together with the Prime Minister's determination not to be sucked into the kind of leadership-sapping spectacles of Government disintegration that marked the MacDonald and Baldwin administrations, Mosley viewed the cabinet and its system

of cabinet committees with personal misgivings and suspicion... After six months of a Mosley administration, an embittered George Lansbury wrote;

*'This is a Government in thrall to its triumph in July and the leader that produced it... Its collective membership permits him to run it as a personal fiefdom, consulting here and there with selected colleagues, running the show through an inner 'war' cabinet, not all of whose members belong to the real thing or have any other base than as a Mosley familiar... Few these days talk of the cabinet as a centre of power, or its meetings as occasions where difficult matters are thrashed out between people whose convictions matter to them'*<sup>3</sup>

While the forms of cabinet government were adopted, the essence remained in doubt. Cabinet committees never had the status and reach that they had possessed under previous administrations, and full sessions of the cabinet were preceded by more substantial strategy meetings by the 'Big Three' (in 1932, Mosley, Graham and Dalton) and selected aides. The overall effect was later described by Attlee as a system whereby 'Mosley presided over a cabinet not of comrades, but of strangers'. The use of the word 'strangers' was strongly suggestive of the United States Cabinet...

...The doubling of the Prime Minister's staff in the first year of the Mosley premiership, the introduction of Party men from Labour positions to strategic posts relating to policy advice in Government departments and the Civil Service reforms of 1932-3 all contributed to a closer association between Number 10 and the 'centre'. The drive by Mosley to provide a dynamic and professionalised 'centre' was exemplified by the influx of senior advisors from outside the world of politics... In September 1932 the Government invited representatives from industry, the unions, academia

and banking to join a 'National Council', a further dilution of cabinet power..."

*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"While Mosley stayed in Britain to supervise the construction of his new Government, in August Dalton and a large team of negotiators travelled to Ottawa and the Imperial Economic conference. Their negotiations were relatively successful. While the Imperial Free Trade Area that the Government truly wanted was not realised, the British negotiators were able to walk away with an agreement that could be presented as a victory for the Imperial ideal...<sup>4</sup>

When Parliament reconvened in September, it had a busy legislative schedule ahead of it<sup>5</sup>. The twin centrepieces of this legislation were the Unemployment Act and the Fair Wages Act; the first not only restored the level of benefit to largely the level it had been before the controversial cuts the previous year, but also established a 'National Relief Organisation' which aimed to take unemployed volunteers and place them in camps from where they would be able to carry out public works schemes. The Fair Wages Act followed the British Columbian model, legislating for a board made up of employer and employee representatives, as well as the public, to recommend a minimum wage for workers of both sexes... Plans were also announced to give tax-breaks and other incentives to companies who established factories and light industry in the depressed parts of Northern England and Scotland, and the creation of the 'National Council' was designed to help coordinate the actions of business, the unions and act as a breeding-ground for new ideas... In November an Agriculture Act was passed to protect British farmers via subsidy, although

many still complained about the ease of imports from the Dominions...”

*(Taken from “Conservatives in the 1930s” by Robert Lodge, OUP 1991)*

“...The defeat of 1932 and Baldwin’s subsequent resignation gave Conservative politicians the chance to redefine their Party and become a coherent alternative to Labour... At first it seemed that there would be little controversy in the choice of new leadership. Neville Chamberlain was the obvious frontrunner, and his ministerial experience and long-held protectionism made him an appealing successor to Baldwin. However, many within the Party believed that only by emulating Labour’s choice of a charismatic younger man as leader could the defeat of the election be reversed.

There was also the influence of Lord Beaverbrook to consider. While he had appalled many Conservatives by his destructive actions in the spring, the fall of Baldwin and the triumph of protection within the Tory party had hugely increased his influence, and the demonstration of Beaverbrook’s ability to seriously damage the party at the polls convinced many that only with a leader with his blessing could prove a success... In a series of hastily convened meetings in the first week of August a disparate grouping of Tories tried to convince the party grandees that Chamberlain was too old and too familiar a face to allow the Party to make a new start, and what was needed was youth and charisma; all qualities exemplified by the young former under-secretary at the Foreign Office, Anthony Eden...<sup>6</sup>”

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"...After the flurry of legislation passed by the Commons in the autumn of 1932 the Labour Government settled into its role, giving Britain its first period of political stability since the beginning of the decade. Mosley still had ambitious plans for the reformation of the House of Lords amongst other things, but he was advised by his colleagues that it would be wise to allow his initial programmes to 'bed down' before anything new was attempted. The Government's popularity had soared due to the radical steps Labour had taken to reduce unemployment, and the period was a bleak one for Eden's Conservative party, whose dark warnings of disaster if Labour policies were adopted now looked ridiculous and opportunistic...

...In the spring of 1933 the Government suffered its first major crisis, when the new German Government informed the Geneva disarmament conference that unless other countries were obliged to disarm to their level, Germany would have the right to build up its own military to parity with its neighbours. While this proposal angered the French, the Mosley Government saw it as an ideal opportunity to press for full disarmament in a general sense, and publicly endorsed the German proposal<sup>7</sup>, suggesting a disarmament plan proposed by the US President Herbert Hoover as model for the reduction of forces. This failed to impress either the French or the Germans, and in June the German delegation withdrew from the conference, refusing all attempts to entice them back. The resulting outcry over the Government's lack of resolve towards the prospect of German re-armament came as a surprise to many, and at a debate on the issue on May 7<sup>th</sup> Eden<sup>8</sup> caught the mood of the House when he remarked that; "I think... this country ought to say that we will not countenance for a moment the yielding to Hitler and force what was denied to Stresseman and reason"<sup>9</sup>. The



controversy deeply embarrassed Mosley and in particular Henderson, who felt taken advantage of by both the Germans and by his own Government. Once the crisis had subsided, he quietly resigned, pointedly for health reasons to avoid accusations of Labour infighting. He was swiftly replaced by Clement Attlee...

...With one of the most fervent supporters of disarmament out of the cabinet and the Geneva conference in disarray, the Prime Minister increasingly came to the opinion that the attempts to disarm had been a noble failure, and only through a gradual program of military expansion could Britain feel secure. This view would put Mosley at loggerheads with much of his own party for the first time since he had arrived in Government, but most certainly not for the last..."

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<sup>1</sup>William Graham was a highly promising figure in the Labour Party who was President of the Board of Trade in MacDonald's Labour administration. OTL he died very suddenly in 1934- this is butterflyed away in this TL.

<sup>2</sup>This bit of legislation will be similar to OTL's Import Duties Act, only more wide-ranging and with higher tariffs.

<sup>3</sup>Lansbury is exaggerating somewhat here- he is not a fan of the Mosley administration and has been a leading light in Labour's small anti-Mosley faction. His quote has been reproduced by the author partly because of the benefits of hindsight.

<sup>4</sup>OTL the conference resulted in a series of bilateral agreements between Britain and the Dominions and was regarded as something of a fudge- ITTL the government is more ideologically wedded to Imperial Preference and so is more willing to make concessions. This breaks the deadlock to a certain extent, and Britain is able to walk away with a treaty signed by the various Dominions agreeing to coordinate their efforts. This is not good news for Estonia, Argentina and Denmark amongst others- their depression will be more severe than OTL.

<sup>5</sup>One effect of the flurry of legislation coming out of Downing St in the days following Mosley's election will be a tendency for later historians to compare his first 'hundred days' to that of FDR's. Roosevelt will almost certainly be described as a 'Mosleyite' in this TL, and for his part

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Mosley will be regarded as somebody who 'Americanised' the British system of government.

<sup>6</sup>Poor, poor Anthony Eden. OTL he's remembered as the man who was forced to wait too long for the top job- in this TL he's the promising man who had greatness thrust on him too early. At least he's not bald though...

<sup>7</sup>The German demand happened OTL, indeed it was one the first acts of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich. In this TL however the British government has a different attitude towards disarmament then OTL's- Henderson as Foreign secretary is a great supporter of the idea, as is the Labour party as a whole. OTL, Mosley's stance on the issue was that if possible, all nations should disarm- however, if agreement could not be reached then Britain had every right to build up her armed forces to whatever level she saw fit. His alignment with Germany then is his attempt to secure general disarmament to forestall an otherwise-necessary military build-up.

<sup>8</sup>So, why Eden over Chamberlain? Well firstly, because Chamberlain is too obvious, and I wanted a young, promising but over-promoted Tory leader to be facing Mosley. In terms of the political situation, I felt that the meteoric rise of Mosley would make many Tories feel that they needed to find their own equivalent, and make a fresh start- plus I'm thinking that Chamberlain would be too closely associated to Baldwin and his final government. Plus, the Tory succession has a habit of turning against the obvious contender, as Rab Butler and Ken Clarke would doubtless tell you...

<sup>9</sup>OTL Attlee said something very similar.



Mosley the Candidate:  
Birmingham Ladywood, 1924



Ramsey MacDonald, 1929



“Between a rock and a hard place”: Stanley Baldwin, 1931

# OSWALD MOSLEY'S



# NEW BRITAIN

NEW LABOUR POLICY

3d

"New Britain"; the Labour Manifesto, July 1932



"Mosley Speaks!" East London, July 1932

James Maxton and Arthur Henderson, 1933





Mussolini and Dollfuss, March 1934



King Edward VIII and the future Queen Thelma, autumn 1935

## Chapter 6

*"It is not an arrogant Government that chooses priorities, it is an irresponsible Government that fails to choose."*

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*(Taken from "Labour; Drift and rediscovered purpose, 1924-1939" by Simon Greene, CUP 1982)*

"...When compared to the variety of tumultuous events that would hijack much of Mosley's time in office, the second half of 1933 and the beginning of 1934 were quiet periods for the Labour Government. The Conservative Party under Eden had found itself unable to make any impression in the administration's popularity, and falling unemployment rates confirmed Mosleyite economics as the new orthodoxy despite the protestations of the right...

...the secure position the Government found itself in naturally encouraged the bolder critics of Mosleyism however, and after the resignation of Henderson in the spring of 1933 the Left of the Party gradually began to return to its something similar to its traditional behaviour. In May the ever-fractious ILP held a meeting at which the perennial threat of disaffiliation from Labour was raised yet again, only to be quashed by Maxton, still a supporter of Government policy<sup>1</sup>.

With the Government finally engaged in major reform at home, the main plank with which the Labour left tried to ensnare Mosley was the disarmament issue. Attlee and the Prime Minister found themselves constantly pressed on their hawkish stance towards Germany, and the leaking of a Labour Ministry memo in the September of 1933 which

put forward the idea that a re-armament programme would help boost jobs led to a huge outcry in some sections of the Party. Luckily for the Government however, the general public's attitudes to the issue were increasingly swayed by both the aggressive nature of the new German regime and reports of Japanese truculence in the east. Mosley's stance on re-armament was only strengthened in the summer of 1934..."

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"...It was to Italy that the Austrian issue was most significant, and it was Italy that pressed Britain and France into action. On February 17<sup>th</sup> 1934 the three nations issued a joint declaration that they had a common view of the necessity of maintaining Austria's independence and integrity in accordance with the peace treaties... Italy followed up the three power declaration with practical steps. On March 17<sup>th</sup> it entered into the Rome protocols with Austria and Hungary, providing for a consultative pact... This was more than commerce; it was in effect a warning to Germany. On the following day Mussolini was more explicit. He proclaimed to Rome and the world that Austria could rely on Italy for the defence of its independence..."

...On July 25<sup>th</sup> a Nazi gang seized the Austrian Broadcasting Company and announced the overthrow of Dollfuss and his cabinet. Learning of the plot, the Chancellor suspended a cabinet meeting and remained in the Chancery. There the Nazis found him and shot him down... All this horrified Europe, but none more than Mussolini. Mussolini had looked upon Dollfuss as a friend and protégé. The Italians acted immediately. He ordered four divisions, 100,000 men to the Austrian border to guard against any 'complications'. He telegraphed the Austrian



Government the assurance that Italy would strenuously defend Austrian independence and broadcast to the world his declaration that all those who had been responsible for the murder of the Chancellor had 'incurred the wrath of the civilised world'. For a while war seemed imminent and there was a flurry of diplomatic activity at the beginning of August, Prime Minister Mosley even flying<sup>2</sup> to Rome on the 7<sup>th</sup> in an attempt to avert a conflict...

By the end of the month the crisis was over, but Mussolini had drawn his conclusions and they were stark. It was all to be expected, this 'revolution of the old German tribes against the Latin civilisation of Rome'. No civilised country could tolerate Hitler's behaviour. He spoke with prophetic clarity in the autumn; 'Hitler will create an army, Hitler will arm the Germans and make war- possibly even in two or three years. I cannot stand up to him alone. We must do something and we must do something quickly.'<sup>3</sup>...

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...Mussolini, as is well known, received his guests in an enormous room at the Palazzo Venezia, and I seldom saw him anywhere else. On my entry he would rise behind his large writing-table at the other end of the room and give the fascist salute, which I returned; he would then come round the desk and advance some way to meet me—halting before the last few paces and throwing back his head in his characteristic gesture as he extended his hand—thus sparing his guest some of the long and solitary march to the chair in front of the table... We used to talk in French, which he spoke well, and conversation was always easy until one fatal day when he announced with pride on my arrival that he had learnt English; after that I understood little he said. Apparently he had lessons from some old English governess, and I shall have the sympathy of my

compatriots who have experienced conversation with an Italian who speaks English really badly...

...He expressed the warmest regard for the English people, his desire to work in peace and harmony with them, and, perhaps surprisingly, his deep sympathy for our movement<sup>4</sup>. I liked him, and found him easy to get on with. This was not always the experience of his colleagues, as I learnt on arriving in Rome for the first time, at the height of Austrian crisis of 1934. When I arrived, Mussolini was in such a rage that none of his associates dared approach him on the subject, and some of them suggested that in my interview I should try to cool him off. I made the attempt, and he took it very well; at first a hard stare of the glittering eyes, and then a most reasonable and realistic discussion. They were right in thinking that he would accept more from the outsider..."

*Taken from "Founding Father: The Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose" by Nirad Bose, Dirispat 1987)*

"From Prague, Bose travelled to Italy. He felt that it was not enough for him to establish contacts with only Austrian, Czech and Polish politicians. He wanted also to meet and know the leaders of Germany and Italy because these countries had at that particular time become centres of important political movements in Central Europe... In Rome, Subhas Bose wanted to speak to Mussolini urgently to convince him of the fight for freedom which the Indian people were carrying on to liberate themselves from the British yoke. At first, his efforts to meet Italian officials came to nothing on the grounds that the Italian Government was determined to remain neutral in the fight which the Indian people were carrying on against Great Britain... However, in August 1934 an opportunity presented itself. Oswald Mosley had flown to Rome in an

attempt to calm tensions between Mussolini and Hitler over the status of Austria. During their discussions, a chance comment by the Prime Minister led the Duce to suggest an impromptu summit between Bose and Mosley, with himself acting as the mediator; Mosley declined the offer, but nevertheless agreed to meet Bose in private<sup>5</sup>.

The meeting between Bose and Mosley profoundly influenced both men<sup>6</sup>. While not being able to promise the complete freedom of the Indian people, Mosley proved far more amenable to Subhas Bose's arguments than he expected. More importantly, Bose realised that the Prime Minister's thoughts on economics and the need for transformation of the State were largely similar to his own. After a long discussion on political theory and the need for corporate government, the meeting ended amicably. Bose passionately rejected Mosley's view that India's destiny lay as a Dominion within the Empire, but he left Rome convinced of the Prime Minister's sincerity and good intentions towards India<sup>7</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Mosley's visit to Rome in the summer of 1934 did little to solve the Austrian crisis, but it had several, more far-reaching effects. Against all the odds, the Labour Prime Minister and the Fascist Dictator found themselves extremely amenable to each other, and Mosley's "summer jaunt" (as the press somewhat dismissively termed it) began one of the most unlikely friendships of 20<sup>th</sup> century diplomacy. At the time, few realised the significance this relationship would have for European politics, but the events of 1935 would demonstrate the importance of Anglo-Italian relations in inter-war Europe....In November foreign affairs briefly receded into the background however, for on

the 13<sup>th</sup> the nation woke to the news that the King had died after a short illness<sup>8</sup>...”

*(Taken from a speech made by Oswald Mosley to the House of Commons, November 13<sup>th</sup> 1934)*

“King George throughout the long years of the war took his full part in the national effort. His example inspired his people in the struggle. But he was no glorifier of war. He stood always for peace. He sought as soon as the war ended to do his utmost to heal its wounds and recreate good relations between nations. No less in the difficult post-war years he shared in the work of reconstruction. He was a real social reformer and took the keenest personal interest in the problems of the day. He recognised the claims of social justice and felt equally the tragedy of unemployment. He shared to the full the life of his people....

...What were the qualities which enabled the late King to succeed where others failed? It seems to me they were his selflessness and devotion to duty, his kindness and humanity, his practical wisdom and his courage at all times. The ceremonies which we have witnessed during the last few days show us that the duties and qualities of Kingship are eternal. King George showed an incomparable understanding of what is required of a King in the modern world. It has been a great piece of good fortune for our generation that, just when scientific invention has enabled, for the first time, so many citizens of the British Commonwealth to hear for themselves the voice of their King, we should have had on the throne a man who so well understood how to speak to his people, a man who set before the nation ideals of peace, justice and service. We have seen the end of a noble life, a life devoted to the welfare of humanity. And in his son, we have a worthy successor and inheritor of his legacy. In the long roll of

British Sovereigns none will, I think, take a higher place than King Edward..."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>OTL in 1931 Maxton managed to keep the ILP within the Labour fold- here the grumbling is more for effect than anything else, and there's no real chance of a split. Some on the left hope to call Mosley's bluff by making threats, in the hope that more radical legislation will follow- the more sensible sections of the ILP realise that the reforms of 1932-3 need to be cemented before more can follow.

<sup>2</sup>Being all thrusting and modern, Mosley is the first British PM to make frequent use of planes in international diplomacy. ITTL the joke; "have you seen the Prime Minister's plane?" "It's got no left wing!" will make a welcome addition to the lexicon several generations early.

<sup>3</sup>With the exception of the fact that Mosley wasn't PM when he visited Rome, this all happened OTL. Mussolini's quote is a real one BTW. Italy's intransigence over Austria in the early 30's is somewhat overshadowed by later events OTL. ITTL, things will be slightly different.

<sup>4</sup> Why is Mussolini expressing sympathy for the Labour Party? Well for a start he and Mosley get on like a house on fire, as they did OTL. Mussolini also feels that Mosley has successfully purged Labour of socialism and is worthy of respect. OTL Austen Chamberlain said that "*Mussolini would not be Fascist if he was an Englishman in England*"- ITTL Mussolini agrees with this sentiment.

<sup>5</sup> OTL Labour and Liberal figures were happy to meet with Bose, while the Conservatives refused point-blank- I can see Mussolini being keen to gain credit for any reconciliation between Bose and the British, while Mosley would accept out of politeness if nothing else.

<sup>6</sup> Actually this is rubbish, but this book is something of a hagiography so the author would like to believe that Mosleyism is largely inspired by Bose's own philosophies when it's actually more the reverse...

<sup>7</sup> Bose is never going to be very happy with the British but he does trust Mosley to a certain extent, and for his part Mosley sees him as a potential lever to split Congress if necessary.

<sup>8</sup>This is 18 months earlier than OTL. Why? Well, George died of flu and diseases are rather susceptible to butterflies. Perhaps more importantly, the King has an intense dislike of Mosley and his new government, and finds dealing with all those awful little men a real strain, not at all like that nice Mr Baldwin or even MacDonald...

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<sup>9</sup>Mosley is not at his most impassioned and honest during this speech sadly- however, he is very excited by the prospect of David getting on the throne. Indeed, the fact that the establishment hates him is an advantage as far as he's concerned...

## Chapter 7

*"The present House of Lords is an anachronism."*

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*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**"WALWAL INCIDENT:** Border clash between Italian and Abyssinian troops in December 1934, and a major factor in the Italian invasion of the country the following year. In 1930, the Italian Government ordered the construction of a fort at the Walwal oasis in the Ogaden desert, claiming that the Italo-Abyssinian treaty of two years before put the region under Italian jurisdiction. In the November of 1934, Abyssinia protested this move, and in early December, the tensions mounted to a clash at the oasis that left 150 Abyssinian and 50 Italian casualties. Both sides demanded apologies of the other, and while the dispute was taken to the League of Nations before the New Year both sides had begun preparations for the war that would begin the following autumn..."

*(Taken from "Edward VIII- A Life" by Isabelle Green, Longman 1978)*

"...For a brief period however the future King's attention was drawn to another woman, much to Thelma's chagrin. On January 10, 1931, the Prince attended a party hosted by Thelma- also invited were Ernest and Wallis Simpson, a

wealthy American banker based in London and his socialite wife. Initially Simpson did not make a very big impression on the Prince, but four months later they met again and from there a mutual attraction began to develop. In the winter of 1931 the Prince had dinner with the Simpsons, staying until the early hours of the morning....

...When Thelma went on a trip to the United States in January 1934 she asked Wallis Simpson to look after the Prince for her. When she returned, however, she found that she had been replaced in the Prince's affections and now Wallis Simpson seemed to be the only woman for Edward... According to Wallis, it was in August 1934 that their relationship became more serious. During that month, the Prince took a cruise on Lord Moyne's yacht, the *Rosaura*. Though both Simpsons were invited, Ernest Simpson could not accompany his wife on the cruise because of a business trip to the United States. It was on this cruise, Wallis later stated, that she and the Prince "crossed the line that marks the indefinable boundary between friendship and love."

For around six months, Simpson was the only woman in Edward's life. Previous mistresses- Thelma among them- were ignored entirely. For his part, the Prince was passionately devoted to her- to the extent that many worried that he neglected his own duties for her. For Simpson's part, her feelings towards Edward remain ambiguous. It was popularly believed at the time that she was seduced less by the Prince himself than by the glamour and power of his position and that she was a ruthlessly ambitious social climber- a judgement reinforced by her alleged actions in the autumn and winter of 1934...

...Around the time of the death of the Prince's father however, Edward's relationship with Simpson began to fall apart. By September 1934 it is known that Simpson (who was still married) was conducting multiple affairs, one with



a married car salesman named Guy Trundle. There are even rumours that she had secret assignations with the Prime Minister Oswald Mosley, although this has never been proven<sup>1</sup>... She also found Edward's dependence upon her burdensome and claustrophobic, writing to her uncle: "How can a woman be a whole empire to a man?" As the autumn wore on she treated the Prince increasingly rudely in the hope that he would break off their affair of its own accord, but he seemed oblivious to the contempt and bullying she poured on him.

In the end, Simpson used the death of the King in November 1934 as a pretext to end the relationship, claiming that she preferred to 'fade into the shadows' then to be exposed to the eye of the public. Heartbroken, the newly-proclaimed King Edward nonetheless found time to have a brief affair with Diana Mitford, the future wife of Oswald Mosley, who introduced the two to each other at a party in December<sup>2</sup>. When this relationship also failed, the King found himself crawling back to his old paramour Thelma Furness, who eventually accepted him again-although it is said that she never truly forgave him for his dalliance with Simpson..."

*(Taken from the Notes and Queries section of the Guardian, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1999)*

**Q:** Is it true that Oswald Mosley stole Edward VIII's mistress Wallis Simpson?

(Guy Richardson, Stroud, Gloucestershire)

**A:** The question of whether Mosley had a relationship with Wallis Simpson is a controversial one, and will only be properly answered in 2015 when the relevant files are made public<sup>3</sup>. However, it is generally regarded that the two had

a brief affair in the autumn of 1934, just before the death of George V. Mosley and Simpson had first met at a party organised by Lady Cunard that September, and their meeting certainly coincided with the decline of Simpson's relationship with the Prince of Wales. Mosley was certainly a compulsive womaniser, and the death of his wife 'Cimmie' the year before gave him even less reason to exercise restraint than he might have done otherwise, although it is known that around the time he had also been seeing his future wife and long-term mistress, Diana Mitford..."

*(Taken from the Labour General Election manifesto, June 1932)*

"...The House of Lords will be replaced by a Second Chamber representing the industry, culture and ability of the Nation. This Second Chamber will also contain representatives whose technical knowledge of science and industry shall be specific and detailed beyond the needs of the House of Commons and will also contain representatives of Education, Religion, the Services, Science, Art, and every aspect of the people's life... The present House of Lords is an anachronism. By abolishing the present House of Lords in favour of an Assembly genuinely representing the industry and culture of the Nation, Labour will restore the original conception of the British Constitution."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"The accession of Edward VIII to the throne was a fantastic boon to the Labour Government. The new King was a self-conscious moderniser and liked to see himself as a man of the people, a world apart from his conservative and cautious father. He fully supported the Government's economic reforms, and took a great interest in the affairs of

state- much to the irritation of many of his close advisors. From the very beginning of his reign he angered many within the traditional 'establishment' by his relentless enthusiasm for change- his first act as King was to end the tradition of having the clocks at Sandringham put forward half an hour, instead ordering that they show the correct time. King Edward's drive, energy and his unfailing ability to infuriate the establishment made him the perfect counterpart to Mosley as Premier- a fact lost on neither man<sup>4</sup>...

...The issue of constitutional reform had long been on the Government's agenda, and now that a sympathetic figure was on the throne Labour felt able to broach the idea of re-organising the House of Lords. Intriguingly though, the King himself was the first to raise the idea in a meaningful way, expressing a concrete if vague desire for reform to Mosley on his return from Como<sup>5</sup> in April 1935. With Royal support guaranteed and Eden's Conservatives able to do little to prevent the passage of the bill through the Commons, only the Lords remained as an obstacle to reform- and they were soon bought off by the promise that many individual members of the upper house would remain, in their capacity as experts and representatives of the various sections of British society..."

*(Taken from "Parliament; A History" by Sebastian Spencer, CUP 1989)*

"Despite the radical revisions that the Parliament Act of 1935 made to the Upper Chamber, it was passed with remarkably little controversy. Enthusiastic Royal approval and the support for the reforms by many on the right undermined the Conservative Party's ability to resist the changes, especially when in May Lord Beaverbrook threw his weight behind reform, characterising the opponents of

the move as hopeless reactionary anachronisms in the process...

When Parliament returned after the summer recess then, it was to a new Upper House. Gone were the hereditary peers that had endured for centuries- in their place were a complex mixture of indirectly elected representatives, appointees made by an independent commission, and a selection of figures who could sit in the chamber by virtue of their public position<sup>6</sup>. The Government intended that the new House of Lords (whose unchanged name was one of the few things that the Conservatives managed to preserve from the old system) would represent every section of British society and allow expert scrutiny to be given to legislation arriving from the House of Commons..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"...The King's support for the Parliament Act proved to be a shrewd move on his part, for it put the Government in his debt... When in the August of 1935 he privately told Mosley that he intended to marry his long-time mistress the Viscountess Furness, the Prime Minister felt obliged to make King Edward's desire a reality. Mosley himself had no objection to the union- indeed later he wrote;

*"There is something symbolic of all their failure in the stiff absurdity of the English ruling class at this time, that they sneer at any form of marriage with an American of beauty, intelligence, charm and character..."*

However, the union was a controversial one in many circles, where the Viscountess' two divorces were seen as scandalous and likely to bring the Monarchy into disrepute. The idea that a divorcee would marry the King was especially disconcerting to many because his father had refused even to allow divorced persons to attend court. The

Conservative Party in particular was horrified, although Anthony Eden's comments on the issue were undermined by other figures on the right, most notably the veteran parliamentarian and serial rebel Winston Churchill, who warmly praised the idea of marriage...

As long as the Government remained supportive of the King however there was little the opponents of the match could do, and public opinion seemed generally supportive of the King, although only if the Viscountess renounced the title of queen. After several months of acrimonious debate that constantly threatened to erupt into a full-blown constitutional crisis, a compromise was reached; the King's paramour would be allowed to marry, but only in a morganatic marriage...<sup>7</sup>"

*(Taken from "The Monarchy in Constitutional Context" by Ivor Gibbons, Picador 1998)*

"...Morganatic marriages have been known in foreign royal houses, primarily because, in those houses, sovereigns are required to marry someone from a specific range of houses. In Britain however there are no such restrictions on the sovereign, and therefore until 1935 the concept of a morganatic marriage was unknown to the law. In Britain for example, Countess Sophie Chotek, the morganatic wife of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, would have been perfectly eligible to be queen, provided she renounced her Catholicism. Thus, a morganatic marriage could not be made legitimate without legislation. It was for this reason that the King needed ministerial consent for the idea...

...A further hurdle for the King was obtaining the consent of the Governments of the other Dominions, at the time meaning Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the Irish Free State. Most could be expected to support

the King, although in Australia there were worries that the Act might be voted down in Parliament... Surprisingly even the Irish were in favour of the move, despite the fears of many on the mainland<sup>8</sup>. In the event the Dominions acquiesced to the King's marriage, and the potential crisis was averted... The King finally married his consort on Christmas Eve, 1935"

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<sup>1</sup>This particular sentence will cause a media frenzy when the book is published in 1978, only a few years after Edward's death. It's one of those things that had been hinted at in some circles for years, but had never been printed.

<sup>2</sup>Diana and Oswald have had the affair they had OTL. Their relationship is pretty similar to OTL's all considered, although she will divorce Bryan Guinness somewhat later.

<sup>3</sup>On one level, having the Prince of Wales's mistress dump him for an affair with the Prime Minister sounds like something from a bad film, probably one by Richard Curtis (Hugh Laurie as the Prince? If only we could rejuvenate Leslie Phillips to let him take the Mosley part...). But, I reckon this is somewhat plausible. OTL Mosley was a notorious womaniser, and he and Wallis would have been a perfect match in many ways- they were both pretty amoral when it came to 'affairs of the heart'. Somehow I feel this just works...

<sup>4</sup>OTL Mosley and the (by then) Duke of Windsor got on very well, although they only met after the war- I imagine they'd be even better suited when they're both in power, although sadly neither is going to exactly act as a break on the other...

<sup>5</sup>This of course is an analogue of the Stresa conference of 1935. It goes pretty much as OTL which is why I'm not covering it in more detail- it's a little chummier than Stresa was as Mosley and Mussolini get on so well, but apart from that little changes.

<sup>6</sup>What I'm imagining here is something of a mess- it's a mixture of the Bryce proposals of 1918 and what the BUF was calling for in the 1930's. Basically there are some peers who are chosen by regional groups of MPs, who comprise the elected element. Then there are the appointed peers, who are similar to OTL's. The innovation in the reform really comes from the third group, who are meant to be leaders of the nation by virtue of the public prominence. It's an extension of the 'National Council' the Mosley government has already put into place really- so basically Generals, Union Leaders, captains of Industry and press

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Barons amongst others will all be able to sit in the Lords and give their views on legislation.

<sup>7</sup>Why is the \*abdication crisis so less severe in this TL? Well, for a start the government's support for the King means that there's no need for a constitutional crisis. Matters are also made easier by the fact that Thelma Morgan is altogether far less objectionable than Wallis Simpson- there are moral grounds for people to dislike her, but as the King's consort herself isn't widely hated it's felt that a deal can be done.

<sup>8</sup>OTL De Valera was the only Dominion premier to favour the concept of a Morganatic marriage. Why does this work in this TL? Well, the British Government supports the idea which counts for a lot, and as mentioned in the previous footnote Thelma Morgan doesn't inspire the same extraordinary hate that Wallis Simpson did.

## Chapter 8

*"The circumstances of our national security have now self-evidently changed"*

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*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"...After the decision to invade Abyssinia the following autumn had been taken, Mussolini was quick to secure support for the project from Britain and France, the other two major Powers interested in the region. In the January of 1935 Mussolini met the French Prime Minister Pierre Laval in Rome, and Africa was one of the primary areas of debate. The discussions were marked by the extremely cordial relations between the two leaders, and on January 5<sup>th</sup> Laval addressed Mussolini at a ceremony where the Italian dictator was presented the Legion of Honour; "You have written the fairest page in modern Italian history; you will bring assistance indispensable to maintaining peace". After several days of negotiation a wide-ranging series of Franco-Italian agreements were signed on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and while it is still unknown whether Laval explicitly indicated acquiescence to an invasion of Abyssinia, the French threat to Italy's ambitions in the Horn of Africa had nonetheless been effectively removed<sup>1</sup>...

...Mussolini's next challenge was Britain, which proved to be just as willing to come to an accord with Il Duce as the French had been. The Mosley Government had always been sympathetic to the Italian point of view, and the Prime



Minister himself had seen Abyssinia as a centre of barbarism ever since he had read Kathleen Simon's landmark work '*Slavery*' half a decade before<sup>2</sup>... The conference at Como in April did much to resolve the residual differences between the two nations, and with the collapse of Anglo-German negotiations two months later<sup>3</sup> any risk to Anglo-Italian relations had been quashed for the time being..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"The increasingly acrimonious exchanges in Parliament about the King's marriage had one positive effect for the Government; the furore distracted the media and the public from the potentially embarrassing events that were taking place in the Horn of Africa. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> Mussolini finally ordered the invasion of Abyssinia, and 100,000 Italian troops supported by colonial militias poured into the African Kingdom from north and south. The outbreak of war attracted little attention in Britain, and it was only in early November with the final passage of the Marriage Act through the Dominion Parliaments that the conflict properly reached the public gaze<sup>4</sup>...

...This month-long window of public indifference to the issue gave Mosley and Attlee<sup>5</sup> a perfect chance to continue their pro-Italian policy without needing to pay any attention to national opinion, an advantage that the Government's French counterparts would envy greatly... In the first days after the invasion, British representatives in Geneva were ordered to do everything they could to frustrate anti-Italian moves in the League of Nations, vetoing the League's condemnation of Italy as the aggressor on October 7<sup>th</sup> and even putting forward proposals to legalise the invasion entirely under the anti-slavery protocols of Abyssinia's accession agreement<sup>6</sup>. While this

move was narrowly rejected it left the League's policy towards the conflict in utter disarray...

...By the time the war in Abyssinia reached the public consciousness, British policy on the issue had effectively created a *fait accompli*. The Government presented the invasion as a humanitarian intervention by Italy to prevent the slave trade and other barbarous practices and was to a certain extent successful, but nonetheless there was plenty of opposition to the conflict from a disparate range of groups.... In Parliament the Liberals were the first to come out against the Government's position, quickly followed by some dissident members of the ILP. In mid November Eden's Conservatives followed, sensing that they had finally found a popular stance to take against a Government that increasingly looked like a shoe-in in the next Parliament<sup>7</sup>... in the event however Labour's early assumption of the moral high ground prevented a coherent opposition to Government policy, and the Abyssinia issue remained, as Churchill put it; 'an issue in search of a crisis'..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...The League of Nations, which in my youth I had so ardently supported as a new instrument of world peace, had begun to fail for reasons of personal weakness in statesmanship already noted, and by this time had been turned into an instrument of the balance of power which from historic experience I regarded as an inevitable prelude to war. The balance of power had always brought war, and now it threatened to return with the League on one side and a motley collection of rejectionist nations on the other; a perversion of every high aspiration of the war generation..."

...I analysed the circumstances in which Europe had arrived at this situation and how the original idea of the League was in danger of being destroyed. America had defected, six other nations –Japan, Turkey, Poland, Lithuania, Bolivia and Paraguay– had been allowed to defy the League with impunity and the departure of Germany had been made inevitable by the chronic lack of will of the League’s leaders. The process was in danger of being completed by driving Italy out of the League and into the other camp by the application of sanctions. I quoted Sir Edward Grigg, Governor of Kenya Colony, to the effect that Abyssinia had for years past raided not only Italian but British territory for slaves, and had committed definite acts of war without one finger being lifted by Geneva or the British Government. Yet when Italy took 'precisely the same measures to suppress these evils as had been taken at every stage of the honourable building of the British Empire', action had been taken against her, although six nations had already with complete impunity violated the covenant of the League. . . .<sup>8</sup>

...The indictment of the old party policy did not stop there. Some of Eden’s Conservatives, swallowing a generation of principle in their determination to destroy the peace, had even called for the Government to seek the assistance of the Soviets against Italy. From this needless gambit would have arisen the subservience of British to Soviet policy in the East, for Britain could not use the Soviets in Europe without in turn being used by the Soviets in the Orient... If Russia was to join with Britain in the iron ring round Germany and Italy, then Britain must have joined with Russia in their iron ring round Japan, not only in contravention of her own interests but in jeopardy of world peace.”

*(Taken from a speech by Oswald Mosley in Parliament, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1935)*

“The world, in fact, is divided into two camps of the possessors and the dispossessed ... in one camp are Britain and France; in the other camp by inevitable gravitation of common circumstances is Germany; and to that camp by analogous folly is being added Japan and potentially even Italy. With the return of the balance of power we witness the return of the arms race and the concomitant Press agitation which inflames the mind and spirit of Europe to fresh fatality...

...Regardless of the moral reasons for her intervention, by the occupation of Abyssinia Italy now has not only an outlet for her population but profitable access to raw materials, and she should be left in undisturbed possession of this new acquisition... A glance at a child's map of the world shows that a hostile Italy could be a much greater menace to British trade routes from the base of Sicily than from any base in Abyssinia. As to the threat to the Sudan, why should Italy abandon the development of the territories she already possesses in order to indulge in a savage fight with the greatest naval power in the world for extra territories which provide not greater but lesser sustenance? Even his worst enemy does not describe Il Duce as a fool...

Furthermore, Italy is not used to administering large colonial territories and will have enough to do in the development of Abyssinia for some generations. Rather, Italy's every interest is to join with the British Empire to maintain the stability and peace of the Eastern Mediterranean and of North Africa...”

**Map 1:**



The peace settlement in Abyssinia,

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"...To Mussolini's intense embarrassment, by the beginning of December the Italian advance in Abyssinia had begun to grind to a halt, slowed by the cautiousness of Marshal De Bono, logistical hitches, and ominously the use of smuggled German weapons by the defending Abyssinians<sup>9</sup>. The easy campaign that looked all but assured a few months before now had the potential to be a draining struggle, even if there was little prospect of Italy suffering a repeat of the humiliation she suffered at Adowa forty years before. With this in mind Mussolini sent quiet feelers to both Paris and London indicating his willingness to come to a compromise peace...

...Mussolini's action came as a huge relief to the Laval Government in France, which had been suffering a barrage of criticism on its reluctance to take a stand on the issue. In early December the French entered into consultations with the Mosley Government in Britain, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> Laval and the British Foreign Secretary Clement Attlee both flew to Rome to put a compromise peace to Mussolini... Under the terms of the proposal, Abyssinia would be dismembered. Italy would gain the best parts of Ogaden and Tigrè, and economic influence over all the southern part of Abyssinia. In compensation, Abyssinia itself would have had a guaranteed corridor to the sea, acquiring the port of Assab. The rump of Abyssinia would become a semi-autonomous region under the trusteeship of the League, although in reality this was intended to formalise British and French influence over the remains of the region<sup>10</sup>...

...Thanks to British and French intervention, on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1935 the brief conflict in Abyssinia came to an end through a cease-fire. The following day the League retroactively legitimised the invasion by accepting the

responsibilities offered to it in the region, and realising that the deal was their only chance of independence the Emperor signed the treaty on Christmas day..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"...The Government's secret diplomacy on the Abyssinia issue took the war's critics by surprise, and when Mussolini announced that he was submitting to Anglo-French mediation on December 9<sup>th</sup> Mosley pulled off a public-relations coup. Mosley's insistence on the League's involvement satisfied the internationalist wings of both the Labour and Conservative parties, and while the reduction of Abyssinia to a rump appalled some on the anti-colonialist left, the Government was able to claim that it was the best possible deal that could be made to save the nation from complete destruction. As 1935 drew to a close with the wedding of Edward VIII and his consort Thelma, the Mosley Government looked forward to the forthcoming election year with increasing confidence..."

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<sup>1</sup>This all actually happened- The French government was pretty pro-Italian in 1935 OTL even without the influence of a pro-Italian government in Britain.

<sup>2</sup>Kathleen Simon was an anti-slavery campaigner and wife of Liberal politician John Simon, who became Foreign Secretary in the National Government OTL. OTL I'm pretty sure Mosley read the work- I see no reason for things to be different ITTL.

<sup>3</sup>OTL these negotiations would have resulted in the Anglo-German Naval agreement of 1935. ITTL they failed because thanks to Mussolini's influence on Mosley the British government is less inclined to trust Hitler. There is also a much greater awareness on the part of Britain that Italy can be kept onside.

<sup>4</sup>This is quite a change from OTL, where Abyssinia was headline news from the very beginning. The lack of initial outrage for Italy's actions will make it difficult for the conflict to become a major political issue in Britain, especially as the government is frantically spinning the conflict in a positive way.

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<sup>5</sup>In fact, the pro-Italian stance of the Government is far more Mosley than Attlee, but the latter is very much a Foreign Secretary who does exactly as he's told and has little input into policy making.

<sup>6</sup>In 1923 Abyssinia was allowed to join the League, provided that it followed a host of directives related to the abolition of the Kingdom's flourishing slave trade. One of these was a recognition of the League's right to intervene to suppress the trade, which is what the British Government is raising ITTL.

<sup>7</sup>ITTL the Tories of the period have something of a thing for bandwagons... luckily for Eden the baseball cap- and for that matter the log flume- have yet to achieve widespread popularity in 1930's Britain

<sup>8</sup>Mosley's attitude to the League is not what you might expect- he's actually very much in favour of the idea, but feels that the League must be reformed hugely if it's to succeed.

<sup>9</sup>This is an exaggeration on the part of the author of course. OTL Hitler sent supplies and guns to the Abyssinians, and this happens here as well. Later events make this aid more prominent in retrospect than OTL, and the image of German military aid going to the Abyssinians is a convenient factor to claim as a reason for the slowing of the Italian advance (which happened OTL as well) in December 1935.

<sup>10</sup>This is pretty much OTL's Hoare-Laval pact, with a few differences, mostly the submission of rump Abyssinia to the League. This is a proposal championed by Mosley, who wanted the region under complete European control in some form or another in order to wipe out the slave trade. Butterflies and the slightly less controversial circumstances of the deal mean that it isn't leaked as it was OTL, and the constant spin by the British government has influenced public opinion quite successfully.



## Chapter 9

*"Unless you are ambitious, you do not make progress"*

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*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Mosley entered the New Year on a surge of popularity, and after the domestic and foreign successes of the previous year there seemed little that could stand in the way of the Labour Government winning a historic second term. The Conservatives under Eden had never quite managed to recover from their defeat of four years before, and Tory politicians still struggled to reconcile their vehement opposition to 'Mosleyism' with the programme's evident popularity in the country at large. This led to constant infighting within Conservative ranks on a range of issues, the traditional Tories on one side being opposed by veteran rebels like Churchill and young modernisers such as Macmillan on the other. In any event the dimly hoped-for 'spring miracle' that would bring down the Mosley Government never materialised, and in March the Prime Minister went to Buckingham Palace and asked the King to dissolve Parliament...

...The campaign was generally regarded as one of the most boring in living memory, as from the start there was little doubt as to the outcome. The flare-up of violence in Palestine halfway through the campaign<sup>1</sup> led to renewed foreign policy debate, but as consensus was soon reached on the issue it had little bearing on the overall result. With

this sole exception, the entire campaign was successfully framed by Labour as a vote of confidence in the Government's policies in the previous four years, a stroke that made campaigning extremely easy, although at the expense of turnout..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"1936 ELECTION:** As had long been expected, the 1936 Election was called for May 1<sup>st</sup>. In contrast to the previous contest in 1932 campaigning was desultory and muted, as there was little doubt of the overall outcome and the Conservative Party were clearly still incapable of mounting a significant challenge to Labour. The result saw Oswald Mosley's Government returned with an increased majority, as well as a further fall in the working class Tory vote and the continued decline of the Liberals at the expense of the two main parties.

The results were as follows:

**Labour: 342 (+24)**

Conservative: 234 (-17)

Liberal: 28 (-8)

Independent: 2 (+1)

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"With the election won and another term in office secured, the Government felt able to continue with "business as usual". Even the traditional post-election reshuffle was muted, with Attlee being sent to India as the new Viceroy and Graham taking his place at the Foreign Office. The new Home secretary was Herbert Morrison<sup>2</sup>. Mosley's main victory however was not against the Conservatives, but

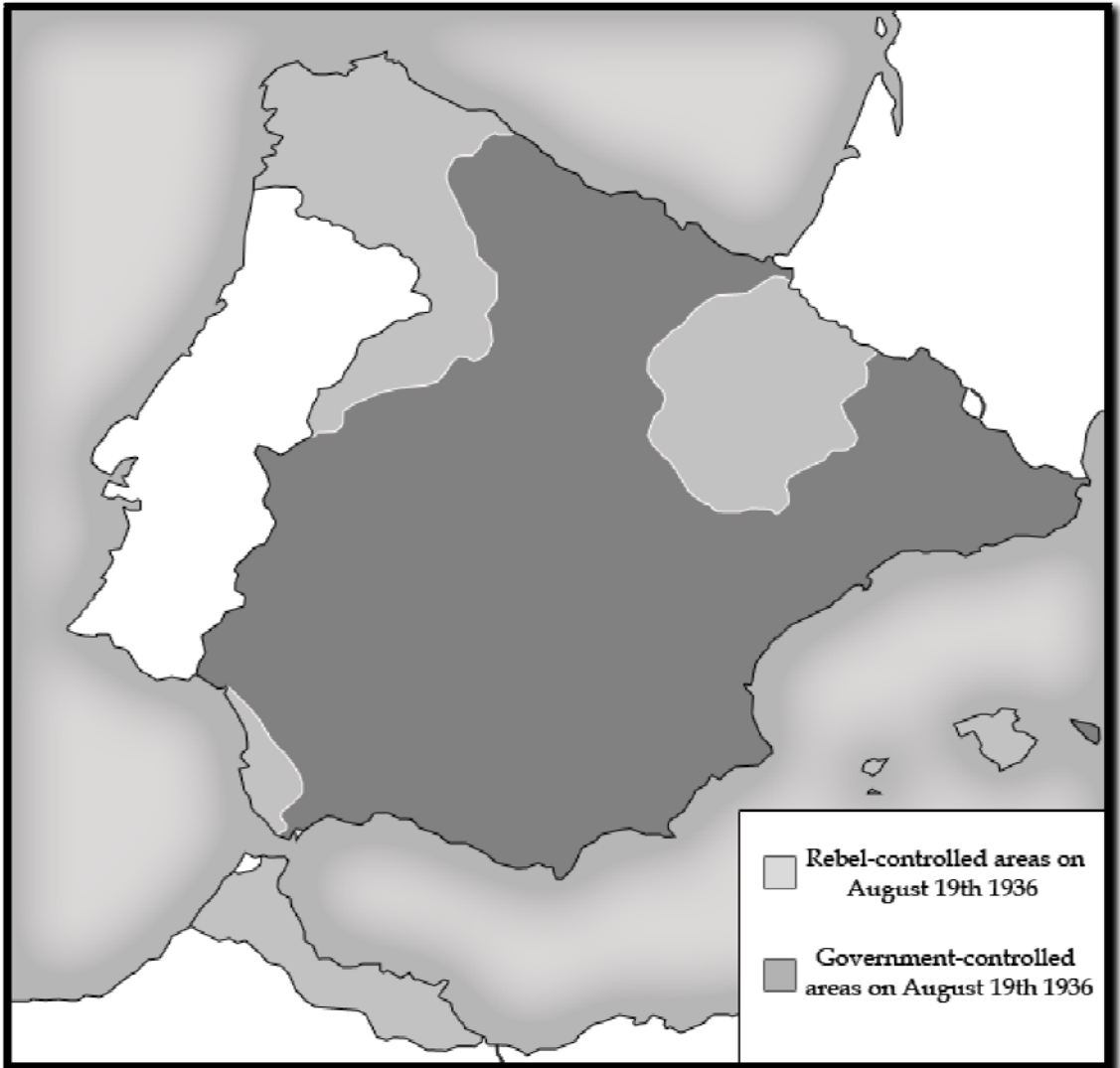
rather an internal one- with his majority now enhanced, the perennially rebellious ILP were less of a threat than before and now had no control over the Government's ability to pass legislation<sup>3</sup>. The removal of the ILP's theoretical veto meant that Mosley was no longer obliged to give great consideration to the views of the far left, a luxury that he would increasingly avail himself of in the years to come...

...Just before Parliament departed for the summer recess, the Government found the legislative time to finally pass the mammoth Government of India Act. The Act was the result of years of intensive negotiations and had been the subject of endless debates in the Commons, where hard-line Conservative Members deplored its provisions and claimed that it would lead to the break-up of the Empire. With the resignation of Anthony Eden as Tory leader in late May however, Labour had found the perfect time to get the bill through Parliament with the minimum of controversy, the Conservatives being distracted by choosing a new leader and unable to do much more than rage impotently from the Opposition benches..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"1936 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT:** The 1936 Government of India Act was the result of a long and torturous process of consultation and compromise between the British Government, the Princely States of India and Indian politicians themselves. It promised the imminent elevation of India to Dominion Status, and conditionally established a Federal Government, provided that half the provinces accepted the proposals. Clement Attlee was in charge of overseeing the implementation of the Act. It was the longest bill ever passed by Parliament.<sup>4</sup>"

**Map 2:**



Spain, August 1936

*(Taken from "Power, Politics and the Olympic Games" by Peter Scott, Tribune 1989)*

"...Ignoring the activity of the worker's internationals, the Berlin Olympics went ahead on schedule. Foreign critics continued to object however; the British Manchester Guardian called for a boycott and was appalled when it was revealed to great popular acclaim that the then-Prime Minister Oswald Mosley was intending to compete<sup>5</sup>; "Germany is seizing ideological control of the games"...As far as the Nazi Government was concerned, the Games brought about a period of international good feeling. Visitors left with memories of grand parties; in the words of Oswald Mosley to his wife<sup>6</sup>; "It was a fantastic Olympics, spectacular! I had such fun!" The talks between Mosley and Hitler were also regarded to have been a success, although nothing substantive was agreed. Nonetheless, Hitler saw the opportunity to build relations with Britain as a fringe benefit of the Olympic phenomenon..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"...Boxing was my first love and I only turned to fencing, in which my main successes were won, when competition boxing was forbidden to me. The headmaster of Winchester tolerated the sport within the school but would not allow any of us to go to the public schools competition, on which I had set my heart with some assurance of success from my instructor. Yet as so often in life, reverse and disappointment turn to success and happiness in the longer range of experience. International fencing, representing Britain in sport and entering into the camaraderies of the great salles d'armes throughout Europe was a joy of my manhood, and in my intellectual maturity gave me some sense of the fullness of life in the Hellenic gymnasium; '*et ego in Arcadia vixi*'..."

...1913 was my last serious chance at the world championship for the foil, for after that I was never again first-rate. At the end of the war the full use of my legs was gone for good. It was ten years before I returned to the sport at all, and then at first only for exercise. Gradually though I discovered that by adapting my style to my new condition I could be quite effective with the epee, the heavy duelling sword, which required less mobility. I was twice to be runner-up to different champions with this weapon in the British championship, and in 1936 was fortunate enough to be a member of our international team...In Berlin I was fortunate enough to reach the round deciding the bronze medal after being bested in the semi-final by one Franco Riccardi, a master fencer and the deserving eventual gold medallist. There I came up against another Italian of a most unorthodox and disconcerting action who upset all my classic preconceptions<sup>7</sup>. I was down three hits to one, out of a total of five up. I then threw all text-book plans to the wind, and decided to mix it with him and rely on sheer speed and constant attack. I took the next four hits and won the round and the bronze. All these things are good lessons for life; never hold too long to methods which do not work, be firm and fixed in principles, but infinitely flexible and adaptable in method...

...An interview with Hitler was exactly the opposite to my first encounter with Mussolini. There was no element of posture. At Berlin in August 1936 we talked for an hour before lunch at this first meeting. He entered the small room in his apartments quite simply; we sat down and talked with the aid of an interpreter, for I could speak no German until I learnt it during my retirement. At first Hitler was almost inert in his chair, pale, seemingly exhausted. He came suddenly to life when I said that war between Britain and Germany would be a terrible disaster, and used the simile of two splendid young men fighting each other until they both fall exhausted and bleeding to the ground, when

the jackals of the world would mount triumphant on their bodies. His face flushed and he launched with much vigour into some of his main themes, but in the normal manner of any politician moved by strong convictions. The hypnotic manner was entirely absent; perhaps I was an unsuitable subject; in any case, no effect of that kind whatsoever was produced. He was simple, and treated me throughout the occasion with a strange, almost feminine charm..."

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"... The final orders, sent out by General Mola in coded telegrams, provided for the Army of Africa to revolt at 5am on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, and the army in mainland Spain to rise 24 hours later. The difference in timing was to allow Spanish Morocco to be secured before the Army of Africa could be transported to the Andalusian coast by the Navy... The rebels could hardly have failed to take Spanish Morocco. There were only a handful of Republican officers, while the Foreign legionaries obeyed the order to rise without question. The Spanish workers, who had no arms and little contact with the indigenous population, were completely isolated..."

Things were different on the mainland however. Here the success of the rebels varied immensely, and depended as much on luck and nerve as planning and military skill. In Oviedo General Queipo De Llano managed to convince the local garrison to join him and secure the city entirely through his own verve and ruthlessness, while in Tetuan the town fell to the plotters after the *Guardia Civil* arrested the local governor and shot prominent trade unionists. In a reversal of roles, in Carlist Pamplona the local garrison remained loyal but the population rose against them, a crowd of red-bereted farmers storming the barracks

shouting 'Viva Christo Rey!'. Observing the scene, a French observer said that he would not have been surprised to have seen an *auto de fe* of heretics occurring at the same time...

Unfortunately for the plotters however, these victories were not widespread or shocking enough to topple the Republic by coup de main. In Barcelona the conspirators completely underestimated the CNT-FAI and found themselves besieged, while in Valladolid the local garrison split down the middle and fought itself ferociously until the railwaymen of the UGT came to the aid of the loyalists and managed to crush the rebels. Crucially, in the strategically vital city of Seville the plotters failed to make any headway whatsoever, General Paxtot and his few co-conspirators being arrested by their own men when they ordered a march on the centre of the city...

...It was not until three days later that clear fronts became recognisable and the situation clarified. The rebels had managed to secure Morocco, the Balearics save Minorca, a strip of territory in the west consisting of Galicia, Leon and parts of western Castile, and a handful of other towns scattered across the country. The Government still controlled the majority of the mainland however, and had the advantage that the rebel areas were isolated from each other on the periphery. The failure of the rebels to secure the Navy further added to the strategic difficulties of Generals Mola and Sanjurjo...<sup>8</sup>

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"...Of the three most important neutral Governments Britain played the most important role. France was alarmed by Hitler's rearmament and, despite having signed a defensive pact with Italy relied principally on Great Britain



for mutual defence. So when on 19<sup>th</sup> August the Spanish Republic turned to France for arms, the sympathetic left-of-centre Government of Leon Blum looked to Britain for guidance. For his part, south of the Alps Mussolini found himself naturally sympathetic to the rebels, but was wary both of Hitler's vocal support for them and of endangering relations with Mosley's Labour Government.... With both powers looking to Britain to take a lead, the British will to act proved crucial. While Mosley and Attlee were presciently concerned about the threat posed to the Republic by the extreme Left, they nevertheless agreed that Sanjurjo's rebels should not be allowed to overthrow a democracy and concluded that it was the responsibility of the Locarno Powers<sup>9</sup> to ensure stability in Spain. Over the objections of the Foreign Office, on the 25<sup>th</sup> Downing St agreed with France that arms should be sold to the Republic as soon as possible. Meanwhile in Geneva British delegates to the League proposed an embargo on the rebel-held areas of Spain, to be enforced by the Royal Navy<sup>10</sup>...

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<sup>1</sup>This is the beginning of the great Arab uprising of 1936-1939, of which more later.

<sup>2</sup> ITTL Morrison never lost his seat in 1931 and remained in Parliament. From 1934-1936 he replaced Attlee at the War Ministry.

<sup>3</sup> Mosley didn't have too much to fear from the ILP from 1932-1936 as he managed to effectively split the group between loyalists and radicals anyway- he was a member himself, which helped matters, and the government programme of legislation in the period didn't leave much scope for more radical action. However now he has no need to control the ILP it will gradually become more of a coherent body, and this will cause problems in the future...

<sup>4</sup> So, how is this Act different from OTL's equivalent? Well, it's more wide-reaching and has a decent chance of success, as the Mosley government is more willing to compromise than the National government was OTL and this has paid dividends. Attlee as Viceroy will help matters as well, as he'll use his energy to far better effect than Lord Linlithgow did OTL. India isn't sorted out by any means, but will

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evolve rather differently ITTL. Dominion status by 1940 is all but assured, for example.

<sup>5</sup> Oswald Mosley fencing for the British Olympic team? It's not actually at all far-fetched- OTL Mosley was a skilled fencer and competed on the international level as late as 1937. Besides, Mosley being Mosley he'd never pass up the chance to be all swashbuckling in the name of his country...

<sup>6</sup> This is a slight inaccuracy- Mosley won't marry Diana Mitford for a while yet ITTL, at this stage they're merely engaged.

<sup>7</sup> This would be Giancarlo Cornaggia-Medici, who OTL got the bronze medal in the Epee for Italy.

<sup>8</sup>Why is the "Generals' rising" not as successful as OTL? Well, a series of reasons really. One factor is that the Royal Navy doesn't allow the conspirators to use phone exchanges in Gibraltar to coordinate their actions as OTL, so the coup attempt is a lot less well-organised. As well as this, butterflies from the slightly different political situation mean that different generals are stationed in different places- Mola for example is in Saragossa instead of Pamplona, which puts him further from the Carlist centres of support that he was able to help coordinate OTL. De Llano for his part finds himself in Asturias instead of Seville, far from anything important. This puts the conspirators in a less advantageous position than OTL. There's also the whole luck factor as well- ITTL the conspirators don't get quite as many lucky breaks as their OTL equivalents got.

<sup>9</sup>The "Locarno Powers" is the term increasingly used to describe the Anglo-Franco-Italian Bloc of the period. It's not strictly accurate, but since when has that ever stopped anyone?

<sup>10</sup>OTL the Anglo-French response to the Spanish civil war was driven almost entirely by Britain and Eden as Foreign secretary- things are the same here, but of course Mosley has different ideas about what should be done...

## Chapter 10

*"We owe it to the refugees to ensure they can return to their homes in safety. And when they do, every other would-be dictator in the world will know that the international community will not stand by and let them kill at will, destabilise a region, destroy a people."*

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*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"...The first months of the war were unsuccessful for both sides. By the end of August it became clear that a protracted struggle might potentially be in the offing, especially after the Government drive towards Cadiz was halted at the end of August. Of perhaps more consequence however was the rebels' failure to seize the Spanish fleet- a mistake that left General Franco and his 30,000 veterans stranded across the straits of Gibraltar. As the attack on Cadiz stalled however General Mola began an advance north towards the Basque country, while elsewhere in the rebel-controlled zone the plotters attempted to establish themselves and root out local fifth columns... By early October however, the British blockade was beginning to have severe effects for the rebel war machine. The Italian refusal of aid left many rebels feeling betrayed and although the Nazis had been sending supplies, the efforts of the Royal Navy meant that the only reliable method of reinforcement was by air<sup>1</sup>. Relations between London and the rebel leadership in Saragossa plumbed new depths, much to the anger of many on the

British right. The rebels increasingly felt that British naval power was doing the work of the Republic's army for it, and after several prominent incidents where sympathetic gun-runners were halted and turned back by the Royal Navy within sight of port, some felt that Britain's line between neutrality and belligerence had begun to blur. Unfortunately for the rebels, their increasing intransigence on the blockade issue would prove disastrous....

On the morning of October 7th, the British cruiser HMS *Orion* stopped and boarded a tramp steamer in the Gulf of Cadiz, several miles south of the port of Huelva. The captain of the steamer was a devout Carlist, and knowing that Huelva's governor was the prominent Carlist Manuel Fal Conde<sup>2</sup> he ordered his radio operator to request assistance from the mainland. Conde, an Anglophobe, had been calling for a confrontation with the British ever since the blockade had been imposed, feeling that if the rebels showed a willingness to escalate the issue Britain would back down. With this in mind then he promptly telephoned the local aerodrome, and soon a flight of Breguet bombers had been scrambled to 'buzz' the *Orion* and hopefully intimidate it into allowing the steamer through. When the bombers reached the *Orion* however, instead of over-flying the cruiser they launched an attack run that took the ship completely by surprise, killing many crew members and causing severe damage to the ship. When return fire from the *Orion* shot down the flight leader the surviving bombers broke off their attack and made for the mainland, closely followed by the steamer that had precipitated the incident in the first place. In all, 41 members of the *Orion's* crew were killed in the attack and the cruiser itself suffered serious damage, although it managed to limp back to Gibraltar<sup>3</sup>... To this day it is still uncertain what exactly precipitated the attack, and the death of the flight's commander made it impossible to know what his motivations were. It is generally accepted however that in

the chaos surrounding the scrambling of the rebel bombers the flight's orders somehow became confused, although Conde himself has also been blamed for personally ordering the attack..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"...In the early autumn the issue of Spain had become a divisive issue in the newly-reconvened Commons, but the bombing of HMS *Orion* managed to change the political situation overnight. Whereas before the Spanish blockade had split MPs strictly along party lines, the loss of British life and prestige in the Gulf of Cadiz enraged Tory members just as much as Labour ones and the political consensus swiftly moved to retaliatory action. Only a few voices in the Commons dared express their dissent- when Winston Churchill<sup>4</sup> rose to argue that the incident was a natural consequence of unwarranted British interference in the region, he was booed and shouted down, and when George Lansbury stood from the Government benches to caution against aggressive action he received the same treatment.

The Government was utterly unprepared for the crisis and the storm of Parliamentary and public anger led to an unusual panic in Downing St, as the carefully constructed Spanish policy of the Labour Government began to collapse. Within the cabinet, there was sharp disagreement over how to proceed, and the meeting called to discuss the subject dragged on into the early hours of the 8<sup>th</sup>. Dalton and Morrison were worried that any dramatic action would drive Italy and Germany together as well as undermining the French Government, but Graham spoke out in favour of a punitive strike at the very least, floating the idea of using the incident as a way of getting the League to involve itself on the peninsula. Mosley, who had sat quietly through the

entire discussion, then rose and agreed with the Foreign Secretary. He proposed an immediate punitive strike on the rebels followed by a demand for an apology and calls for League intervention in Geneva, a course of action that unexpectedly gained the full support of the new Tory leader, Samuel Hoare<sup>5</sup>...

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"The *Orion* incident not only raised the spectre of foreign intervention but also exposed the growing rift between the rebel military and the political parties that supported them. The fact that it was the Carlist leadership in Huelva that triggered the crisis rather than the military was not lost on Generals Sanjurjo and Mola in Saragossa, but despite their titular command of the rebellion they had little influence in the areas not immediately under the control of their own units. In the event, as soon as General Sanjurjo heard of the incident he went to the British consulate in Saragossa to apologise in person, but his efforts were almost immediately undone by the Carlist leadership, who declared the attack a great victory and eulogised the sole rebel casualty of the raid<sup>6</sup>. As British planes based in Gibraltar bombarded Cadiz the following day Sanjurjo continued his attempts to defuse the situation, even going as far as to gauge the practicality of arresting Conde, regardless of the damage this would do to relations with the Carlists. Relations between the military and the Carlists was still more strained by the behaviour of Generals Mola and Queipo De Llano, both of whom had made clear their distaste for a restoration of the monarchy. When it came to the attention of the Carlist Count of Rodezno that the latter had ended all his radio broadcasts with the refrain "Viva la Republica!" a major confrontation between the two factions developed<sup>7</sup>. It became increasingly clear by the middle of

October that while the rebellion's military leadership was theoretically centralised in Saragossa, in reality it only controlled the region around the city itself and the Balearics- the Carlists held sway in much of the rebel-controlled interior and in Andalusia, while General Franco was a power unto himself in Morocco. More worryingly for the rebels, in Galicia a power struggle appeared to be beginning between General Queipo De Llano on one side and the charismatic leader of the Falange Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera<sup>8</sup> on the other..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"LOGRONO MASSACRE, THE:** Massacre of women and children in northern Castile that provided the official pretext for the League of Nations' intervention in Spain. On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1936 a Carlist militia seized the town from its Government garrison, and imprisoned many prominent leftists and trade unionists along with their families. When a militiaman was killed three days later the angry occupiers emptied the town's prison and massacred 103 of the prisoners, many of whom were common criminals. The massacre came to international attention completely through chance- an American journalist named Herbert Matthews was passing through the Logrono on his way to the rebel headquarters at Saragossa when the killings took place, and his report was printed in most major newspapers across the world. After the massacre support for intervention gained wide publicity in Western Europe, and combined with the already existent military action by Britain in the south led to a League declaration of support for the Spanish Republic on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>9</sup>"

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"The commencement of British bombing raids on rebel targets in Spain precipitated yet another crisis for the League. Just as a year before in Abyssinia, a major Power had taken unilateral military action, coming before the League only to gain retrospective approval and request further support. The League's critics increasingly painted the organisation as a mere vehicle for the interests of the Locarno powers, and it is ironic that despite his professed admiration and support for the League Oswald Mosley managed to so gravely wound it by his determination to transform the organisation into an interventionist one...

...the non-interventionist nations were further shaken a month later, when details of the infamous 'Logrono massacre' emerged. In Britain the details of the atrocity destroyed what little popular support remained for the rebels, and further increased the pressure on Blum's Popular Front Government in France to provide more support to the Spanish Government than merely selling them weapons. Encouraged by signs of public support in France and Britain, on November 1<sup>st</sup> the Spanish Government formally requested military assistance from the League to help it 'secure peace and stability in the country', and the following day the League assembly narrowly assented to the request<sup>10</sup>. The move presented Blum with a political crisis; fearing a repeat of the right-wing riots that had taken place earlier in the year the French Government confined itself to providing a few squadrons of fighters and avoided any commitment of ground troops to crush the rebellion, although border patrols were stepped up on the border between the two Moroccos. Another Great Power was more forthright; on the 4<sup>th</sup> Mussolini surprised the world by pledging Italy's support to the Spanish Government, sending a consignment



of 12 Savoia bombers to Barcelona and promising more direct military aid as well. At the time, Mussolini's willingness to help the Spanish Government against his supposed ideological allies amongst the rebels was interpreted as another sign of Il Duce's political pragmatism; in reality, a Spanish representative had signed a secret agreement with Count Ciano the day before allowing Italy to construct naval bases in Majorca and the Canaries<sup>11</sup>...

...The Spanish Government's diplomatic efforts finally bore military fruit on the 16<sup>th</sup> November, when 8000 Italian troops supported by aircraft from the Royal Navy landed unopposed on Majorca and quickly quelled rebel resistance on the island, suffering enough casualties in the process that Mussolini was able to stage a state funeral for the 'Balearic Martyrs' on the arrival back in Italy a week later. The operation gave the Spanish Government the confidence to attempt an offensive of its own and by the 20<sup>th</sup> the weak rebel garrisons in Cadiz and Jerez had been crushed, although Huelva still held out..."

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"The Anglo-Italian operation in the Balearics proved to be a turning point for the rebellion. In Morocco, it was the final straw that convinced General Franco that the rebellion was doomed. His veteran troops were rested and ready for combat but had no way of reaching the Spanish mainland because of the British blockade, and with the Government capture of Cadiz there seemed to be nowhere obvious that he could reinforce even if he had the ability. While there seemed no immediate prospect of a French attack from the south Franco was uncomfortably aware that his army remained the largest rebel force in the field. Determined not

to let the army of Africa suffer the same fate as that of the rebels on Majorca then, the ever-canny Franco opened informal channels with the Government to negotiate his defection on November 22<sup>nd</sup>12...

...While in the south General Franco began to sell out his cause, in Galicia the political infighting between the military and the Falange steadily became more and more serious. Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera increasingly distrusted the suspiciously liberal General Queipo De Llano, and for his part the General resented the Falange's interference in military matters. A debacle in late November when Falangist militias disobeyed direct orders and seized the town of Vilalba instead of rushing to the defence of nearby Lugo further convinced Queipo De Llano that the Falange were a threat to his authority and had to be dealt with. Accordingly, in the early hours of November 13<sup>th</sup> the General and a group of trusted officers attempted to replicate his success of three months before and launched a pre-emptive strike, raiding the party's headquarters in Oviedo in an attempt to arrest Primo de Rivera and disable the Falange at a stroke. Unfortunately for Queipo De Llano, a sympathiser in the military camp had tipped off the Falangists, and the result was a pitched gun battle between the two factions that raged all night. By morning Queipo De Llano himself was dead having been taken prisoner and then shot, and the Falange swiftly moved throughout the region to remove 'defeatist' elements in the rebel command structure<sup>13</sup>..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"...Hitler told Ribbentrop that the reoccupation of the Rhineland was 'from a military point of view an absolute necessity'. He originally had 1937 in mind for such a step. But the distraction of Spain, the fragility of the French

Government and the positive image given by the Berlin Olympics in the summer were reasons for acting sooner, not later. Hitler did not believe there would be military retaliation; at worst the French would push for economic sanctions and he was confident that in his discussions with Mosley in August the British Prime Minister had indicated his implicit acceptance of the move... On 18<sup>th</sup> November Hitler told them that he had made the decision. The proclamation of the remilitarisation would be made the following morning, followed by an offer of a non-aggression pact with France and the prospect of Germany's rejoining the League..."

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1936 three German Battalions entered and occupied the remilitarised zone of the Rhineland. On the international stage the news was greeted with a mixture of shock and prevarication... Hitler's unexpected action certainly succeeded in splitting the Locarno Powers, whose actions over Spain only the month before had given a strong impression of unity. The French response set the tone of the other powers' reaction, the French cabinet immediately ruling out military action and instead deciding to act through the League. Blum's non-confrontational attitude enraged Mussolini, who correctly saw the German occupation as a gigantic bluff that could have destroyed Hitler if only the French had the courage to oppose it. In Britain, the reaction to the news was mixed. The Mosley Government was greatly embarrassed by German claims that the Prime Minister had implicitly assented to the occupation in his visit in August, although outright denials of this rumour are conspicuous by their absence..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"...The risk had in fact been a moderate one. There had been hardly any chance of Western intervention, but the triumph for Hitler was tremendous. Not only had he outwitted the Locarno powers but had also scored a gigantic victory over conservative forces in the military and Foreign office. As in the previous year the caution shown by the army's leadership had been misplaced, and this only deepened his contempt for the 'professionals'. His rampant egomania received another boost... More dangerously, the occupation of the Rhineland impelled Hitler to make a catastrophic mistake in his reading of Oswald Mosley's personality. After their meeting in August, Hitler came away certain that his British counterpart was a potential ally and would happily turn a blind eye to German expansionism elsewhere. With Mosley willing to countenance German growth the French and Italians would be unable to act on their own, and Germany would have nothing to fear from the West... Hitler's mistaken belief in the pliability of Mosley would only serve to increase his risk taking, and would have serious consequences in the future<sup>14</sup>..."

*(Taken from a confidential letter written by Oswald Mosley to his wife Diana, December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1936)*

"...I have taken every precaution, but I do not believe (Hitler) will do anything of the kind. An attack on the west, to anyone who knows anything of the subject, is contrary to the whole history and psychology of the National Socialist Party. You cannot spend a lifetime pointing a mass movement of the people in one direction, and then suddenly say: 'About turn, I really meant the opposite to

what I have been saying all the time'. Some minor practitioners of the political art are now discovering the truth of this elementary fact... The truth is that I care not what happens in the East of Europe save Austria, which should be neutralised to guarantee Italian security. Even this though can be negotiated upon... It seems to me as natural that Germany should have a Monroe Doctrine in the East of Europe as that America should have it on the American Continent. We have had enough Balkan wars. If someone will keep them in order, well good luck to that someone, but I do not envy them their job. Now that Germany has complete security in the west she will have no need to bother us; indeed, any attempt by Hitler even to prepare anything of that kind will be the quickest way to get rid of him. If he even begins seriously to organise such an undertaking, which must be clear in its design from the start to a great many people, let alone to launch it, he will not last five minutes..."<sup>15</sup>

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"...The terms of Franco's defection were eventually agreed on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. In return for the Government's connivance in the fiction that the army of Morocco had never mutinied and had remained loyal to the Republic throughout, Franco would ferry his veterans across the straits of Gibraltar to crush the remains of the rebellion<sup>16</sup>. Any lingering hope that the rebels might have had of victory was finally crushed on December 1<sup>st</sup>, when the first soldiers of the Army of Morocco began landing at Cadiz and boarded railcars that would take them to Galicia... However even before Franco's treachery became clear the rebels found themselves in a serious military situation. Until late November the military situation south of Saragossa had remained static, as rebel forces and regular

troops loyal to the Republic had locked themselves in stalemate along the Jalon River. On the 26<sup>th</sup> however, this deadlock was broken quite by chance. The rebels had largely discounted the CNT-FAI as a military threat after their failure to take Barcelona, as the Anarchists appeared to be using the distraction of the conflict to consolidate their control of the city. However, by late November a column of anarchists led by the Anarchist leader Buenaventura Durruti had marched up the Ebro as far as the town of Caspe, where they surprised a small force of Carlist militiamen and utterly routed them. The eastern route to Saragossa was suddenly unguarded, and even as the rebels began to retreat to adapt to the new situation they came under intense aerial bombardment from French and Italian bombers. This new assault proved to be the final straw for many soldiers, and from the 29<sup>th</sup> regular units that had supported the rebels began to surrender en masse.

As Government and anarchist forces closed in on Saragossa the rebel leaders panicked and tried to abandon their allies to their fate. General Mola donned the clothes of a labourer and tried to escape through the lines, but was recognised because of his distinctive height and arrested. He would be executed by firing squad in Madrid on Christmas Eve.... General Sanjurjo did not even last this long, his overloaded transport plane crashing on take-off as he attempted to return to exile in Portugal<sup>17</sup>. On the 1<sup>st</sup> December Saragossa was finally taken, amidst rumours that Italian warplanes had destroyed bridges further down the Ebro to slow the anarchist advance in favour of the Government's troops...

Meanwhile in Galicia, the short-lived Falangist state found itself in a state of collapse barely three weeks after it had been declared. The purge of the regular army had decapitated the rebellion's military leadership in the region, and the Falangist commanders had little understanding of military affairs. The rebels were already in retreat even

before the first units of Moroccan troops arrived, and on December 7<sup>th</sup> the Falange's last attempt to hold the Government's troops back was crushed at the town of Ordes, just north of the holy city of Santiago de Compostela. As the Royal Marines landed to secure the naval base of Ferrol and Franco's troops approached La Coruna Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera managed to escape the city to rally Falangist resistance in the Galician hills... By the second week of December the rebellion had been all but crushed, although Carlist bands still terrorised areas of rural Spain and the Falange still offered sporadic resistance in the northwest. On the 9<sup>th</sup> the French Premier Leon Blum telegraphed his congratulations to Prime Minister Giral on the Republic's victory. Unfortunately for Spain, his sentiments would prove to be somewhat premature..."

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<sup>1</sup>This means that the German aid is even more air-based than OTL. This has serious effects on the rebels' ability to equip troops, although they do have good planes.

<sup>2</sup>Fal Conde was the Chairman of the Carlist Junta in 1936. In the absence of anyone better he's basically leading the rebels in Andalusia, which without the energetic efforts of General De Llano is mostly in government hands ITTL.

<sup>3</sup>Damage and casualties on the Orion were made far more severe by the fact that the cruiser was completely unprepared for an attack. Many of the crew were not at their posts, instead having come up on deck to watch the search of the tramp steamer, and hatches were open, guns were being cleaned etc. As the first indication of an attack came when the first bomb fell, this led to chaos on board.

<sup>4</sup>While Churchill was as jingoistic as the next man, I feel his contrary nature would lead him to speak out against Spanish intervention, it also being a distraction from Germany.

<sup>5</sup>Why Samuel Hoare? Mainly because he's not too closely associated to Eden and is a figure all the various Tory factions can swallow their misgivings about and support. This does not represent a huge vote of confidence in his ability.

<sup>6</sup>This seems like a pretty stupid thing to do, and it is. But, from the Carlist point of view Spanish force of arms has driven the British blockade away from a major port and opened it to shipping, if only

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temporarily. There is also no news of the British response at this stage. Of course the Generals are rather more pragmatic than this and realise how idiotic a move the attack was.

<sup>7</sup>OTL relations between the military and the Carlists were often strained- indeed Manuel Fal Conde had to escape to exile in Portugal in 1936 after angering Franco.

<sup>8</sup>Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera was moved from Alicante to Burgos in late July, and in the first days of the uprising he managed to escape to rebel territory. His survival ITTL will not prove to be good news for the rebels.

<sup>9</sup>The massacre is similar to many that took place on both sides in the first days of OTL's Spanish Civil War. In itself it's nothing too unusual by the brutal standards of that conflict- however, the Carlists had the misfortune of having Matthews see what was going on, and have him publish at a time when the conflict had caught the public mood.

<sup>10</sup>Why the appetite for intervention? Well, in Britain there's a general sense that the rebels need to be punished for their effrontery, and the British public has worked itself up into one of its periodic bouts of moral hand-wringing over foreign events. For its part the Labour Government genuinely believes that the Spanish rebels are a threat to world peace and have to be eliminated, and are able to drag the French along with them. It's worth pointing out that this is an extremely controversial move by the League, and angers many representatives of the smaller nations, who feel that the organisation is increasingly a tool of the Great Powers. More on this later, but many historians date the demise of the league from November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1936.

<sup>11</sup>OTL the Italians wanted to do this, but were skilfully deterred by Franco- here, the Spanish Government is happy to do such a deal in exchange for help in putting down the rebellion.

<sup>12</sup>Franco was a clever, clever operator, and once he realises that there's no mileage in the rebellion he's naturally inclined to try and jump ship, figuring that the army of Africa will prove a highly useful powerbase in the post-rebellion political climate.

<sup>13</sup>Unfortunately, many of these 'defeatists' are the more competent officers commanding the rebels in the region- the Falange has just significantly harmed its own ability to wage war.

<sup>14</sup>This is actually not strictly true, but is the accepted version at the time of writing. In fact the situation is rather more complicated.



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<sup>15</sup>For reasons that will become clear later, the publication of this letter after Lady Mosley's death will cause an academic and media controversy, and many will claim that it is a fake.

<sup>16</sup>This is very generous of the Spanish government, but Franco has large numbers of veteran troops at his disposal, and the rest of the army of the Republic hasn't exactly covered itself in glory during the campaign. The general consensus is that it's better to co-opt Franco than go to the trouble of invading Spanish Morocco, although this may prove to be a long-term mistake.

<sup>17</sup>Sanjurjo died this way OTL, and it's an odd enough thing to happen that I feel it's a pity to butterfly away completely.

## Chapter 11

*“The essence of a community is common rights and responsibilities. We have obligations in relation to each other. If we are threatened, we have a right to act. And we do not accept in a community that others have a right to oppress and brutalise other people.”*

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*(Taken from “The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939” by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

“With the ‘General’s Rising’ crushed and the Republic supposedly secure, by the end of December the people of Spain felt able to take stock and assess the future of their nation. There was little certainty to be found. The political landscape was utterly different from the previous August, six months of fighting and upheaval having changed many of the certainties that had existed before the rising. Most significantly, the parties of the Right had been completely gutted. The Falange and the Carlists had been banned outright as enemies of the state and its representatives imprisoned, executed or in exile, while on the moderate right CEDA still existed but was a shadow of its former self<sup>1</sup>. Many conservative deputies had supported the rising and had been imprisoned, but more worryingly for the rump right in December 1936 and January 1937 several loyalist representatives were also arrested or kidnapped, many ending up in the fast-growing unofficial prison system the PCE had set up in the autumn...

...The real winners of the rising were the far left, most notably the PCE and their anarchist rivals in the FAI. With the exception of Franco's troops, the regular army which had fought on the loyalist side had gained a reputation for incompetence and inaction over the course of the conflict, and many saw the people's militias and the parties behind them as the true saviours of the Republic. The new-found strength of the various leftist groupings was not only political but physical, as in the confusion of the rising many towns and swathes of countryside had come under the effective control of the Anarchists or Communists. Practically all of Murcia, parts of Andalusia and much of Catalonia was completely out of the Government's control, and the while the Basque autonomy bill that had been hurriedly passed in the uncertain days of August had ensured the loyalty of the region to the Republic, it was at the expense of much influence.

In the midst of this uncertainty there stood an even more unpredictable player; the enigmatic General Franco. Franco had unexpectedly emerged from the chaos of the previous six months as a major figure in Spain, and his well-timed and immaculately propagandised defection from the rebel side made him a popular hero in some quarters. With the pro-rebel Right either dead, imprisoned or in exile Franco was able to escape any charges of betrayal from that quarter, and was instead feted as the one Republican general who was able to defeat the renegade generals- once he had convinced his dithering masters in Madrid to move his troops to the mainland of course<sup>2</sup>. As they nervously contemplated the Leftist takeover of cities like Seville and Valencia, the church, Spain's remaining conservatives and more than a few liberals increasingly began to see Franco and his 30,000 veterans as their country's only hope for stability..."

*(Taken from "Extremist Parties in the Inter-War Period" By Trevor Jones, Longman 1991)*

"In many ways, Britain's experience with domestic fascism in the period could be likened to that of America's. Both countries saw a variety of fringe groups formed, none of which ever had any electoral impact beyond being a convenient bogeyman for some on the Left. Both also had their popular impact largely pre-empted by the reformist Mosleyite policies of their countries respective Governments<sup>3</sup>... In the 1920's, British Fascism had been largely dominated by the "British Facsisti", led by the redoubtable Rotha Lintorn-Orman. Anglicising its name to the "British Fascists" in 1925 the group attracted some support on the political fringes, but a split during the 1927 General Strike and a subsequent schism in 1929 that led to the foundation of the rival "Imperial Fascist League" left it in decline. The final blow was the defection of Francis Hawkins in 1931 to form a new group, the "British Fascist Alliance"<sup>4</sup>. With the death of Lintorn-Orman in 1935 her group effectively disbanded itself, most of the few remaining members affiliating themselves with Leese's IFL...

...The early 1930's then saw two rival organisations claiming to represent the real Fascist alternative for Britain<sup>5</sup>. In policy terms Hawkins' BFA was the most ideologically 'fascist'- the party contested seats at the 1932 and 1936 elections on a platform obviously inspired by Mussolini's regime in Italy, and at its peak in 1933 claimed to have more than ten thousand members. The success of the Mosley Government's reforms in combating Britain's 'crisis' mentality eventually proved fatal to the movement however, and it haemorrhaged support both to the left and to the more militant and less intellectually-driven IFL. By the re-election of the Labour Government in 1936 the British Fascist Alliance was a skeleton of its former self, leaving

Arnold Leese's party as the main Fascist political group in Britain.

In contrast to Hawkins' organisation, the 'Imperial Fascist League' was an unashamedly rabble-rousing party that aimed at working class support and was happy to use violence to achieve their goals<sup>6</sup>. Their political platform was best described as radical Mosleyism combined with a frank admiration for Hitler's Nazi party; their main distinguishing feature however was their rabid anti-Semitism, which manifested itself in several acts of violence, the most notorious being the March 1937 Chapman St Riot. After the disturbances Leese and many members of the IFL were arrested on public order offences and later imprisoned. This effectively decapitated the League, although Leese's deputy Walter Whitehead continued operations in a desultory form until the outbreak of war..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"CHAPMAN ST RIOT, THE:** 1937 riot in the East End of London following a rally by the Imperial Fascist League. On the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1937 Arnold Leese's Imperial Fascist League organised a rally in Wellclose Square, East London. The rally was deliberately planned to take place in a predominantly Jewish area, and the speeches were marked by the League's customary Anti-Semitic rhetoric. While there were minor scuffles between IFL 'Blueshirts' and leftist and Jewish groups the event was well heavily policed and major trouble was avoided. As the fascists returned home however a minor altercation between a Jewish youth and a group of Blueshirts turned into a chase, and as the youth was pursued into nearby Chapman St the pursuing Fascists were ambushed by a larger band of Communists.

Word of the disturbances reached both sides and rival gangs soon began to converge on the street, which was the scene of a fierce confrontation that injured several before the Police were able to stabilise the situation. The Riot caused political controversy as while many within the IFL leadership were arrested, few of their leftist opponents were afforded the same treatment. In the event Arnold Leese and ten others were sentenced to three years in prison for a variety of offences, breaking the Imperial Fascist League as a serious political force in the process..."

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"...With much of the Cortes still vacant because of the deputies arrested in the rising, President Azaña felt obliged to dissolve it on December 19<sup>th</sup> and call new elections for late January. Ever the democrat, he realised that this ran the risk of sidelining the centrist elements in Spanish politics but saw no excuse for allowing the legislature to continue in the state that the rising had left it. The following day, a Greek-registered tramp steamer, the MV Stavros docked in Barcelona. The cargo manifest claimed the hold was full of tractor-parts- in fact, the hold contained crates of rifles, ammunition and several field guns sent by Stalin to the local communists. Over the next month several 'advisors' would also arrive from Moscow. It was a portent of things to come<sup>7</sup>...

...Almost as soon as the election was called there was violence. The victims varied according to who controlled the locality- in Seville anarchists and 'reactionaries' were dragged from their beds at night and vanished, while in Valencia, Malaga and anarchist-controlled regions of western Catalonia communists suffered the same fate<sup>8</sup>. In the areas where two factions jockeyed for control violence

was endemic, albeit at a relatively low-level for the time being. In Madrid the army were generally able to keep order, but even Franco's feared Moriscos couldn't stop several high-profile political assassinations. Matters were slightly better in the cities that still had international troops stationed in the vicinity, and the high-profile presence of Italian forces in Barcelona and the Royal Marines in the northwest certainly did much to calm tensions. However, by the first days of January it was clear that any poll would be massively skewed in favour of the extreme left...

...Finally, on the January 21<sup>st</sup> the nation went to the polling stations, protected by the army, civil guards or international troops where possible and by the various people's militias where Government control was more tenuous. There was clear evidence of intimidation and across the country conservative and centrist candidates found themselves threatened, kidnapped, arrested under suspicious circumstances and in some cases even murdered. In the centre of Seville there were reports of Communists forcing trade unionists to vote for them at gunpoint, and in Barcelona POUM activists fought running battles with their less numerous but better organised and equipped PCE rivals. Amidst persistent threats and rumours of general strikes and potential coups, the results were announced the following day; as expected the centre-left parties and the right suffered severe losses to the fringe groups, especially the PCE through their effective use of violence and intimidation. POUM also increased their representation, although PSOE remained the largest single party in the Cortes<sup>9</sup>. CNT/FAI once again boycotted the elections. The results left President Azaña little choice but to accept the formation of a new 'Popular Front' Government, although one that was far more limited than the previous and consisted mainly of the Republican parties, PSOE and the PCE, the Anarchists refusing to take part in the administration and POUM being left on the sidelines.

Although the most powerful member of the new coalition was clearly the radical Trade Unionist Francisco Largo Caballero, the centrist leader of the Republican Union Diego Barrio was appointed Prime Minister as a sop to the international community..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"After the controversy of the Spanish intervention and the Rhineland crisis, the new year of 1937 began auspiciously for the Mosley Government with the commencement of work on the Crystal Palace site, planned home of the soon to be infamous 'Festival of Britain'. The Palace had been destroyed by fire the autumn beforehand and on the initiative of Herbert Morrison<sup>10</sup> a grand scheme was planned whereby the area would become a 'tonic for the nation' with pavilions celebrating British culture, history and progress. At the time the development costs were predicted to be a little over £5 million, a sum the Tories decried as 'preposterous'. Events were to prove this figure something of a conservative estimate..."

...In late January the long Indian debate seemed to have been finally put to bed, as Attlee was able to recommend that the previous year's Government of India Act had been implemented to the extent that the subcontinent could finally be granted Dominion status. The almost apocalyptic speeches made by Conservative members on the issue now looked increasingly ridiculous, although the subsequent difficulties of embedding Indian federalism would threaten to be a running sore for Labour. On the foreign front Spain was still a major issue within Labour, as the victory of the Spanish left seemed to provide the perfect opportunity to adopt radical new policies and 'wipe the slate clean'. The Left and Mosleyites alike increasingly looked towards the Spanish Republic as the perfect laboratory for



governmental theory without the spoiling tactics of the entrenched interests, and involvement of British troops to protect polling stations was a particularly popular move by the Government. Ironically enough considering the events of May, for the early months of 1937 the one thing that united the Labour party more than any other issue was approval for Mosley's Spanish policy..."

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<sup>1</sup>Over the next few parts I'm going to be talking about different Spanish political parties a lot, so here are the acronyms to remember- there are rather a lot, so apologies; PCE- Spanish Communist Party (Stalinist). POUM- Non Stalinist Communists. CEDA- Conservative coalition ranging from far-right to centrist. CNT/FAI- Anarchists. PSOE- Socialist Party. UGT- Main Spanish Trade Union, aligned to PSOE.

<sup>2</sup>Franco is a clever, clever man- and the deal he made with the government for his defection has enabled him to present himself as a loyal soldier of the Republic. There's not much the government can do about this, especially as his troops remain loyal.

<sup>3</sup>ITTL Roosevelt is seen very much as a 'Mosleyite', and many parallels are drawn between the response of the USA and Britain to the depression.

<sup>4</sup>Not very imaginative with their names these Fascists, are they? OTL, Hawkins joined the BUF and took most of the members of Lintorn-Orman's organisation with him. Here he sets himself up as an independent player.

<sup>5</sup>As a side note, ITTL, the use of the word 'fascist' is even more controversial and argued over than OTL- As Mussolini is seen as something of a good guy for a long time there will be quite a distinction between 'Fascism' and 'Nazism'. Sternhell's definition of the ideology or an analogue of it will probably be the accepted formula for quite some time, at least until long after Mussolini when revisionist historians are able to stick the boot in his reputation...

<sup>6</sup>Basically, the BFA/IFL split represents the split between the more ideologically driven intellectual fascists and the anti-Semitic thugs that the BUF largely managed to unite OTL. ITTL most of the former are absorbed back into mainstream politics or into even more obscure movements that don't merit mentioning, while the anti-Semites, street fighters and racial theorists generally end up supporting Leese's Imperial Fascist League.

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<sup>7</sup>A note about the PCE- at this point they are not large in numbers, although the General's Rising has given them a considerable boost and they do have a degree of popular support they did not have before. Where they score over the other parties is discipline, unity, ruthlessness and increasing amounts of Soviet support.

<sup>8</sup>This is not good news for POUM as that's where their main support base lies. In this sense Durutti's march to Saragossa did the FAI a lot of favours, although anything that hurts POUM also strengthens the Stalinist PCE.

<sup>9</sup>Obviously this bears no resemblance to the real political make-up of Spain, as the results were so heavily skewed by intimidation and violence. Having said this, the credibility of the centre-left and the Unions has been badly damaged by the General's rising, so the increase in support for the extreme left also has something of a popular basis even if it's exaggerated in the new Cortes.

<sup>10</sup>OTL, Morrison was the brains behind the Festival of Britain- it's his baby ITTL as well.



Italian troops in Abyssinia, November 1935

Mosley on the campaign trail in Wales, March 1936





Mosley in Manchester, March 1936



Mosley competes in the Berlin Olympics, April 1936





Fighting in Spain during the  
"Generals' Rising", August  
and September 1936





HMS Orion, September 1936

The RAF responds, October 1936





Arab fighters, Palestine April 1936

General Francisco Franco, December 1936





The Chapman St Riot, March 1937

Anarchists in Barcelona, May 1937





## Chapter 12

*“The purpose of terrorism lies not just in the violent act itself. It is in producing terror. It sets out to inflame, to divide, to produce consequences which they then use to justify further terror.”*

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*(Taken from “The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939” by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

“After the excitement and violence of the election in January, the first few months of 1937 passed quietly enough for the Spanish Republic. The authorities gradually restored control across the country, and for the most part the militias acquiesced, knowing that the *Guardia Civil* and army were unwilling to provoke a confrontation by being too heavy handed. Outwardly, the new Popular Front Government seemed relatively stable and keen to continue the reconstruction of the country; behind the scenes however a mixture of personal rivalry and political manoeuvring would prove severely destabilising...

While most members of the Popular Front contented themselves with desultory plotting, for one man the situation was far more personal. Francisco Largo Caballero was certainly one of the most powerful figures in the new Government; as leader of PSOE and the UGT trade union the “Spanish Lenin” was determined to move the Popular Front into a more revolutionary phase. Unfortunately for him though, Largo Caballero was too influential for his own good; recognising a potential threat, the other parties and

his rivals within PSOE blocked his appointment as Prime Minister in January, opting instead for the safer figure of Diego Martínez Barrio, the centrist leader of the Republican Union<sup>1</sup>. Although Largo Caballero was given the consolation prize of the Interior Ministry his failure to become Prime Minister rankled, and he and his supporters began a constant whispering campaign against Barrio...

...Another man plotting for the premiership was Indalecio Prieto, leader of PSOE's moderate wing and Largo Caballero's long-time mortal enemy<sup>2</sup>. Like Largo Caballero, Prieto saw himself as an obvious candidate for the post of Prime Minister, and having blocked his rival's candidacy for the post the previous year was determined to seek the prize for himself... Prieto's ambitions soon found a useful ally in the shape of the PCE. In mid February the Communists concluded that Barrio was incapable of resisting Largo Caballero, and on the 5th March a letter from Moscow authorised them to switch their support to Prieto, who was now judged to be the best way of avoiding the installation of a revolutionary in the post<sup>3</sup>... Matters came to a head on March 17th, when a series of vicious attacks by Communist-leaning and UGT-controlled newspapers combined with a systematic campaign of defamation finally broke Barrio's nerve. His health temporarily shattered by the stress, the Prime Minister wrote to President Azaña tendering his resignation. Despite the inevitable calls for Largo Caballero's promotion Azaña hesitated, torn between the Interior Minister and the Minister of Finance, Juan Negrín<sup>4</sup>. In the event, Largo Caballero's complacency was to prove his undoing. Despite confidently telling friends and supporters that he would soon be installed as Prime Minister, he allowed himself to be outmanoeuvred by a lobbying campaign by Prieto, who positioned himself as a compromise candidate with Communist support. Underestimating the violence of his reaction, Azaña consequently passed over Largo Caballero

in favour of his nemesis, who was confirmed in the role on the 19th. Predictably, Largo Caballero was enraged by the move, and on March 25th, he resigned as Interior Minister. His resignation letter was bitterly scathing;

*"...The 'People's Front', led by the Stalinists, is strangling the Socialist revolution in the name of an outlived bourgeois democracy. Hence the disappointment, the hopelessness, the discouragement of the masses of workers and peasants, the demoralisation of the army..."*

He followed his attack on the Government with one on members of his own party;

*"They have fallen sway under the illusion that the proletarian socialist revolution can be achieved by reforming the existing state. We want our social revolution now!"*

Having burnt his bridges, Largo Caballero announced that would form a resurrected "Alianza Obrera" (Worker's Alliance), comprising of himself and his supporters in the UGT, PSOE and POUM. The Alliance would also be supported by the Anarchists outside the Cortes<sup>5</sup>. Largo Caballero's move caused a predictable sensation, as PSOE immediately collapsed into a brief orgy of confused infighting. After several days of mutual denunciation, street brawls and local strikes, it became obvious that Azaña had underestimated the popularity that Largo Caballero enjoyed within PSOE and the union movement. Largo Caballero had been at least partially successful; the majority of the UGT had followed his lead, although the Unions had stayed loyal to Prieto in Seville and in the Cortes few PSOE deputies had joined the former Minister. While the defection of Largo Caballero and the formation of the AO did not threaten the Popular Front's control of the Cortes, the loss of an influential Minister and much of the organised Labour movement was a massive blow to the

Government's prestige and popular support; more importantly, it also meant that the loyalty of the industrial cities could no longer be counted upon. Calls for a crackdown on dissent, especially from the Communists, grew louder and louder..."

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"The schism in PSOE and UGT profoundly destabilised the fragile political processes of the Spanish Republic, solidifying the fundamental split between the moderate left and their revolutionary brethren. With no prospect of electoral victory while the Popular Front controlled the Cortes, Cabellero found himself increasingly willing to contemplate direct action to bring down the Government; a temptation that only increased as the organs of state were gradually brought to bear on his supporters. Barely a week after his resignation, several hundred UGT loyalists were rounded up by the city guard in Toledo and imprisoned; on the 8<sup>th</sup> April a brawl between 'Caballeristas' and PSOE-supporting union men in the Madrid suburb of Carabanchel escalated into a full-blown riot, which ended when the *Guardia de Asalto* intervened on behalf of the PSOE loyalists. Nor were UGT unionists the only ones targeted. CNT/FAI members and supporters of POUM were also arrested, beaten and occasionally killed. Perhaps the most serious incident occurred on April 10<sup>th</sup> near Cordoba, when unidentified attackers ambushed a car carrying Francisco Ascano, a regional general secretary of the FAI<sup>6</sup>. The assassination of Ascano convinced the Anarchists that their opponents in the Government would soon mount a concerted offensive against them; Largo Caballero was already thinking along the same lines, and a visit by Juan Garcia Oliver<sup>7</sup> on the 21<sup>st</sup> cemented the hardening of attitudes amongst the revolutionaries.

After much consideration, on April 27<sup>th</sup> Largo Caballero announced that UGT and CNT/FAI would mount a nationwide General Strike on May 1<sup>st</sup>, its aim being to;

*“Secure public freedom and to prevent the massacre and the exploitation of the people by those, who, without calling themselves fascists, nevertheless want to establish a regime of absolutism, in complete violation of the feelings and the traditions of our people.”*

Fearing the overthrow of the Government, on the 29<sup>th</sup> Prieto took action. Spurred on by the Communists he secretly authorised a pre-emptive strike on the Unions, intended to take place on the evening before the strike. Prominent AO-supporting trade unionists, deputies of the Cortes and Anarchists were to be arrested, newspapers and factories raided, and strategic locations occupied. The intention was to decapitate the revolutionary opposition in one fell swoop... Unfortunately for the Government, two factors seriously undermined the operation. Firstly, Prieto's understandable unwillingness to trust the army in general and General Franco in particular meant that the regular military was not informed of the operation, which was intended to be carried out by loyal militias, the Police and units of the *Guardia Civil*. The second factor was the excellent intelligence-gathering apparatus of CNT/FAI, which learnt of the plot astonishingly quickly and passed on detailed information to its allies. Mindful of the Anarchists' successful, if unheeded prediction of the Generals' Rising the previous summer, Largo Caballero paid close attention to these reports and acted on them. The authorities had completely lost the element of surprise...”

*(Taken from "Ten Days in May" by Kenneth Miles<sup>8</sup>, Secker 1938)*

"...That night, between two and three, I was asleep in my room when I was woken by several shots outside, followed by the loud clatter of a machine gun. I thought instantly: 'It's started!' But I thought it without any very great feeling of surprise- for days past everyone had been expecting 'it' to start at any moment. I dressed and went downstairs. A crowd of people was seething in the entrance-hall; there was a great confusion, nobody seemed to know what we were expected to do.

At this moment a fellow-guest ran up to me, an Irish Union man whom I had met several days previously. He was greatly excited. "Come on, we must get down to the Comite Local. The P.O.U.M. chaps will be meeting there. The trouble's starting. We must hang together." "But what the devil is it all about?" I said. The Irishman was hauling me along by the arm. He was too excited to give a very clear statement. It appeared that he had been in the Plaza de Cataluna when several lorry-loads of armed Civil Guards had driven up to the Telephone Exchange, which was operated mainly by C.N.T. workers. The Guards had made to storm the building, but before they could do so they were fired upon by the occupants, who were evidently well prepared for the assault.

As we moved down the street a lorry raced past us from the opposite direction. It was full of anarchists with rifles in their hands. In front a ragged youth was lying on a pile of mattresses behind a light machine-gun. The streets were utterly dark and silent, not a soul stirring, steel shutters drawn over all the shop windows, but no barricades built yet. We arrived at the Comite Local without incident; there were armed guards at most of the windows, and in the street outside a little group of militiamen were stopping

and questioning the few passers-by. An anarchist patrol car drove up, bristling with weapons. Beside the driver a beautiful dark-haired girl of about eighteen was nursing a sub-machine-gun across her knees. There was a great fuss before they would let us into the building, which was locked and barred.

Inside, all over the building and on the stairs, small knots of people were standing and talking excitedly. There was a general impression that the Civil Guards were 'after' the C.N.T. and the working class generally. Once I heard how things stood I felt easier in my mind. The issue was clear enough. On one side the C.N.T., on the other side the police. I have no particular love for the idealized 'worker' as he appears in the bourgeois Communist's mind, but when I see an actual flesh-and-blood worker in conflict with his natural enemy, the policeman, I do not have to ask myself which side I am on..."

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"By morning, it had become clear that the Government had struck and failed, only succeeding in triggering the very revolt that it tried to pre-empt. In some areas the authorities had managed to overwhelm the unions; Seville was firmly in Government hands and Valencia had seen only minor skirmishes. However, in the major cities the UGT and CNT/FAI had withstood the assault. In Madrid the fighting had spread across the city, while in Barcelona and Bilbao the Government had been routed and were fighting increasingly desperate battles to avoid losing control. Much to Prieto's concern, the attitude of the military still seemed in doubt; frantic phone calls made to General Franco throughout the night remained unanswered<sup>9</sup>, and while some individual units joined one side or the other the

majority of the army remained in barracks and neither aided the revolutionaries or put down the rebellion.

By midday it became clear that the UGT was getting the better of the fighting in Madrid, and the order was given to evacuate several Government ministries. Soon afterwards, the famous Anarchist Buenaventura Durruti broadcast to the nation;

*“A Revolutionary Junta has been constituted in Barcelona. All those responsible for the putsch, manoeuvring under the protection of the Government, shall be executed. The UGT and the POUM shall be comrades in the Revolutionary Junta because they stood by the workers. Workers of the CNT and the UGT! Remember the road we have travelled together. How many have fallen, covered in blood, in the open streets and on the barricades! Pick up your weapons! Embrace as brothers! We shall be victorious if we are united. Unity among ourselves! Death to fascism!”*

By and large, his words were heeded. While the UGT and CNT/FAI were wary allies, both groups coordinated their actions relatively successfully; in Barcelona UGT members accepted anarchist leadership on the barricades while in Madrid the two groups formed a joint committee... As night fell, it seemed obvious to many that the revolutionaries posed at least as great a threat to the Republic's existence as the Generals had nine months earlier, and that drastic measures were needed to stabilise the situation. Reluctantly and against Prieto's advice, President Azaña played his trump card; after a brief telephone call and a hurried midnight meeting General Franco was appointed the new Minister for War, and the Spanish army began to leave its barracks shortly afterwards...”



*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"The three interventionist Powers were taken by surprise by the rapid deterioration of events; the last Italian troops had left Barcelona only days before the General Strike was declared and only a handful of Royal Marines remained in Ferrol in the north. However, the new crisis in Spain caused radically different reactions in Britain, France and Italy. South of the Alps, the renewed violence brought only a disinterested shrug; Mussolini was satisfied with the concessions he had wrung out of the Republican Government and cared little for either side in the conflict as long as they did not impinge on Italian interests. In France, there was general unanimity; Leon Blum's Popular Front naturally gravitated towards the Spanish authorities. While some elements of the Government expressed concern at any role that the army might play in quelling the violence, few warmed to the prospect of a revolutionary state south of the Pyrenees. In Britain however the "May Days" precipitated an unexpected political crisis within the Government, for reasons unique to the structure and internal tensions of the Labour Party..."

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

In truth, the revolutionary cause was doomed from the moment that General Franco's troops left their barracks. While the Anarchists and Trade Unionists had initially bested the *Guardia Civil* and militias sent against them they were no match for the Moroccan veterans, many units of which were equipped with Italian rifles, artillery and armoured vehicles. Even after the CNT's seizure of a military depot outside Barcelona the opposition was under-equipped, the few heavy weapons at their disposal being a handful of field-guns seized during the fighting the

previous year. The anti-Government forces also suffered from a complete lack of clarity of purpose. While the Anarchists generally spoke in terms of revolution, few in the UGT knew what their goal was. Largo Caballero himself oscillated wildly between calling for the Government's overthrow and seeking accommodation and while there was talk of establishing a revolutionary Government, few of the practical steps towards achieving this were taken. While the Left's failure may be obvious in hindsight however, after the first day of fighting it seemed to many that the outcome was still very much in the balance. Barcelona, much of Aragon and large parts of the industrial north were under revolutionary control; isolated pockets of unrest existed all over the country, and the Government had evacuated to Valencia after losing the street battles that had engulfed Madrid. In a phone call to Prieto on the evening of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, General Franco glibly told a horrified Prime Minister that the threat to the Republic was far greater than nine months previously; privately however, the new Defence Minister was far more honest about his chances of success. In a letter to his brother Ramon, Franco confided that the "situation is far less grave...then it appears; it is merely Asturias all over again<sup>10</sup>... Thanks to almighty God, the Left has struck and failed!"<sup>11</sup>

Over the next few days, Franco's predictions were partially borne out. Government forces supported by the *Guardia Civil* and *Guardia de Asalto* quickly stamped out resistance in most of the country, and by the 4<sup>th</sup> May it was clear that the majority of the country was under Government control, with only Madrid and areas of Aragon and Catalonia resisting. While in some areas political militias took part in the 'pacification' (in fact a string of summary executions, occasional massacres and skirmishing), the military was keen to discourage their participation; Franco was determined to ensure that the army gained credit for saving the Republic. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, a column of troops marched up the

coast from Valencia towards the Anarchist stronghold of Barcelona; a major action was fought at Tarragona that afternoon with CNT forces. Initially, the Anarchists managed to hold the advancing *Moriscos* just to the east of the town, but their success was short-lived as the Government forces first brought up artillery and then the heavy cruiser *Baleares*, which bombarded the CNT positions with its guns. The retreating Anarchists were then harried by Caproni bombers operating from Valencia. The engagement perfectly demonstrated the massive military superiority of the Government; lacking aircraft of their own or even anti-aircraft guns the revolutionaries could be bombed and strafed at will..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"The eruption of violence in Spain in May 1937 proved to be the final straw for many in the ILP, who had been growing increasingly frustrated with the Government's slowing-down of economic and political reform. Private muttering turned into real anger however when on May 3<sup>rd</sup> William Graham delivered a statement in the House of Commons condemning the Spanish revolutionaries. While few expected the Government's reaction to the crisis to be any different, many in the ILP and indeed the wider Trade Union movement were appalled that a Labour Foreign Secretary who was himself a member of the ILP would make such a statement. The ILP had long been a staunch ally of the revolutionary POUM, one of its sister parties in the 'International Bureau of Revolutionary Socialist Unity' or 'London Bureau'<sup>12</sup>. To Conservative jeers and an uneasy silence from the Labour front bench, James Maxton stood and passionately denounced Graham's statement. Pointing at his friend and colleague Robert Edwards, who had only just returned from Spain as a guest of POUM<sup>13</sup>, Maxton continued;

*“How have we reached a point when a Labour Government is supporting the complete destruction of the Spanish Labour Movement? The workers of Spain are being machine-gunned at the barricades and we are turning a deliberate blind eye!”*

That evening, an angry meeting of the ILP debated what action to take next. Fenner Brockway<sup>14</sup> raised the prospect of expelling Graham from the grouping; Robert Edwards argued the perennial case for disaffiliation from the Labour Party, while David Kirkwood and Maxton underlined their anger with the Government while nonetheless urging caution. While Labour could rely on a workable majority even without ILP support, the threat of disaffiliation struck at the heart of the Government. Many in the cabinet including Mosley himself were members of the group, as were several junior Ministers and Whips. After Maxton, the Education Secretary John Strachey<sup>15</sup> attempted to speak; he was booed and jeered at until he and the other Mosleyites who had attended walked out in disgust. The meeting then broke up in disorder...

In the event, the crisis was short-lived. While the Spanish “May Days” caused much anger at the time, the swift quelling of the rebellion by the Spanish military presented the ILP with a *fait accompli*, and in a ballot on the 21<sup>st</sup> disaffiliation was narrowly avoided yet again. However, the real damage was long term; many on the Left who were previously willing to give the Government the benefit of the doubt would no longer do so. As Michael Foot later put it; “We had been betrayed once. We resolved that it would not happen again.” More worryingly for Mosley, the ILP now realised how damaging a schism could be for the Government; in many ways, the events of May 1937 were a direct ‘dress rehearsal’ of the crisis the following year...”

*(Taken from "The Spanish Republic in Crisis; 1931-1939" by Ian Allerton, Picador 1998)*

"...Cut off from his Anarchist allies in Aragon and realising that defeat was almost certain, Largo Caballero made a stream of increasingly desperate announcements in an attempt to stem the tide. Hoping to neutralise Franco's feared *Moriscos*, on the 9<sup>th</sup> he announced over the radio that Spanish Morocco was to be made independent<sup>16</sup>; the announcement was completely ignored by the Moroccans and succeeded only in enraging the French Government. By now, everyone recognised that the revolutionary cause was lost. The following day, Spanish troops launched a thrust towards the centre of Madrid; desperate fighting saw both the army and the UGT take heavy casualties but the Government's command of the air meant that the final result was never in doubt. By the early hours of the 11<sup>th</sup> the military was in control of the capital once again; Largo Caballero himself was missing presumed dead and his son was captured and executed. In the east, the victory was less decisive; rather than fight for the city street by street as the UGT had tried to do in Madrid, the majority of the CNT/FAI leadership abandoned Barcelona and melted away into the friendly Catalan countryside from where they would conduct a long and bitter insurgent campaign against the authorities..."

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"The chaos of the Spanish "May Days" caused yet more governmental upheaval in Spain. Even as the revolt was being put down by General Franco's troops, members of the Government were seeking to blame each other for the crisis. The obvious culprit was Prime Minister Prieto, whose decision to take pre-emptive action against the Unions and Anarchists had proved the catalyst for the violence.

However, the schism in Prieto's PSOE had given the Prime Minister a chance to purge the membership and cement his position within the Party, which was the largest in the Popular Front. Over the following months, Prieto and his allies increasingly pointed the finger of blame at President Azaña, and by the summer of 1937 a confrontation between the two men seemed inevitable..."

*(Taken from Time Magazine, June 14 1937)*

High over the rolling mountains north of Huesca, a twin-motored plane dodged last week through thick patches of fog. A young shepherd on a hillside idly watched it come out of the clouds. Few minutes later he stumbled excitedly into the little village of Arguis. The plane had crashed into the mountainside. Help was wanted.

Sweating painfully uphill, rescuers soon found the wreckage. All the occupants were dead, two aides, the pilot, and mechanic. Twenty-five yards away they found the mangled body of still another man, wrapped in a worn tan waterproof coat. Round his body were scattered sheaths of papers. It was some time before he could be identified: Manuel Azaña, President of the Spanish Republic. Lugubrious, bespectacled President Azaña was reputedly found still clasping his pen in his hand..."<sup>17</sup>

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"The unexpected death of Azaña averted one potential crisis, but triggered another. In the partisan, bitterly divided political scene of the Spanish Republic a neutral figure was needed to become Head of State. Prieto himself put his name forward, as did Negrin, the Minister of Finance. In the event though, it was clear that only one man could take

the role; having put his indiscretion of the year before behind him and having twice saved the Republic, General Franco was installed as the third President of the Spanish Republic on June 23<sup>rd</sup>..."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>OTL, Largo Caballero was appointed Prime Minister in September 1936- ITTL a more centrist PM is felt necessary thanks for the need for international approval of the new Republican government so Barrio gets it.

<sup>2</sup>The two had hated each other since the '20s, over disagreements over whether to cooperate with Primo de Rivera's regime. Prieto wrote that "Largo Caballero is a fool who wants to appear clever. He is a frigid bureaucrat who plays the role of a mad fanatic". Largo Caballero replied that Prieto was "envious, arrogant, and disdainful" and was not a socialist "either in his ideas or in his action". Ironically, the two held the opposite positions to what they did a decade later, both OTL and ITTL- Prieto became more moderate and Largo Caballero passed him going the other way.

<sup>3</sup>Since 1935 the PCE had been instructed by Moscow to support a Popular Front, avoiding a revolutionary government- Largo Caballero is regarded as too radical and non-Stalinist.

<sup>4</sup>OTL Negrin became PM in May 1937- here he's considered for much the same reasons as OTL as a balancing figure between the centre and left.

<sup>5</sup>Largo Caballero had long been calling for a united worker's front, and POUM and the CNT are his natural allies in this sort of situation. Indeed, in 1934 and 1935 UGT and CNT had cooperated in strike actions. It's not going to be the happiest of alliances but needs must- both groups are aware of the symbolic power of a united worker's front.

<sup>6</sup>OTL, Ascano was killed in the first day of fighting in Barcelona during the Civil War.

<sup>7</sup>The leader of FAI: OTL, he served as Largo Caballero's Justice Minister.

<sup>8</sup>Kenneth Miles is a left-wing journalist who had the good fortune to be in Barcelona in spring 1937. Aside from his different choice of pseudonym he is little different to OTL.

<sup>9</sup>This is quite deliberate of course; Franco knew about the plans for a crackdown from the start, and is quite happy to remain "masterly inactive" until the Government come begging for aid.

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<sup>10</sup>In 1934 UGT and CNT/FAI cooperated in an uprising in Asturias, which Franco led the campaign against. The 1937 uprising ITTL is essentially a repeat of 1934 writ large.

<sup>11</sup>Franco will quite happily play up the danger of the situation if it benefits him, especially as he is perceptive enough to realise that he is in a position of great potential strength.

<sup>12</sup>ITTL the ILP stays affiliated to the Labour Party beyond 1932, meaning that the organisation is both larger and rather less radical than OTL. It still remains the vanguard of the Party's Left however. An organisation similar to OTL's "International Revolutionary Marxist Centre" is still formed ITTL, although participation is mostly on the leftward fringe of the ILP.

<sup>13</sup>OTL, Edwards led the ILP's contingent in POUM during the Spanish Civil War. ITTL he was elected to Parliament in the 1936 election, representing Chorley.

<sup>14</sup>ITTL Brockway retained his seat in 1931, and remains a prominent ILP member within Parliament.

<sup>15</sup>OTL Strachey was Mosley's PPS in the Macdonald Government, and later became a Communist before rejoining Labour in the 40's. ITTL he's remained firmly attached to Mosley's coattails.

<sup>16</sup>OTL there were voices in the Republican government calling for exactly this announcement to be made.

<sup>17</sup> This may have been an accident, it might not. Rivals to Franco didn't have a fantastic record in aerial safety...

<sup>18</sup> Franco as President? Well OTL he was regarded as politically neutral right into the Spanish Civil War, and his volte face ITTL in 1936 has been conveniently brushed under the carpet. With the army backing him, I can see him being an obvious choice for the role, especially as many Spaniards see that using the army to guarantee the stability of the State may be no bad thing.



## Chapter 13

*"The real impact of a settlement is more than correcting the plight of Palestine. It is that such a settlement would be the living, tangible, visible proof that the region and therefore the world can accommodate different faiths and cultures, even those who have been in vehement opposition to each other."*

*"Britain and India, I believe, have much to offer each other. Our partnership for a better and safer world awaits."*

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*(Taken from "Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate" by Clive Rogers, Longman 1991)*

"The Arab rebellion began with sporadic outbursts of violence. On the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1936 these culminated with an attack by an Arab mob in Jaffa on Jewish passers-by which left nine Jews killed and ten wounded. On that same evening a curfew was ordered and a state of emergency declared throughout Palestine. A "Higher Arab Committee" was cobbled together out of the most prominent political parties by the 25<sup>th</sup>, and immediately declared a General Strike...

...The upsurge in violence in April came at a sensitive time for the Labour Government, which was fighting an election campaign and hoped to secure a second term in office. The imposition of the state of emergency played into the hands of Conservative politicians and the right-wing press, who used the crisis to try and paint the Mosley Government as insufficiently concerned with the well-being of the Empire.

Eden's speech on the issue on April 24<sup>th</sup> further fanned the flames of the controversy, as the Leader of the Opposition accused Labour of 'retreating in the face of organised terrorism' and suggested that a Government that took a weak line in Palestine might do the same in India. Mosley's response was decisive. Anxious to maintain his image as a staunch defender of Imperial interests and his reputation for swift and decisive action, the Prime Minister announced on the 25<sup>th</sup> that martial law would be imposed in the Mandate and additional troops sent as reinforcement, a decision that silenced his critics and resolved the immediate political issue while simultaneously sending shockwaves through the Colonial Office<sup>1</sup>.

The decision to impose martial law delighted the War Office and the GOC Palestine Air Vice-Marshal Peirse, who had become increasingly frustrated with the restrictions placed on his operations by the civilian authorities. For High Commissioner Sir Arthur Wauchope however, the Government's decision was a disaster. Wauchope feared that the imposition of military control would escalate the situation and instead advocated a policy of political concessions combined with troop reinforcements to demonstrate British strength. The re-election of the Labour Government on the 1<sup>st</sup> May and the arrival of Jack Lawson<sup>2</sup> in the Colonial Office ended any hope for a reversal of policy, and after the High Commissioner criticised the Foreign Office's polite but firm rejection of Ibn Saud's offer of mediation in early June<sup>3</sup> he was finally recalled on the 14<sup>th</sup>. The military had triumphed, and renewed their systematic campaign against the Arab rebels... Wauchope's dogged pursuit of a conciliatory policy did have one result however; after meeting with Lawson and Graham upon his return to London he was able to confirm in the minds of both ministers that the proposal of sending a Royal Commission to the region was a desirable course of action. Mosley's approval for the scheme was soon forthcoming,

and despite sustained pressure from the Zionist lobby the Cabinet agreed to make the announcement on the 16<sup>th</sup> June... The Zionists considered a boycott of the Commission, but parliamentary allies such as Amery advised against. The net result could only be damaging..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of Jewish History" by David Segal, Haifa 1983)*

**"BIRDWOOD COMMISSION, THE:** Royal Commission of Inquiry sent to propose changes to the British Mandate in Palestine following the Arab uprising. It was headed by Lord Birdwood<sup>4</sup>. On the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1936 the Commission arrived in Palestine. It returned to Britain on December 24<sup>th</sup> and published its report on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1937. The Commission denied the theory of equal obligations to Arabs and Jews, arguing that the Mandate had been predicated upon the supposition that the Palestine Arabs would accept the Jewish National Home. Since they had not done so, the Commission reached the conclusion that the Mandate had become unworkable and must be abrogated, suggesting instead partition. The Jewish State would include Galilee, the Plain of Esdraelon and the coastal plain; an Arab State, most of the rest of Palestine. Permanent mandates were proposed for the Jerusalem area and certain Christian holy places...

*(Taken from "Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate" by Clive Rogers, Longman 1991)*

"...While Graham remained a cautious supporter of the Birdwood commission, his civil servants were constantly at the forefront of efforts to water down its proposals. As early as March 1937 Graham had to engage in an unseemly confrontation with one of his own advisors after the Arabist

George Rendell tried to submit a memorandum to Birdwood criticising his commission's presumed findings, and once the report was published at the end of May the chorus of disapproval from the Foreign Office was embarrassingly public. Over the summer of 1937 a bitter struggle on the issue would erupt between the Government and Colonial office on one hand and the Foreign Office on the other<sup>5</sup>...The Zionists for their part were divided. Weizmann favoured partition in principle, and the other Zionists in London were eventually brought round by Amery and Churchill's urgings to accept the deal. In Palestine itself however their counterparts equivocated for a time, although the firm British response to the disturbances the year before reassured many that any deal would be enforced... The final Zionist acceptance of the plan came in the second week of June, when Parliament sent the Birdwood Commission's findings to the Geneva for approval and it became clear that, in the words of Lawson; 'this was the Government's proposal and they could either take it or leave it'..."

*(Taken from "The Monstrous Boat: From Raj to Dominion" by Edward Bridge, OUP 1986)*

"Once the Government of India Act was passed, hitherto hypothetical questions about the workability of the scheme were open to be tested in the crucible of political reality. Would the princes join the federation? Would British India work a scheme which included indirect election? Would the Act make India safe for the Empire for another thirty years? With his Viceroyalty due to end as the Act was due to be passed, Lord Willingdon did little to bring federation to fruition: That task was for his successor as Viceroy, Attlee, to settle after the first provincial elections were held under the new Act the following spring. The ball was in Attlee's court..."

Immediately after he arrived in India, Attlee made an investigation of the state of the federal negotiations. By June, he reported that "Federation has few enthusiastic friends but few implacable foes"; the Princes "regard it as an unpleasant inevitability but do not welcome it" while Congress "find it a distasteful necessity". The new Viceroy found himself deluged by Princely demands as concessions for their involvement in federating. Some, like Mysore, wanted abolition of their annual tributes, others wanted tax concessions, boundary changes or even more guns on their salutes. While the Government advised caution so as to avoid "a rising market for the states' accessions", it also conceded that federation should be consummated as soon as possible<sup>6</sup>..."

*Taken from "Founding Father: The Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose" by Nirad Bose, Dirispat 1987)*

"The police who had put Bose on board the SS *Gange* on a forced exile from India in February 1933 were ready to receive him as he disembarked in Bombay on 8 April 1936. Even before he had set foot on Indian soil he was arrested and sent to Yeravda jail, near Poona. However, this detention was short-lived. The British Government ordered Lord Willingdon to release Bose, much to the outgoing Viceroy's dismay; he was thus able to attend the Congress session at Lucknow, where he was appointed to Congress' Working Committee<sup>7</sup>... Bose's own health was fragile however, and after falling ill in the summer he spent five months at Dalhousie, a hill-station in Himachal Pradesh, under the treatment of his friend Dr Dharmavir. With improvement in his health he picked up the threads of political activity after four years. The following spring, the Congress had fought the general elections held under the new Government of India Act. Although it was its first

attempt as a party at the hustings, it scored a massive victory<sup>8</sup>...”

*(Taken from “The Monstrous Boat: From Raj to Dominion” by Edward Bridge, OUP 1986)*

“...The 1937 elections came as an unpleasant shock to many in Britain, but for all Congress’ success was dramatic its main function was to increase the pressure on the Princes. Attlee argued that the election results demonstrated that the states were safer inside federation than outside it, and examples of Congress flexing its new-found power such as its threat to abandon its traditional non-intervention in the states by supporting a Congress agitator in Mysore seemed to help his case. As Graham remarked to Mosley, “It is quite easy for the Princes to remain coy about saying ‘yes’, so long as they do not have the immediate alternative of saying ‘no’”... In the face of slow progress, it was decided that the Act should be amended to as to ensure that a princely state joining Federation would bear no financial cost for the move<sup>9</sup>, a measure which passed on the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Attlee’s arrival on the subcontinent... By the summer of 1937 many of the small states had been convinced, but none of the four largest states had consented to join federation; this unity however began to crumble in June, when Attlee gave a confidential guarantee to the Nizam of Hyderabad that Britain would prevent any forced incorporation of his domains into India proper. Mysore was the next to follow, and by the end of the year Attlee could confidently report back to London that Federation might be able to be inaugurated as early as the spring of 1938...”

*Taken from "Founding Father: The Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose" by Nirad Bose, Dirispat 1987)*

"At a meeting of the All-India Congress in the autumn it was decided that Bose should be elected president of the Congress session at Haripura, an honour which he fully deserved in view of his long record of service and suffering<sup>10</sup>. Many observers were surprised that Gandhi should have sponsored the election of a born rebel like Bose; Gandhi probably hoped that apart from his action being viewed as a grand gesture of compromise, it would take the wind out of the sails of the Leftists just as a similar strategy in the case of Nehru had done at Lahore eight years earlier.... In his first public statement after Bose election he declared; "It will be agreed on all hands that we have to bring India before the world then we have done so far. India's problems, after all, are world problems. On our close contact with the progressive movements will depend not only on the salvation of India but also of the suffering humanity as well" This statement was characteristic of Bose, and his first act after the Haripura session was to embark on a trip to Britain, to engage in talks with the Government..."

*(Taken from "A History of Flight" by Giles Tetley, Longman 1979)*

"...Whittle's time at Peterhouse would prove short-lived however, for half-way through his course in the summer of 1935 he received a visit from Air Ministry officials, who had noted that his patent for the jet engine was about to expire and wished to develop the concept towards producing a workable version<sup>11</sup>. Heartened by the new interest in his idea, Whittle abandoned his studies and in October 1935 incorporated a company named Turbo Jet Ltd. with two colleagues, R Dudley-Williams and J Tinling. With RAF backing in place, the development of the first engine,

known as the 'Whittle Unit' (WU) proceeded well, and the new engine ran for the first time on June 8th 1936; three weeks later, the Air Ministry decided to award Turbo Jet a £12,000 contract to build a flyable version...

...Turbo Jet had no real manufacturing capability, so the Air Ministry offered shared production and development contracts to BTH, Rover, and Vauxhall; in the event however only Vauxhall would take up the offer. They also sent out a contract for a simple airframe to carry the engine, which was quickly taken up by Gloster. Whittle had already studied the problem of turning the massive WU into an airworthy design and in the autumn of 1936 work started in earnest on the "Whittle Type 1", an engine that ran for the first time in November 1937, just over a year after development had first begun. The Type 1 powered the Gloster E.15/37 when it took to the air for a short hop on February 9th 1938, the first time a jet aircraft had ever flown..."

*(Taken from "Great Buildings of the World", Picador 1993)*

### **The Severn Barrage**

Locale:	South West England / South East Wales
Carries:	Double railway track, plus a one-lane road
Crosses:	River Severn
Architectural style:	Art Deco
Total length:	5,128 Metres (3.19 mi)
Electricity Generation:	2207 Megawatts
Cost:	£57 Million
Construction Began:	October 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1933
Opening Date:	March 5 <sup>th</sup> , 1938



Ideas for damming or barraging the Severn estuary and Bristol Channel have existed since the 19th century; however, the idea first received serious consideration in 1925, when an official study group was commissioned by the British Government to look into the feasibility of the scheme. Although the group's findings were positive the proposal was abandoned under cost grounds. Seven years later the Baldwin Government revived the idea, and a Severn Barrage Committee was created to examine the practicality of the project<sup>12</sup>. The Committee was as enthusiastic as its predecessor and in March 1933 recommended that the Barrage should be constructed along the 'English Stones', between Caldicot and Severn Beach<sup>13</sup>. While the weight of the Barrage would seriously damage the structural integrity of the Victorian railway tunnel below, it was decided that a line could be run across the top of the construction, rendering the tunnel useless in any case.

The newly-elected Mosley Government quickly decided to pursue the scheme, both as a job-creation project and as a means of increasing Britain's electrical self-sufficiency; work began in October 1933, and over the next five years 12,000 labourers toiled away to create what was at that point the largest concrete structure in the world. The use of largely unskilled workers and the Government's determination to build the project quickly meant that safety levels were poor; over 200 workers died in the construction of the Barrage, and the number of accidents at the site allegedly led Oswald Mosley to remark that "This barrage is deadlier than any one I saw in France" Despite these setbacks and an eventual cost that was £10 million over budget, the Severn Barrage began operation in March 1938<sup>14</sup>. Over the next three months as it was brought up to

capacity, and soon generated almost 10% of Britain's electricity, saving almost a million tonnes of coal every year...

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<sup>1</sup> Everything up to Mosley's decision to impose martial law is OTL- with an election to fight, Labour can't risk being seen as weak on the Imperial issue, and sweeping statements are often made in campaigns without too much regard to their consequences...

<sup>2</sup> OTL Lawson was financial secretary to the War Office in the MacDonald Government and later became Attlee's War Minister- ITTL he's an influential member of the party and a staunch Mosleyite in Foreign affairs.

<sup>3</sup>Why is Britain so much more assertive then OTL? The realisation in the later years of the 1930's that Italy was a potential threat caused a huge degree of nervousness in the Foreign Office, and British inaction in Abyssinia was thought to have encouraged Arab leaders to consider taking an anti-British stance if she was distracted elsewhere. ITTL however Italy is seen as an ally, and so the British regard their position in the Middle-East as being strong enough to risk alienating Arab opinion to a larger degree.

<sup>4</sup>OTL, Earl Peel was in charge of the commission- ITTL the responsibility is given to Field Marshall Birdwood, who was so cruelly cheated out of his governor-generalship of Australia...

<sup>5</sup>OTL the Foreign Office was relatively successful in sabotaging the Peel Commission and the principle of Partition- here thanks to Graham's support for the idea and the government's natural dislike of civil servants they're considerably less successful.

<sup>6</sup>This is precisely the reverse of the National government's position OTL, which decided that concessions were broadly inadvisable. Here the Labour government is rather less schizophrenic on the issue and Attlee is less cynical then Linlithgow.

<sup>7</sup>OTL, Bose was detained until March 1937; here, the Government's attitude is slightly more relaxed, although he is being watched closely. Bose's earlier return to Indian politics will improve his political position somewhat relative to OTL.

<sup>8</sup> Thanks to the fact that the negotiation processes have been rather less rancorous and Congress has made a few more concessions on the issue of direct versus indirect elections, the election results aren't quite the triumph for Congress that they were in OTL.

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<sup>9</sup> OTL Linlithgow called for this pretty early on, but Chamberlain disagreed and the government dragged their feet- here the government is more willing to make the concession.

<sup>10</sup> This happened OTL; Bose has had more time to build up his support ITTL however, so is in a slightly stronger position.

<sup>11</sup> Why the earlier interest in the jet engine? Unlike OTL, the RAF has rather more money for R+D thanks to the Mosley government's earlier rearmament and Labour's enthusiasm for science and technology- this means that a number of projects considered too marginal to fund OTL have been reconsidered and invested in. This effect will also help speed up the development of radar, as well as a whole bunch of less useful technologies.

<sup>12</sup> All of this so far is OTL- the main difference ITTL is that the Mosley Government has the political will to build such a thing.

<sup>13</sup> This is where the second Severn crossing was built OTL- the 'English Stones' is a rocky area in the Severn that both ITTL and OTL is handy for the foundations of a crossing.

<sup>14</sup> Five years is a very short construction time, considering- the 1933 Committee estimated it would take eight. However, the Government has been throwing money at the project (hence the budget overruns), and has also employed getting on for three times the construction force originally envisaged, as a way of keeping people in employment.

Map 3:



The proposals of the Birdwood Commission, 1937

## Chapter 14

*"Sometimes and in particular dealing with a dictator, the only chance of peace is a readiness for war."*

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*(Taken from The Times, April 14<sup>th</sup> 1937)*

### **AUSTRIAN CHANCELLOR KILLED IN CAR ACCIDENT**

Herr von Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor was killed in a car accident yesterday afternoon, and his wife was stunned and is suffering from shock. The Chancellor and his family, a governess and a plain-clothes policeman, were travelling on the high-road near Linz (Upper Austria) at 50 miles an hour when the car suddenly swerved from the road, dashed across a ditch and collided with a tree. The impact was so violent that both the Chancellor and his wife were thrown many feet. Frau von Schuschnigg was merely stunned but the Chancellor died almost instantly, his spine having been broken through his head striking the edge of the roof of the car, which was half open...

...Rumours last night that the accident was the result of foul play were quickly contradicted by members of the Upper Austrian provincial Government, who condemned attempts to 'mar the profound impression created by the country's bereavement'<sup>1</sup>. Units of the Austrian army have reportedly mobilised as a 'precautionary measure', although the streets of Vienna and other Austrian cities

have remained quiet. Some 200 persons were arrested last night to forestall disturbances in various parts of the country. The Vice Chancellor, Prince Starhemberg has interrupted his holiday in Venice and returned to Vienna yesterday evening, and is expected to be sworn in as Chancellor today<sup>2</sup>...

*(Taken from "Germany, Italy and the Austrian Question, 1930-1938" by Charles Bland, Longman 1988)*

"The assumption of Ernst von Starhemberg to the Chancellery led to an immediate change in Governmental policy. The period of dual rule was abruptly brought to an end and now Starhemberg and his Heimwehr faction were now firmly in the ascendant, much to the relief of Rome and frustration of Berlin. The new Chancellor began making his mark immediately. On the April 18<sup>th</sup> Papen was informed by the Austrian ambassador that the delicate negotiations that had been taking place since the autumn would be abandoned<sup>3</sup>, and the following day Starhemberg pointedly met the army's chief of staff Field Marshall Jansa for defence discussions... Despite his sweeping repudiation of the Schuschnigg era's policy initiatives in the foreign field, in some areas Starhemberg was forced to be pragmatic and retain his predecessor's approach. One area where this was particularly galling was in the continued legalisation of the Nazi party, which had been so recent that it was judged as being too controversial to reverse for the time being. Starhemberg resolved to deal with this threat as soon as an opportunity presented itself- in the meantime, the complete subordination of the *Heimwehr* to the organs of state gave the authorities a useful defence mechanism against any unrest the Nazis might ferment...

The German reaction to the new Austrian Government was first confusion, then rage. Even after the abandonment of

Austro-German negotiations the Foreign Office held out some hope that Starhemberg could be brought around to a pro-German policy again, but with his visit to the General Assembly of the League in Geneva on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and his subsequent discussions with William Graham and Joseph Paul-Boncour Starhemberg appeared to firmly turn his back on any compromise with his northern neighbour. Foreign Minister Baar-Baarenfels' visit to Rome and the subsequent renewal of the Austro-Italian friendship treaty towards the end of the month finally demonstrated the extent of Austria's return to the Locarno fold, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1937 Papan regretfully informed Berlin that 'any chance of an equitable agreement is now unlikely in the extreme'. Paradoxically, the death of Schuschnigg and his replacement by Starhemberg worked to increase the influence of the Austrian Nazis on German policy towards their country... whereas before their calls for radical action had been largely ignored by Berlin and their actions had been vetoed for the sake of good relations, in the spring of 1937 there was a growing realisation on the part of the Party leadership that the policy of *Gleichshaltung*<sup>4</sup> was unachievable and *Anschluss* could only be achieved by direct action..."

(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)

"The change of Government in Austria not only reversed the gradual movement of the country towards the German camp, but also acted as a catalyst to the diplomatic realignment of central and Eastern Europe. The arrival of the legitimist Starhemberg to the Chancellery sent ripples of concern through Belgrade as the Yugoslav Government resurrected its favourite fear of a Hapsburg revival and scrambled to align itself against its northern neighbour. This directly led to discussions in Berlin between the Yugoslav foreign minister and Hitler, who had similar

reason to fear a restoration of the Archduke Otto, and on June 5<sup>th</sup> a German-Yugoslav agreement was signed. A secret protocol formalised previous discussions on a joint German-Yugoslav occupation of Austria should the monarchy be in danger of being restored<sup>5</sup>... The Yugoslavian shift towards Germany would directly lead to the collapse of the 'Little Entente' over the following months, as the Czechoslovaks paid only lip-service to the alliance and began to rely on a series of bilateral treaties with the Rumanians, French and in August, the Soviet Union. More significantly, in early September the Czechoslovak foreign minister Milan Hodža arrived in Warsaw, where he engaged in exploratory talks with the Polish Government designed to reach a final settlement of the disputed Cieszyn region and the conclusion of a wide-ranging diplomatic agreement..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"On a number of occasions in the summer of 1937 Hitler had spoken in imprecise but menacing terms about moving against Austria, and it seems clear that by the second week of June he had moved to a desire to end Austrian independence in the foreseeable future. The visit to Germany in mid July by Arthur Greenwood, Lord Privy Seal<sup>6</sup> had further confirmed in Hitler's mind that Britain would do nothing in the event of German action against Austria. Greenwood had effusively agreed with Hitler that an Austro-German agreement should be resurrected to achieve a general easing of tensions within the country, before indicating that the British Government would accept an economic and possibly currency union between the two countries if the Austrian Government and people were amenable to such a scheme..."



...On July 27<sup>th</sup> Goering had told leaders of the iron industry in confidence that the rich ores of Austria would soon come to Germany. No time scale was mentioned, but it was plain that Goering did not have the distant future in mind... As diplomatic feelers put out by Neurath and Papen continued to have little success, Goering's impatience for a more radical solution to the 'Austrian Question' grew. In early August Hitler was presented with a proposal to resume the supply of weapons and armaments into Austria for use by the local Nazis, who had made great use of their continued legality to entrench themselves in cities such as Salzburg and Graz to the extent where in some districts the Government had little to no authority. More significantly, the training of an 'Austrian Legion' began in Munich for the first time since the group's forced disbandment in the summer of 1934. The Austrian Nazis were instructed to renounce violence for the time being in preparation for more concerted action in the near future, and the desultory spate of bombings and shootings that had been the constant backdrop to public life in the country ground to a halt, much to the misguided exultation of elements of the Government's Heimwehr..."

*(Taken from "Memoirs" by Prince Ernst Von Starhemberg, Vienna 1956)*

"The Hapsburg question was therefore one of the chief subjects of discussion between Milan Hodža and myself. He told me he was sorry I had so definitely declined in my speech of the 19<sup>th</sup>, to stand as a candidate to the throne of Austria<sup>7</sup>...I refused to consider any such suggestion. I pointed out to Hodža that there were no doubt different opinions regarding the advisability of a restoration in Austria. But if there was to be a monarchy then for both historical and traditional reasons it could only be a Hapsburg monarchy. Hodža brought forward all the familiar arguments, particularly that a Hapsburg on the

throne would inevitably cause trouble in the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy; "Czechoslovakia and Rumania dispose of millions of soldiers, and these millions would go to war to defend the independence and existence of Austria. But they would not fight to defend a Hapsburg Austria". After a pause he continued: "There is only one case in which I would consider this solution, and that is if you can persuade me that the restoration of the Hapsburgs is the only way of saving Austria from joining Germany. The 'Anschluss' is a matter I cannot even begin to discuss"<sup>8</sup>...

Before I left Geneva I received an interesting visitor. Sir Oswald Mosley happened to be in Switzerland on holiday, and on learning of my presence arranged to meet me at my hotel. A well-dressed, well-built, young looking man arrived at the appointed hour. I had no means of verifying what he told me about England, for I knew the country too little for that. Regarding politics he expressed opinions which were strangely familiar to me, considering his socialist background... England's economic crisis, he claimed, had been solved by the application of corporatist policies similar to the ones favoured by my own Government, and if I held my nerve the economic situation within Austria could only improve. His foreign politics were also familiar to me, although I noted that his approach towards Austria seemed to be based more on a regard for Italian concerns than on any personal interest... What interested me more than his opinions was Mosley's trick of rolling his eyes in exactly the same manner as Mussolini. During my repeated meetings with the Duce I had noticed that he was able to pull down the lower lid of the eye in such a way that the pupil was visible, and by lifting the upper eyelid the white above was also laid bare. The pupil, thus surrounded by the white of the eye, was particularly mobile, and this rolling of the eyes by the Duce had an arresting effect. During our conversation I noticed Mosley

used the same trick. This surprised me a little; at the same time it amused me for it looked very much like imitation...

In later years, there has been controversy over my position on Austrian rearmament... I opposed a general expansion of the army because the Austrian army would be useless against German military strength. Austria would not win this struggle by having a relatively strong army opposed by a ten times stronger one, but by the influence of its political soldiers on the public. An expansion of the non-political army at the expense of the Patriotic front, Heimatschutz, Sturmsharen, etc would thus be a mistake... In the first months of 1936 I was present at a cabinet discussion with Chancellor Schuschnigg discussing this very issue. I asked Major-General Zehner for an assurance that the army would fight if faced by the Reichswehr. He hesitated, and I continued; "I will give you an answer myself. Elements of the Austrian army would in such a case start negotiating with the Germans about rates of pay, and if they were satisfactory units would go over to the Reichswehr. Don't let us have any illusions about the army. Originally red, the officer corps has been forced to become black, and it will go brown just as quickly if material interests are involved". This naturally led to stormy protests by Zehner, but what I said proved, alas, to be only too true..."

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<sup>1</sup>OTL something very similar happened in the summer of 1935, although Schuschnigg survived and his wife was killed. Foul play? Perhaps, but then accidents can happen... That said it is rather handy for Mussolini and lots of other people.

<sup>2</sup>Starhemberg hasn't been dismissed yet, as OTL- his influence is stronger as Mussolini has steadfastly remained a supporter of an independent Austria, and he's seen as a safe pair of hands in the foreign capitals that matter. As Austria appears to be more secure on the international stage this makes him seem less of a busted flush. As Chancellor, he's going to be a lot of fun- he's a fascist anti-Nazi, deeply pro-Italian and a Hapsburg legitimist for a start. He should definitely appear more in TLs.

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<sup>3</sup>These negotiations were leading to something that would have been very similar to OTL's 1936 Austro-German agreement- ITTL nothing similar will be agreed.

<sup>4</sup>*Gleichshaltung* was a term used mainly by Nazis, signifying a policy whereby although Austria was politically independent its policies and institutions were aligned (harmonised if you will) with Berlin.

<sup>5</sup>This actually happened OTL- here the Yugoslavians are merely formalising a deal that they have already made.

<sup>6</sup>OTL Greenwood was Lord Privy Seal in Attlee's government- here his standing in the Labour party has guaranteed him a cabinet role in the Mosley government.

<sup>7</sup>OTL in 1936 there were calls in some circles for Starhemberg to be made King, or Duke, of Austria as an alternative to a Hapsburg restoration. The idea was ridiculed by pretty much everyone, including Starhemberg himself. ITTL Starhemberg's assumption of the Chancellorship has resurrected the idea in some circles, with enough strength that Starhemberg is forced to publicly distance himself from the concept

<sup>8</sup>This last point was also related by Starhemberg in his OTL memoirs.

## Chapter 15

*"Mine is the first generation able to contemplate the possibility that we may live our entire lives without going to war or sending our children to war."*

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*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"By early 1938 the atmosphere had become menacing in the extreme for Austria. Shootings and bombings had become relatively commonplace, and while the Starhemberg Government's firm response to the disturbances had helped to calm the situation to a certain degree, the difficulty of preventing weapons, exiles and other supplies being slipped across the German border meant that in pro-Nazi areas such as Styria the *Heimwehr* practically operated as an occupying force... Even so, from the perspective of the German regime's leadership, how to engineer a suitable crisis to begin the '*anschluss*' still appeared to be a question without a firm answer. While the Austrian Nazi leader Captain Josef Leopold still argued that his compatriots could bring down the Austrian Government on their own, Hitler and Goering still held to Seyss-Inquart's more considered analysis of events; at most, the Austrian Nazis could provide a pretext for annexation but the events of 1934 proved that they could never accomplish it on their own... In the event however the decision to give the Austrian Nazis free reign provided precisely this outcome. Like an answer to a prayer, the shooting of the German Ambassador Franz Von Papen by a group of Austrian

Nazis disguised as members of the Fatherland Front opened up an opportunity not to be missed<sup>1</sup>...”

*(Taken from The Times, February 24<sup>th</sup> 1938)*

## **GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA SHOT**

Herr Von Papen, the former German Chancellor and current ambassador of the Reich to Austria was shot early this morning in an attack claimed to have been carried out by members of the auxiliary police. The shooting took place as the Ambassador left the residence of Cardinal Innitzer, the Archbishop of Vienna. As Herr Von Papen was getting into the motor-car to return to the Embassy, shots were fired from across the street by three men dressed in Heimwehr uniforms. Herr Von Papen was severely wounded in the chest, his assailants having fled when his chauffeur returned fire. He was taken to be treated at an undisclosed location, and is believed to be in a serious condition.

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

“...The German reaction to Von Papen’s assassination was immediate. In the lull that came between the ambassador’s shooting and his death two days later Goebbels noted in his diary that Hitler ‘believes the hour has arrived’. The Fuhrer was certain that Britain would do nothing, and while France and Italy might want to take action, without British support they would not dare to act themselves. At the worst a short clash with Italy might be expected, after which the fait-accompli of Austrian annexation would be enough to restore peace. ‘Risk not so great as at the time of the occupation of the Rhineland’ was the conclusion... By the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> February, the German response had

been prepared, and awaited only the death of the unfortunate Von Papen. An ultimatum would be sent to the Austrian ambassador demanding an amnesty for Austrian Nazis and the immediate formation of a currency and economic union between the two states, to be followed by a referendum on complete Austrian incorporation into the Reich. Should Starhemberg refuse as was expected, German planes would shower Austria with leaflets, exhorting the people to rise against their Government. The Austrian Nazis would then rise in revolt, and the following day the Austrian 'legionnaires' followed by the Wehrmacht would march in. Nobody was sure if the Austrian army would open fire, but as Goebbels put it 'So, it must be risked. March was always the Fuhrer's lucky month'<sup>2</sup>...

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"...The Austrian crisis took the Mosley Government completely by surprise; as Dalton later recalled, it was a "thunderstorm that suddenly struck from a cloudless sky". The assassination of Papen had gone almost unnoticed in political circles in London, which were still buzzing over the ruthless deposition of Samuel Hoare by the Chamberlainites and the former Chancellor's final ascension to the Tory leadership. It was only on the 26<sup>th</sup> February and the issue of the German ultimatum that the Austrian situation entered the consciousness of Westminster, and even then reaction was relaxed. Conservative Members were still in a frenzy of excitement over their recent coup, and it fell to John Simon to ask the Foreign Secretary about the Government's stance on Austria. Graham's answer was a masterpiece of vague reassurance; the union of Germany and Austria was a matter for the peoples of those two countries, and he was sure that any agreement could be made peacefully... At this stage in the crisis it was still complacently assumed by most

politicians that Mussolini would bluster and make threats, but would not actually take any action to rescue Austria; as the tone of announcements from Rome steadily increased in belligerence however this assumption rapidly proved to be a huge misconception.

The complacency in London on the Austrian issue abruptly came to an end with the Italian declaration of support for Starhemberg on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and later that evening an emergency Cabinet meeting was held on the subject. Mosley's message was blunt; "Austria is not worth a war". Britain's responsibility was to secure an Italian withdrawal from the Tyrol and a peaceful resolution to the crisis, not to fight for a cause that had never been high on the Government's list of priorities. Germany's expansion to the east was a merely a matter of reclaiming her natural sphere of influence and providing a counterweight to Soviet power in the region; not something that the Locarno Powers needed to be overly concerned over. Graham agreed with the Prime Minister, although cautiously. Other cabinet members were unconvinced however. Ernest Bevin made a passionate speech arguing for action, and Herbert Morrison added that Britain's treaty obligations made non-intervention difficult. Dalton had the last word in an uncertain and nervous meeting; "If we are forced to decide between abandoning Mussolini and going to war, which course do we take?"

*(Taken from "A Quick Guide to the Austrian War" by Edward Corbin, Longman 1989)*

"The German ultimatum came as no surprise to the Austrian Government, which had been expecting a crisis ever since the upsurge of violence the previous autumn. Realising that time was precious and determined to resist if possible, the Austrians had spent their time preparing arms



caches and training the *Heimwehr* in guerrilla combat after Prince Starhemberg's policy that military resistance was in all probability pointless. The Austrians had prepared the political ground too. In December links had been forged with the Austrian socialists, many of whom had no more wish to be under German rule than their rivals on the centre and right did... On the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Starhemberg received a telegram from Ciano in Rome, simply stating 'we guarantee protection'. Shortly afterwards the Chancellor broadcast to the nation and outlined the Austrian response to the German demands. After expressing his sympathy to Papen's family and to the German Government and promising to bring the murderers to justice, Starhemberg stated that his Government had no plans to announce an amnesty of Austrian Nazis, although such a move could be negotiated if necessary. The chancellor's next remark was utterly unexpected. Starhemberg welcomed the German proposal of a plebiscite on Austria's incorporation into the Reich, and invited the League of Nations to send both observers and soldiers to guard the polling booths. The statement concluded with a gigantic gamble on the part of the Chancellor; ever the legitimist, Starhemberg announced that his proposal for the wording of the plebiscite would invite voters to back 'A free and German, independent and social, Christian and Hapsburg Austria; for freedom and work, and for the equality of all who declare for Emperor and Fatherland'<sup>3</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"...While many Austrians welcomed the concept of restoration if it safeguarded the independence of their nation against Germany, Starhemberg's move completely split the Left. Many moderate Social Democrats had long called for union with Germany, and as Karl Renner put it, "A choice between Berlin and Otto is no choice at all". The

radicals however had other ideas. Many on the extreme Left had been quietly released from prison in the weeks before the crisis as the Government had recognised their opposition to a German takeover, and in the confused atmosphere of the 3<sup>rd</sup> March their demands for action undermined the SDAPO leadership's announcement that they would campaign for "Anschluss". That evening there were confused scuffles in the streets of Vienna between police, Social Democrats, Nazis and other Socialists, and no single party appeared willing or able to stamp their authority on the situation...

...Starhemberg's gamble on the future of Austria led to the same uncertainty and unwillingness to take immediate action across Central Europe just as at home. In Czechoslovakia and Rumania the response was muted and any condemnation of the move was intended for internal consumption- Prague and Bucharest both felt that even a Hapsburg in Vienna was preferable to the prospect of German occupation, although Miron Christea<sup>4</sup> warned Hungary not to take advantage of the crisis. In Budapest however, Admiral Horthy's reaction was one of concern, not calculation- the Hungarian Government was just as worried about German expansion as his neighbours, and even shared the regional fear that a Hapsburg restoration might destabilise his own country. Indeed, the only country that failed to give a nuanced and cautious answer was Yugoslavia, where the Austrian crisis had exacerbated the Kingdom's long internal crisis over Croat representation. Fearing that many Croats would seize on Otto Hapsburg as an alternative ruler to his own regency, Prince Paul condemned Starhemberg's plebiscite announcement and threatened that unless the Austrian Government acquiesced to German demands then Yugoslavia would feel obliged to intervene alongside the Reich..."

(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)

"For its part, the German Government was completely taken aback by Starhemberg's gamble. Hitler had not been informed in advance of Starhemberg's intentions, and was at first incredulous. Then, his astonishment rapidly gave way to mounting fury at what he saw as underhand tactics by the Austrians; 'an extremely dirty trick' as Goering later recalled, designed to 'dupe the Reich through a stupid and idiotic plebiscite'. Hitler was at first unsure how to react. He at first considered a Nazi abstention from the plebiscite in an attempt to undermine its credibility, or sending planes over Austria to drop leaflets... In the event however, events moved too quickly for such schemes. On the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> an Italian declaration of support to Austria combined with rumours of troop movements through the Brenner Pass led Hitler to assume that Mussolini would do everything in his power to forestall any '*Anschluss*', and around 8PM he sent a handwritten letter via his emissary Prince Phillip of Hessen telling the Duce that as 'a son of Austria I can no longer stand back, but feel compelled to restore order in my homeland', adding that nothing would alter his determination to uphold the Brenner border. By the time this letter had been sent however Hitler was already in the process of organising demonstrations in the South Tyrol, and around midnight he signalled to Keitel that despite the immediate lack of preparedness in the Wehrmacht, 'Sonderfall Otto' had to take place as soon as was practical.

The next day was one of utter confusion; as Yugoslavia indicated its inability to accept a Hapsburg on the Austrian throne and began to mobilise troops, Austrian Nazis took control of Government buildings in several cities and Vienna teetered on the brink of complete disorder, it quickly became apparent that a German response was essential to take control of the situation. In an atmosphere of complete uncertainty and without knowing if they

would face resistance, German troops finally crossed the Austrian border at 5.30pm on the 4<sup>th</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

On paper at least, the Bundesheer seemed capable of resisting the German advance for a limited amount of time despite the huge numerical advantage the invaders boasted. Austrian troops were well trained and well armed, and the year before had engaged in intensive exercises based around staving off a larger and more mobile foe. Only a month before the crisis began the Austrian army had taken delivery of a consignment of Italian weapons and vehicles, and the autumn and winter of 1937 had seen a considerable expansion of the paramilitary 'Heimatschutz', organised on the Italian model. The Austrian defence rested on a plan drawn up the year before by Field Marshall Jansa<sup>5</sup>. Jansa envisaged an assault from southern Germany towards Vienna, and as such intended to mount a strategic defence between the rivers Traun and Enns. The Austrian General Staff were under no illusions about the ultimate outcome of any German invasion, but hoped that giving the Wehrmacht a bloody nose and temporarily halting the German advance would buy enough time for a diplomatic solution to be reached. As Field Marshal Jansa later wrote;

*"I was concerned not so much with winning battles but, by our resistance, to force an intervention by the Great Powers by which Austria will be given the strength to have a chance of striking a bargain with Germany."*

Unfortunately for the Austrian Government, the situation was not as simple as a clash between two armies. Civil order had broken down across much of Austria as Nazis fought running street-battles with units of the Heimwehr and Socialist groups, and to the south the prospect of

Yugoslavian intervention looked increasingly likely. These factors were dwarfed however by the fact that the Austrian Bundesheer quickly proved that it could not be relied on. Starhemberg had never fully trusted the military to resist German pressure, and his suspicions were soon borne out. By the early morning of March 5<sup>th</sup> it became clear that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division under General Feurstein, Alfred Ritter von Hubicki's Fast Division and the Air Force under Commander Lohr had all decided to throw their lot in with the Wehrmacht, with three more divisions clearly wavering. The defection of Fuerstein and Hubicki tore the heart out of the Austrian defensive line and any meaningful defence of Vienna was made impossible by the news at lunchtime that General Kienbauer's 4<sup>th</sup> Division had also joined the invaders. Realising that the capital was in all probability lost, Starhemberg and his Government secretly left Vienna in the early afternoon, heading westwards in the hope of reaching Innsbruck...

In the event, the first shots of the war were fired at dawn on the 5<sup>th</sup>. After a night of street-fighting, local Nazis and a contingent of Austrian 'legionnaires' who had crossed the border that evening had secured the city of Salzburg, and units of the Wehrmacht soon followed in their wake. Having heard the defections of Austrian commanders triumphantly proclaimed on the radio, the Germans only expected limited resistance from holdouts of the Heimatschutz, and were completely surprised when they were fired on by elements of the Austrian 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade just to the south of the city... As the morning wore on it became clear that some elements of the Bundesheer were determined to resist, and while in Upper Austria the Austrians were generally content to remain in their barracks, the risk of resistance slowed the German advance. Only an hour after the Italian ambassador in Berlin handed Ribbentrop<sup>6</sup> an ultimatum demanding an immediate withdrawal of German troops from Austria, German troops

approaching the Tyrolean village of Scharnitz fired shots at what they assumed were Austrian Tiroljaeger- in fact, the defenders were part of a force of Italian Alpini that had hurriedly been despatched across the Brenner Pass the evening before. As the skirmish intensified and both sides brought up reinforcements and artillery, it became increasingly obvious that even without a formal declaration of war the occupation of Austria would not be the easy one the Germans had hoped for..."

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"Realising that the Italian ultimatum to Germany gave only a short window for a speedy resolution to the conflict, British diplomats quickly found themselves in a race against time. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March saw a stream of increasingly desperate diplomatic notes passed between London, Rome and Berlin aiming to calm tensions and pull both sides back from the brink of war. Graham hoped that a conference could be arranged that would clarify Austria's position, or at the very least that both sides would agree to abide by the result of Starhemberg's plebiscite. It quickly became obvious that this was a forlorn hope however, and the Foreign Office found itself completely isolated<sup>7</sup>. The fact that Italian and German troops were already engaged in combat made a climb-down by either side impossible for prestige reasons, and Berlin and Rome both felt confident that they could accomplish their goals without the need for negotiation. The Central European states were just as unwilling to help, as Yugoslavia found itself tied to the German cause and her neighbours were too unsure of the outcome to commit one way or the other. After flying to Paris on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> Graham was able to extract a grudging statement of concern from the French Foreign Minister Marx Dormoy, but it was obvious that the French Government sympathised with the Italians more than with

the British<sup>8</sup>. As Graham flew from Paris to Rome the following morning, he received word that Italy had declared war on Germany and Yugoslavia. Although attempts to resolve the situation would continue for the next fortnight, the chance for peace had been dealt a terrific blow..."

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"...The chaotic opening days of the war provided encouragement to both sides. For the Germans, the defection of elements of the Bundesheer and their largely unopposed drive towards Vienna indicated that the conflict would be over quickly, even if the Wehrmacht faced a bloody struggle to force their way into the Tyrol. For the Austrians and Italians, the activation of Starhemberg's national defence plan and the successful arrival of Italian troops seemed to ensure that the Germans could be held in Carinthia and north of Innsbruck. While the defenders south of Salzburg and along the Danube were swiftly crushed by German troops and their Austrian Nazi allies, Bundesheer and Heimatschutz units conducted a spirited defence of Voralberg and central Austria, often against overwhelming odds. On the 8<sup>th</sup> March the situation was regarded as serious enough by OKW to commit the 10<sup>th</sup> Army to Austria to join the 8<sup>th</sup>, the first recognition by the Germans that matters were not going completely according to plan..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"Shortly before 4pm on the afternoon of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Hitler crossed the Austrian border at his birthplace, Braunau am Inn. The church bells were ringing, and thousands of people (most of them brought in from out of town) lined

the streets. Hitler did not linger; his bodyguards were worried about an assassination attempt by members of the Heimwehr and his visit was wholly for propaganda purposes rather than sentiment. The cavalcade proceeded to Linz. Progress was slower than expected, and Glaise-Horstenau later commented on the strange way that some villages seemed full of happy crowds cheering the Fuhrer while others were completely deserted or heavily garrisoned by men from the SS<sup>9</sup>. It was in darkness, four hours later, that Hitler eventually reached the Upper Austrian capital of Linz. An enormous crowd of carefully vetted locals was waiting for him. Hitler looked deeply moved; tears ran down his cheeks. In his speech on the balcony of the town hall he told the crowd that providence had singled him out to return his homeland to the Reich, and that they were witnesses to the success of his mission. He was constantly interrupted by cheering. After the speech Hitler had originally intended to be driven back to Munich, but warnings of a plot to ambush his car forced him to stay the night in Linz and fly back to Germany the following morning. Two hours after he left the city's post office was blown up by a bomb, and three prominent local Nazis were discovered with their throats cut that afternoon..."

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"Italy's declaration of war on the 6<sup>th</sup> March irritated the British but caused little anxiety in Paris, where the Blum Government had long been frustrated by Mosley's caution on the German issue. Indeed, as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> it appears that Blum sent a private note to Mussolini promising French support in the event of war "as guaranteed by treaty", and over the next few days Dormoy spent much of his time assuring Central European ambassadors that Austria would have no irredentist designs on its



neighbours. More significantly, on the 7<sup>th</sup> Blum gave permission for the aeroplane carrying the Archduke Otto Hapsburg to Milan to over-fly French territory, a decision made without consulting the British. Finally, as news came of German troops surrounding Vienna three days later, the French ambassador in Berlin handed a note to the Foreign Ministry demanding the withdrawal all German troops from Austria- if this ultimatum was ignored then France would fulfil her treaty obligations as set out at Locarno and Rome and declare war herself. Blum's motivations for war were not wholly elevated; the Prime Minister judged that war would have the effect of rallying the French people around his ailing Popular Front Government..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**"VIENNA COMMUNE, THE:** Popular name given to the doomed attempt by Austrian Socialists to defend their capital against German attack in March 1938. After the Austrian Government decided to abandon Vienna and retreat to the Alps, Vienna briefly became a city without any official control. It seemed unlikely that German troops would accept the official proclamation of Vienna as an 'Open City', and despite the departure of troops and members of the Heimatschutz skirmishes continued between rival militias. As units of the Wehrmacht entered St Polten on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, several Socialist groups opposed to the Anschluss began to barricade streets and arm themselves with weapons looted from Vienna's armouries. They were also aided by the delivery of a consignment of guns brought in from nearby Bratislava under the tacit approval of the Czechoslovak authorities. After surrounding the city, German forces finally entered Vienna on March 10<sup>th</sup> and annihilated the defenders in a two day battle. The defenders' hopeless struggle was immortalised

by the presence of the writer and journalist Kenneth Miles<sup>10</sup>, who happened to be in the city at the time of the crisis and who joined the defenders for a time before seeking refuge in the British embassy. The publication of his essay "*Homage to Vienna*" played a hugely important part in galvanising British public opinion towards supporting intervention in the Austrian War..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Despite the Italian declaration of war and the increasing likelihood of France entering the conflict, the Mosley Government still maintained its calls for a peaceful resolution to the Austrian situation. Graham was ordered on an increasingly pointless tour of the capitals of Europe in order to tease out support for a general agreement, which only earned him polite incomprehension in Prague and Budapest, frustration in Rome and contempt in Berlin. Even as late as March 11<sup>th</sup> and the expiration of the French ultimatum Mosley confidently hoped that peace could be salvaged..."

...Meanwhile, calls for intervention grew. As early as March 3<sup>rd</sup> James Maxton made a speech in the Commons demanding an immediate show of strength to dissuade German aggression; "Will the Prime Minister abandon the workers of Austria just as he so callously abandoned the workers of Spain?" he asked a packed Chamber. Winston Churchill rose after Maxton. Noting wryly that he seldom found himself agreeing with the leader of ILP, he went on to describe the German moves as "A programme of aggression, nicely calculated and timed", warning that Britain should take "effective measures while time remains". Watching from the Press Gallery, Peter Howard<sup>11</sup> would later recall that

*“The atmosphere in the Commons was electric; the usual rivalries and alliances were abruptly turned on their head. Diehard Imperialists cheered Maxton, while the Reds shouted their praise of their old nemesis Churchill; on both benches Members barracked their neighbours, while the Front Benches sat in stony silence and Whips desperately tried to restore order. Those of us in the lobby looked at each other in consternation. Would anything ever be the same again?”*

After the events of the 4<sup>th</sup> March, matters moved swiftly in Westminster. A meeting of the ILP called that evening demanded immediate intervention; caught up in the excitement, even junior ministers like Bevan and Shinwell found themselves voting for a motion promising disaffiliation if nothing was done to aid Austria. On the right, similar moves were taking place; an eclectic mix of Conservative hawks such as Churchill and Amery and pro-Italian Anglo-Catholics like Charles Petrie began to press an unwilling Chamberlain to call for action against Hitler. It soon became obvious that the pro and anti-war camps made a mockery of party divisions, as Mosley found himself on the same side as Chamberlain and Halifax on the issue and opposed to allies like Bevin. Divisions in the Conservative party partly eased the Government’s discomfort, but as newspapers began to call for war and lurid stories of German atrocities began to leak out into the public domain<sup>12</sup> it became clear that Mosley had a major crisis on his hands...

The Prime Minister remained fixated on attempts to salvage peace however, and even as France joined Italy in declaring war on Germany he held out hope for some sort of deal. The pressure began to grow intolerable however. Public opinion, inflamed by the writing of figures like Kenneth Miles and Michael Foot<sup>13</sup>, swung behind the cause of intervention. A major protest march in favour of war took place in London on the 14<sup>th</sup>; a crowd drawn from a

massive range of British society marched to Trafalgar Square, where they were addressed by both Churchill and Maxton to the rage of their respective party leaderships... Attempts by loyalist Mosleyites to salvage the situation only made matters worse. On the 18<sup>th</sup> March the Education Minister and Mosleyite protégé John Strachey made an unguarded comment to a reporter that implied a war with Germany would risk the swift aerial destruction of London; the Beaverbrook press jumped on the remark, and the following morning the newspapers were full of accusations of Governmental cowardice. The '45 minute scandal' forced Strachey's resignation that evening, and faced with the loss of a valued political ally and increasingly angry communiqués from Rome and Paris, it rapidly became clear to Mosley that it would be almost impossible to avoid entering the conflict..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"A declaration of war in 1938 risked two consequences: the disaster of European civilisation tearing itself apart for a second time, and the triumph of Communism. The only power which could have benefited from that war was Russia... Statesmen can only deal with the facts confronting them in any given situation. To write this is almost as difficult as it was to take the bitter, truly agonising decision to send men to their deaths knowing that their sacrifice should not have been necessary. Yet it is my duty now, and it would be cowardice to avoid it. Nothing is more unpopular than to oppose the rush to war, and it can be almost as unpopular after the war to say it should not have been fought. But unless we can beseech this generation, in the words of Cromwell, "to believe it possible that you may be mistaken", error can follow error until Britain enters the eternal night.<sup>14</sup>

Before I give my reasons for believing that the war was an immense mistake, I should answer the question whether it could possibly have been avoided. Policies can only be judged effectively by their results, and it is not difficult to show that this war was disastrous to Europe; but to convince, I must show that an alternative policy had a reasonable chance of avoiding the catastrophe. The policy for which I have always stood was to make Britain so strongly armed that it need not fear attack from any quarter, to develop the British Empire, and not to intervene in any foreign quarrel which did not affect British interests. Austria was such a quarrel. My good friend Mussolini never understood that the only policy which could logically have produced another explosion on the frontiers of Germany was his denial of expansion to the east. What was gained by the war beyond the aggrandisement of Russia? Present experience shows us that the four-power bloc of Britain, France, Germany and Italy was quite possible without any similarity of political system, if we had agreed in mutual interest on this common policy in foreign affairs. Was it really worth sowing the seeds of war to attain a unity of purpose that we could have accomplished without the deaths of countless thousands and the destruction of entire nations?"<sup>15</sup>

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**MERAN REVOLT:** Pro-Nazi uprising in northern Italy during the Austrian War, centred on the town of Merano. After Italy was awarded the region after the Great War, the German population of South Tyrol had long hoped to reunite with their compatriots in the north. In the mid 1930's the Nazi regime in Germany included the VKS (*Völkischer Kampfring Südtirols*) in its policy of providing funding, weapons and training to Pan-German groups

across Central Europe, and by the outbreak of war in 1938 the faction was well armed, organised and willing to fight. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March the VKS launched a series of raids across the region aimed at cutting railway lines and preventing the movement of Italian forces into Austria, and the following day the rebels seized Government offices in the town of Meran (modern Merano), massacring Italian officials and proclaiming their incorporation into Greater Germany. In the event, the rebellion was short lived<sup>16</sup>- the large numbers of Italian troops already in the region made the uprising futile, and the disturbances only served to delay Italian troop movements through the Brenner Pass by a few days. Meran was finally retaken a week after the initial revolt, and the VKS' leader Peter Hofer was captured and shot. The revolt's main consequence was the internment and eventual deportation of the entire South Tyrolean community and the resettlement of the region with Italian speakers.<sup>17</sup>

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"By the third week of March the Labour Government soon faced the greatest crisis of its 6 year existence, as Oswald Mosley tried everything he could to wriggle out of his commitment to Italy and France to come to their aid in case of war with Germany. Mosley was insistent- war with Germany was not only needless but still avoidable. The majority of the Labour party however was all too keen to join the French and Italians in the cause of Austrian independence, and the Prime Minister found himself with only a dwindling band of Mosleyites in his own party for support, as well as the new Conservative leader Neville Chamberlain, who was increasingly isolated in his own party. The resignation of Strachey on the 19<sup>th</sup> brought the issue to a head, and the following lunchtime a deputation led by Dalton and Bevin visited Downing St, telling their

leader that if he refused to go to war there would be mass resignations and his position would be untenable. It is a measure of how stubborn Mosley was that he found his Ministers' threats astonishingly insubordinate, and only a meeting with the Whips confirmed the level of antipathy for his stance in the Party, and indeed the country at large.

Having come to the brink of political disaster, Mosley found himself considering his own resignation. That afternoon the Prime Minister consulted first Graham, and then the King as to what his course of action should be. Both are thought to have advised the Prime Minister to bend to popular opinion rather than to sacrifice his political career. That evening, Mosley held a cabinet meeting at which he made his climb-down clear. The cabinet were overjoyed; Bevin later recalled that "A great sigh filled the air- it was the sound of disaster averted". The Foreign Office was instructed to draft an ultimatum to Germany around midnight on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The die was cast."<sup>18</sup>

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"Yugoslavia had sat out the first week of the war while it mobilised, the only action in the region being the occasional border skirmish with Italian troops in Slovenia and Albania. As the Wehrmacht found itself facing heavier resistance however Belgrade soon came under German pressure to launch an offensive, and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March the Yugoslavian high command authorised an attack by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army northwards across the Karawanken mountains into Austria, aimed at taking the city of Klagenfurt and severing the only railway link that supplied the Austrian defences around Graz and allowed Italian reinforcements to reach Styria. The attack began the following day and took the Austrians completely by surprise. The only unit in

position to repel the Yugoslavians was a battalion of Alpenjaeger, and their suicidal defence of the Loibl Pass against four Yugoslav divisions held the attackers for three days, long enough for reinforcements to be frantically rushed in from further east.

The 'Alpine Thermopylae' as the engagement was dubbed failed to halt the Yugoslav advance however, and by the 25<sup>th</sup> Austrian troops had been forced to withdraw to the town of Ferlach, in the Drave valley. Further east the Yugoslav attack had been even more successful, driving the Austrians across the Kamnik Alps and actually reaching the south bank of the Drave at Ebernsdorf. Despite these advances however the Yugoslavians were unable to capitalise on their advantage. The offensive had uncovered severe problems in the coordination of infantry with artillery, and the arrival of Italian aircraft in the region meant that the Yugoslavs could no longer move forward in the knowledge that they were safe from aerial attack. Any attempts at further movements in the region were abandoned after the 1<sup>st</sup> April, when the Italians launched their first offensive towards Laibach..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Mosley's retreat on the issue of war saved his political career, but came too late to avoid serious long-term consequences. The Prime Minister's determination to see his plans through had previously seemed laudable, but his colleagues belatedly realised that Mosley's quixotic streak could prove disastrous; the young James Callaghan noted that "before now, the wind has always been behind the PM. Is it possible that he can only be blown forward and not tack?"<sup>19</sup> The rapidity with which Mosley isolated himself from the party made many MPs uncomfortably aware that a single crisis had almost caused the Government to fall, and raised



obvious concerns about his ability to lead. Others quietly questioned whether Mosley was capable of fighting a war that he clearly felt ambivalent about, while on the Left many in the ILP and beyond realised that if enough pressure was exerted on the Government it could cave in and reverse policy. It was a dangerous precedent...

More subtly, the crisis caused personal rifts. Strachey became deeply bitter at the events surrounding his resignation, and his continued closeness to Mosley irritated the Left. More significantly, Dalton's action in confronting Mosley won him much praise in the Party but at the expense of lasting enmity from the Mosleyites, who saw his actions as a betrayal by an ambitious upstart. The Dalton/Mosley relationship had always been a tense one, but from the spring of 1938 Mosley's acolytes began to actively seek to try and turn the Prime Minister against his Chancellor..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"...Hitler had still not given up hope that the British could be kept out of the conflict. On his return to Berlin he had Goering summon Neville Henderson to make a last attempt. The British ambassador had, at the increasingly desperate urging of his Government, been trying for some weeks to organise a peace conference. On the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> however he had received a communiqué from London instructing him to abandon such moves and await further instructions. It was in this uncertain atmosphere that Henderson arrived. He found Hitler in a nervous state. The odour from his mouth was so strong that the ambassador was tempted to move back a step or two. Hitler was at his most implacable. Austria was rightfully part of the Reich and the country's "false Government (would) be broken and annihilated". In the next breath he added that

further negotiations were possible, as long as the principle of Austrian incorporation into the Reich was upheld. Again the threat followed, in ever more hysterical tones. Hitler knew that it British interests to avoid a fight with him. But if Britain chose to fight, she would pay dearly. He would fight for as long as necessary. In the early hours of the following morning, Henderson was informed that he was to inform Hitler that no negotiations could take place until German troops were withdrawn from Austrian territory. No reply to this message was received. At 10AM on the 21<sup>st</sup> March, Henderson handed the British ultimatum to Ribbentrop in place of Hitler, who had refused to meet the ambassador...

The ultimatum expired at midday. Hitler was at war with Great Britain, the would-be 'friend' he had long tried to woo. Despite all warnings, his plans had been predicated that Britain would not enter any war- though he had shown himself deterred even by that eventuality. It is little wonder that when Ribbentrop delivered the British ultimatum he angrily turned to Ribbentrop and asked; "What now?"...Hitler's dismay at the entry of Britain quickly gave way to the usual optimism. Goebbels was with him that evening, and Hitler went over the military situation. The Fuhrer believed that "there will be a potato war (Kartoffelkrieg) in the West" he wrote..."

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<sup>1</sup>Papen being killed by Austrian Nazis? It seems a bit far-fetched, but it was one of the schemes that Hitler vetoed in 1937 in favour of a slower, 'evolutionary' approach. He's certainly not somebody the Nazi regime would have shed any tears over especially as he's failed to bring Anschluss any closer.

<sup>2</sup>This is pretty similar to the German plans for the Anschluss OTL, with the difference that because the German government wants a referendum ITTL instead of being bounced into the prospect of one by the Austrians, there is a much larger degree of preparation and less improvisation.

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<sup>3</sup>Here, Starhemberg is making a gamble similar to Schuschnigg's in OTL. The wording of the plebiscite isn't too different to OTL's, with the obvious addition of the Hapsburg restoration. Why does Starhemberg do this? I felt that Starhemberg's legitimist ambitions would compel him to make an attempt to restore the monarchy, and doing it in a referendum where the other option is incorporation into Germany would make sense in the context of internal politics- what better chance would there be? In addition, Starhemberg feels that as restored Kaiser provides the perfect national symbol for Austrians to rally around.

<sup>4</sup> King Carol of Romania has introduced a personal dictatorship as OTL, although the details are slightly different. More on this later.

<sup>5</sup>Alfred Jansa was appointed the Chief of Staff of the Austrian Army in 1936. The Germans recognised him as a competent commander and OTL his removal was one of the demands made by the Germans in the lead up to the Anschluss. ITTL the German tactics have been different, and he retains his position.

<sup>6</sup> ITTL Ribbentrop has been Foreign Minister since the autumn of 1937, Konstantin von Neurath having resigned over Hitler's aggressive Austrian stance in September.

<sup>7</sup> Matters aren't helped by the fact that the Foreign Office realises that peace is a fool's errand, and expends as little effort as possible in trying to encourage a deal.

<sup>8</sup> OTL in 1938 the French were more belligerent than the British over Germany, but were restrained by Eden and Chamberlain. Here the Italian involvement gives the British far less leverage, much to Mosley's dismay

<sup>9</sup>OTL of course Hitler made a similar progress through Austria. Here his reception is slightly different.

<sup>10</sup> ITTL Kenneth Miles has so far made rather a good career of finding himself trapped in short-lived radical revolts.

<sup>11</sup> OTL, Peter Howard was one of the authors of the famous polemic *Guilty Men*. ITTL he remains a political journalist.

<sup>12</sup>Atrocities that were no worse than what the Heimwehr were doing themselves, of course- but that's not the point...

<sup>13</sup>ITTL, Michael Foot was elected to Parliament in 1936, as the Member for Monmouth. He is the baby of the House and an accomplished polemicist in the Left-Wing press.

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<sup>14</sup>This passage causes uproar when it is released in 1961- the war is still an issue of great importance for many ITTL, and Mosley's comments will be seized upon by both his supporters and detractors. Mosley is something of a sore loser, as may be obvious...

<sup>15</sup> Note that Mosley doesn't address why he decided to go to war despite his better judgement- saying that he feared for his political skin is taking honesty slightly too far, even for him.

<sup>16</sup> Of course, this is the whole point- the Germans are using the VKS as cannon fodder to delay Italian reinforcement through the Brenner pass and never expect the revolt to succeed.

<sup>17</sup> No Dableiber here- the Italian resettlement is harsh and effective. Many of the South Tyroleans will end up in Germany and Austria eventually, although in the short term they are sent to Calabria; some of the especially unlucky ones get sent as colonists to Italy's African possessions.

<sup>18</sup> There are two obvious questions to be asked here; why is the British public eager for war, and why has Mosley been so incredibly stubborn? On the first question, Britain feels far more confident on the world stage than it did at this point OTL; the country is re-armed, recently engaged in a successful overseas intervention and feels more secure strategically. Ironically in this field the Mosley Government is a victim of its own propaganda. As to the second question, the answer is because that's how Mosley's character was. Mosley has been very lucky so far in this TL- all the issues that he's made a principled stand on have come out OK in the end, and events have occurred in such a way as to play to his character strengths rather than flaws. This is the first time that Mosley is confronted with a situation that he can't get his way on, and his inability to accept reality causes a completely avoidable crisis. In the broad sweep of this TL, we've just left the 'hubris' stage and will be moving towards 'nemesis' presently.

<sup>19</sup> Sorry.

## Chapter 16

*"Sometimes it is better to lose and do the right thing than to win and do the wrong thing."*

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*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"May I now ask the reader to consider what anyone in my position should have done, believing, as I did, the war to be a profound and possibly disastrous error; a difficult process, I know, for anyone who thinks my view quite wrong. But, given that belief, what could or should be done about it? Why did I, having decided that the war was a mistake yet having been compelled to enter it nonetheless, choose not to resign?

The answer was quite simple; if Britain was committed to fight, then it was my duty to ensure that the war came to a swift and victorious conclusion with as little bloodshed as possible. While a negotiated peace was preferable, it could not be relied upon; therefore, the entire nation had to be mobilised. Again, I refrain from false modesty; I was the best person to accomplish this mobilisation. My resignation would have precipitated a political crisis at a time when Britain and the Empire needed strong leadership, and there was no alternative candidate to whom I would have willingly entrusted such a burden. My old sparring partner Neville Chamberlain had no more wish to fight than I, and in retrospect his health was already beginning to fail<sup>1</sup>. Within my own Party there was no successor; Strachey and

Bevan were not ready, Attlee too safe, and my views on Dalton are well known<sup>2</sup>... It says something of the lack of leadership at the time that the only man who I would have trusted to prosecute the war were I to be incapacitated was a backbencher in the other Party; whatever can be thought or said of the character and policies of the man, Winston Churchill was a patriot who openly declared his principles and stood for them courageously...

Thankfully, when war came we were largely prepared; from the day I entered into power I pressed for the rearmament of our country<sup>3</sup>. I was naturally preoccupied with the air arm in which I had served, but also advocated the modernising and mechanising of the army. For instance, in 1935 I said that;

*"We will immediately mobilise every resource of the nation to give us an air force equal in strength to the strongest in Europe. We will modernise and mechanise our army, and at the end of that process our army will cost less, but will be the most modern and effective striking-force in the world."*

By 1938 the task was not complete, but I am satisfied that without the efforts of my Government we should have been in a poor state indeed. It only remained to mobilise the civilian sphere; and here again, much had been done. I had long felt that legislation should be kept prepared in case of a crisis, and this instinct served me well; less than 24 hours after we entered the war many of the necessary economic and social components had been already put in train.

My next consideration was the political leadership of the country. I had long been certain that only a Government comprised of talented men from each of the Parties would suffice for a situation such as the one we found ourselves in. Accordingly, I invited the Conservatives and Liberals to form a joint administration for the national good. To my

deep disappointment, both Chamberlain and Sinclair turned down my request<sup>4</sup>... With this option closed to me I at first resolved to invite patriotic individuals within the other Parties to join the Government, but soon realised that this would only engender anger and bitterness within the Opposition. With great regret, I concluded that a Government comprised of Labour alone was the best means of retaining a stable political situation during wartime..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Once the decision to go to war had been made the Prime Minister sank into a brief state of nervous exhaustion, much to the concern of the Cabinet and confidants<sup>5</sup>. At a cabinet meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> Mosley was detached and monosyllabic, almost semi-conscious; in his diary Graham wondered if he might have to be replaced for the sake of his mental health... Even with their leader incapable however, the machinery of Government swung into action to prepare for war. A long-mooted Conscription Bill was dusted off, and on the advice of Attlee it was decided to bring the Indian Federation Bill forward...

Thankfully, the Prime Minister's lethargic state of mind did not last for long. By the afternoon and the expiration of the British ultimatum, Mosley had recovered enough to broadcast to the nation;

*"This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note stating that, unless we heard from them by midday that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Austria, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country is at war with Germany.*

*You can imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that my struggle to win peace has failed. Yet I cannot believe that there is anything more, or anything different, that I could have done, and that would have been more successful.*

*But if we are to fight- and fight we must- we must throw ourselves into the effort of a united nation. There is little point in looking regretfully at past events. Now we have reached this point we must prosecute this conflict to the finish. We are determined by every means in our power to ensure that the life and safety of Britain shall be preserved by proper defences until that peace can be made.*

*Now may God bless the King, the Empire and you all."*

*(Taken from "Disobedience and conspiracy in the German army, 1918-1941" by James Butler, Famighetti 1997)*

Within Germany in the early days of the war, the conservative opponents of Hitler were uncoordinated, unclear about what was happening and uncertain how to act themselves. Nor, unless the army leadership could have been stirred into action, could they have achieved anything. But the army leadership was weakened and divided. Few leading officers thought Hitler's optimism about the non-intervention of the Locarno powers to be justified. Resignation, not gung-ho enthusiasm prevailed. As first Italy, then France and finally Britain entered the war however, the mood became despairing. Generals Fritsch<sup>6</sup> and Beck had long warned of Germany's inability to fight a long war, and at the beginning of April Beck even went as far as to quietly sound out support for a collective resignation of the military leadership... At this stage of the war however, these Cassandra-like warnings were generally regarded as hysterical and exaggerated. For the time being at least, the views of Generals Busch and Manstein prevailed; it was not the business of soldiers to



intervene in political matters. The doubters should rid themselves of the burden of responsibility- a matter for the political leadership- and play a full part in securing a quick end to the conflict..."

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"As German troops found themselves engaged in a heavy fighting rather than the swift occupation they had expected, it became increasingly clear that what had begun as an invasion was rapidly turning into an Austrian civil war... Until the end of March the focus of Italian activity had been stemming the German advance into Austria, with the Yugoslavian front receiving far less prominence. Two events served to change this situation.

The first came on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, when Yugoslavian forces launched their offensive towards Klagenfurt. While Austrian forces successfully held the attackers and prevented them from cutting the vital railway to Graz, the Italian high command realised the situation was highly dangerous; on the 25<sup>th</sup>, Marshall Badoglio bluntly informed Mussolini that "Klagenfurt is now the most important city in Europe". Plans for a diversionary offensive into Carinthia were already being made when Italy faced a further threat from the Yugoslavians; on the 28<sup>th</sup>, the Italian coastal enclave of Zara came under sustained shellfire and the local commander warned that he suspected that an attempt to take the city was imminent. The risk of a humiliating withdrawal from Zara brought the planned offensive forward, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> April Italian forces launched two attacks into Yugoslavia; one in the north spearheaded by General Guzzoni's 4<sup>th</sup> army, and one in Albania designed to attract Yugoslavian troops southwards.

The results were mixed. While the Italian forces in Carinthia were able to push through the Yugoslavian defences thanks to superior numbers and brute force, it quickly became apparent that Italian troops were far better suited to entrenched Alpine warfare in the north than to sweeping mobile advances on less mountainous terrain<sup>7</sup>. Chronic transport shortages hobbled the celebrated "Celeri" divisions, and after initial gains the battle turned into something that more resembled the trench warfare of the Great War than manoeuvre combat. The Italians were eventually halted just over ten miles from Laibach at the village of Nauporto, where from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> April both sides threw reserves into the maelstrom in the hope of influencing the outcome. In the end the Yugoslavian line held; both sides were exhausted by the battle, and it would be several weeks before serious fighting returned to the Slovenian front. In the south, the Albanian offensive met even less success, as the advancing Italians were decisively mauled by entrenched border defences. After only three days of fighting, the attack was called off. While the Italians failed to take Laibach, their efforts had forced the abandonment of the Yugoslavian advance in the north; to accomplish this objective however both sides paid a massive cost in blood..."

*(Taken from "'Achtung Heimwehr!': Irregular warfare in the Austrian War" by Peter Scott, Picador 1987)*

"...In the early weeks of the war the Heimatschutz had the clear advantage in the war behind the lines. Prince Starhemberg had long assumed that irregular warfare would be necessary in the event of a German invasion of Austria, and in 1937 a great deal of effort had been expended training members of the Heimwehr in what amounted to terrorist tactics. Potential *Sturmscharen* were chosen for their skill in outdoor living and mountain

climbing, and were subjected to an intensive course designed to enable them to operate in occupied territory, executing Nazi sympathisers, blowing up infrastructure and causing as much chaos as possible. In March 1938 Starhermberg's forethought paid off, as bands of *Sturmscharen* roamed the Austrian countryside causing terror and destruction in their wake. They proved so successful in suppressing pro-Nazi sentiment in the occupied areas that on March 25<sup>th</sup> Hitler personally ordered the creation of a similar commando force designed to spread confusion in Styria and Carinthia and aid Nazi sympathisers there..."

*(Taken from "The Air War in Europe" by Ian Stock, Rothwell 1984)*

"...As the fighting began in earnest, it became clear that neither side in the conflict was particularly prepared for the resulting air war. While both sides were well trained, neither had experience of fighting a large opposing air force in the context of a general European conflict; even the vaunted *Regia Aeronautica* was only accustomed to the aerial bombardment of hapless infantry<sup>8</sup>... There were also serious deficiencies in equipment. The Germans quickly found that their fighters were inadequate to the demands of modern warfare; their Heinkel He 51 biplanes were outclassed to the point of obsolescence by the Italian CR.32s, while the more modern Messerschmitt BF109 was a superior plane but woefully under-gunned<sup>9</sup>. This caused the Wehrmacht severe problems; after the first few days of air superiority, the arrival of Italian fighters in the skies over Austria rendered ground attack aircraft such as the Ju 87 Stuka practically useless...While the Italians had the advantage in the fighter department however, both sides found themselves equally incapable of dealing with enemy bombers. The Luftwaffe's fast Heinkel He111s were easily

able to outrun their Italian attackers, and while German fighters had some success against the older Fiat BR.20s, they had great difficulty shooting down Italian SM.79s...

...While the weakness of the German fighter force caused the Wehrmacht considerable problems in the ground war, the inability of Italian aircraft to shoot down German bombers led to the Luftwaffe placing considerable emphasis on strategic bombing. On the 12<sup>th</sup> March, the first raid on Milan took place; by the end of the month Heinkels were launching raids all over the north of Italy. On March 22<sup>nd</sup> German bombers operating from Yugoslavian bases launched an attack on the town of Bari... For their part, the *Regia Aeronautica* replied in kind. While at first Yugoslavia bore the brunt of the Italian bomber campaign thanks to the country's small and outdated air force, three days after the Milan raid a squadron of SM.79 bombers crossed the Alps and attacked Munich, to great effect; emboldened by this raid, on the 21<sup>st</sup> a similar sortie was launched against Stuttgart, with the bombers landing in French bases after completing their mission..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**UNTERNEHMEN ADLER (English; "Operation Eagle"):** Daring attempt by members of the SS to assassinate Otto Hapsburg in the Austrian War. Realising that Prince Starhemberg's Austrian Government was relying on pro-Hapsburg sentiment for popular support in the country, as soon as the fighting began Hitler ordered the assassination of Otto Hapsburg by any means necessary. The mission received increased urgency when Hapsburg began broadcasting anti-Nazi propaganda into the occupied regions of Austria. For the first weeks of the war the pretender's whereabouts were unknown, but in mid April

1938 an Austrian SS officer named Otto Skorzeny<sup>10</sup> tracked him to the Hotel Moarhof in the Tyrolean town of Lienz, where he had made his headquarters. Skorzeny and his men planned to emulate the tactics of their Heimwehr opponents and wear false uniforms to gain entry to the hotel, before finding the pretender and killing him. The attackers would then try and blend in with Hapsburg's bodyguard in the confusion before escaping into the mountains to the north and making their way back to friendly territory. In the event, the attack was a failure; the assassins were stopped by a suspicious guard outside the hotel, and a fire-fight developed in which most of the SS men were killed, though they inflicted heavy casualties and caused utter chaos. The operation's main effect was the escalation of the partisan fighting that both sides employed behind the lines, and the elevation of Otto Skorzeny to hero-status in the Third Reich...

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"While the Italian and Yugoslavian armies battered away at each other in western Slovenia, the Wehrmacht decided to launch a major offensive into Styria from their positions south of Wiener Neustadt. The offensive had three objectives; to take Graz, link up with Yugoslavian forces in Slovenia, and to support the Austrian Nazis in the region. On April 8<sup>th</sup> a two-pronged assault began; one crossed the Leith and followed the main road into Styria proper, while the other skirted the Hungarian border through the Burgenland, aiming to swing westwards after crossing the higher ground in the centre of the province. Using the poor weather as cover against Italian air attack, German infantry supported by tanks and artillery met initial success, smashing through the improvised fortifications thrown up against them. The strategically vital Wechsel Pass was taken

on the 13<sup>th</sup>; after this success a buoyant General Blaskowitz informed Hitler that the capture of Graz could be accomplished within weeks. In the event, Blaskowitz's confidence was slightly over-optimistic. The German advance began to bog down a few days after the Wechsel Pass was taken; by this time however the Wehrmacht had penetrated across the valley of the river Rába, and were only slowed by the arrival of several French Alpine divisions from the 6<sup>th</sup> Army...

The lull in the fighting that followed allowed both sides to take stock and assess their performance in the conflict so far. For most of the participants, their conclusions were mixed. While the German military machine had proved itself to be a formidable force, it was clear that the Alpine valleys of Austria had rendered the Wehrmacht's superiority in mobility and armour mostly irrelevant, much to the frustration of the German General Staff. More worryingly, the 'flying artillery' which German commanders had hoped to rely on was neutralised by the *Regia Aeronautica's* fighter superiority<sup>11</sup>. Although an up-gunned version of the Bf 109 had been rushed into production, the prospect of RAF reinforcements arriving in the theatre was not something relished by OKW...

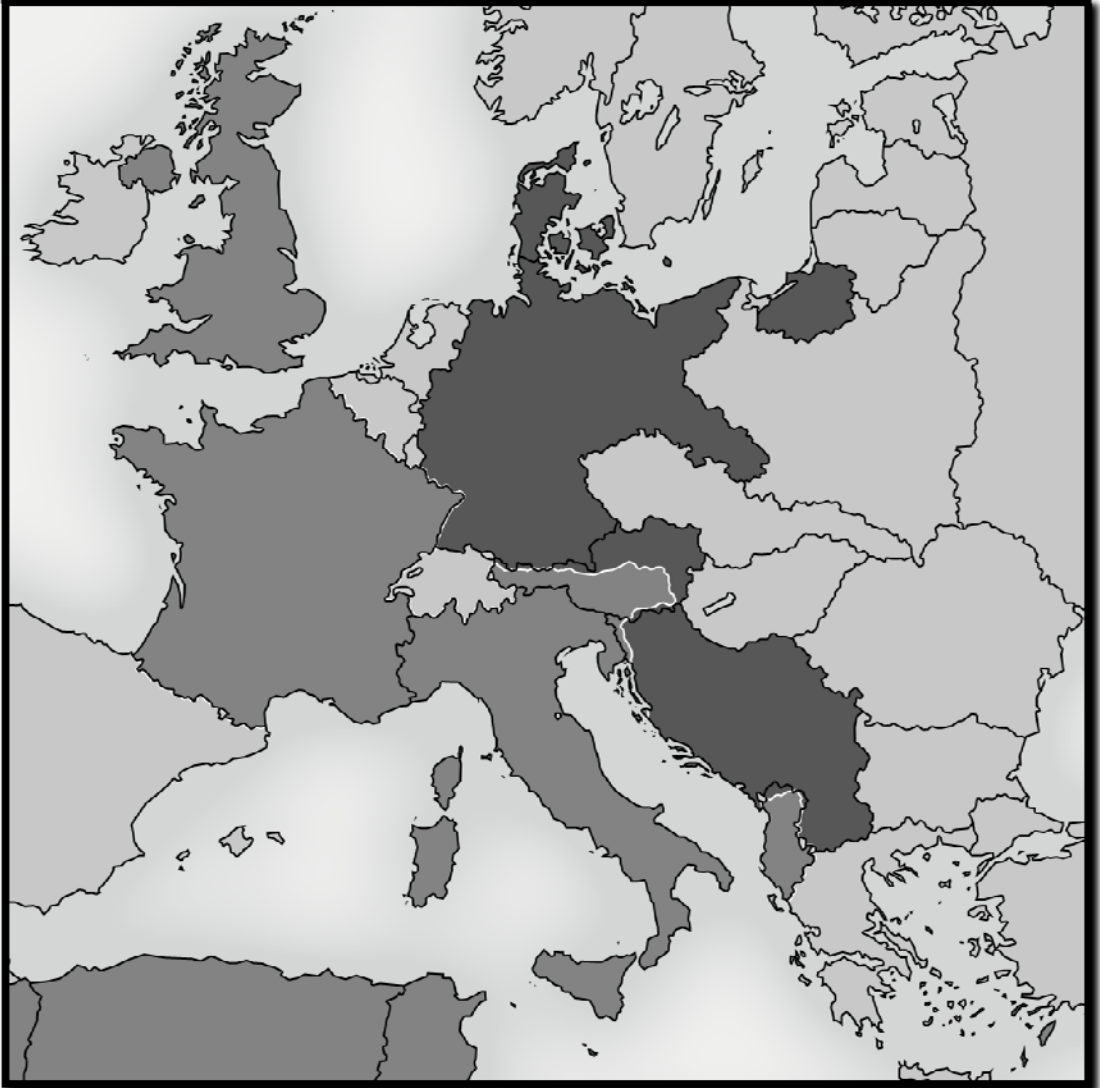
In Italy, the performance of the armed forces was the source of a bitter row. The Italian army had long been split between mobile warfare enthusiasts and their more traditionalist opponents, and the course of the war provided ammunition to both factions. While the German experience had shown that mechanised forces were largely wasted in an Alpine environment, the poor showing of Italian troops on the Slovenian and Albanian fronts was seized on by the proponents of a "Guerra di Rapido Corso" doctrine..."

*(Taken from "The influence of J.F.C Fuller: A Review", in Military Affairs, July 1959)*

"About the time he retired from the army, Fuller became identified with Oswald Mosley, then the charismatic leader of the opposition Labour Party and soon to be Prime Minister. In this he was not alone; the Mosley faction included several military men. For Fuller, Mosleyism held a natural affinity. His strong Carlylean moral standard, admiration for great men, love of decisive action as opposed to democratic lethargy and distaste for finance capitalism made him a natural Mosleyite<sup>12</sup>. Ironically, Fuller's departure from the army in 1933 only served to deepen his influence, for his appointment as an advisor to the War Ministry the following year gave him access to the seat of power and compelled people to think about his ideas...

Fuller was a great exponent of mechanical mobility, of using caterpillar vehicles to provide muscle for movement across the battlefield and of the tank as a hole-punching device against field fortifications. Like Liddell Hart and Richmond, he also called for balanced forces and the need for co-operation in order to win any future war. This image of inter-service cooperation did not endear him to many diehards, particularly in the Admiralty; indeed, his struggles with the Air Ministry are well documented... Despite these restrictions however, Fuller and his allies partially succeeded in the task that they set themselves to do. By the outbreak of war Britain's armed forces had not adopted a wholly 'Fuller-ite' doctrine; however, enough had been done to make the BEF a more mobile striking force than any of its contemporaries, enemy or allied<sup>13</sup>..."

**Map 4:**



Central Europe, May 1<sup>st</sup> 1938



(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)

"Even before the British declaration of war on March 21<sup>st</sup>, the *Kriegsmarine* began making preparations to secure the Baltic from Allied incursions. Access to the iron ore of Sweden was a major strategic concern; the economic staff of OKW concluded in late 1937 that maintaining Swedish ore deliveries during a war was a 'basic demand of the Wehrmacht'. While the ore of northern Sweden was out of Germany's reach for the time being, the mines of central Sweden could be secured relatively easily; German aircraft, ships and submarines began tracking British naval vessels in the Baltic as early as the 6<sup>th</sup><sup>14</sup>, and preparations were made to mine the Øresund and the other entrances to the Baltic... The Mosley Government's dithering over entry to the war did the Royal Navy few favours, and the opportunity to reinforce the region before hostilities began was lost. By the 21<sup>st</sup>, only a few craft were on station in the Baltic; the cruisers HMS *Enterprise* and *Diomedé*, a handful of destroyers and 4 submarines, most famously the HMS *Thames*. This force was to face the brunt of everything that the Germans could throw at it. Less than 24 hours after Britain declared war on Germany U-32 torpedoed HMS *Enterprise* near the island of Bornholm; the submarine HMS *Seahorse* was strafed by aircraft on the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> and was never seen again. Despite these successes, OKW remained terrified of the prospect of the Royal Navy sending a squadron into the Baltic; on the 28<sup>th</sup>, ironically enough the same day that the Admiralty shelved such a plan<sup>15</sup>, Hitler approved the immediate occupation of Denmark to close the Baltic...

In the early morning of April 1<sup>st</sup>, Operation *Oderübung* began. Without any declaration of war, German forces crossed the border into Denmark; at the same time two German ships began to disembark troops at the docks in

Copenhagen. Although vastly outnumbered and poorly equipped a few Danish units did attempt to offer resistance, most notably the Royal guards in the capital, who exchanged shots with the advancing Germans until the King ordered them to cease-fire. Soon afterward a flight of bombers from the Luftwaffe flew over the city, as a none-too-subtle reminder of German power. Little over two hours after the operation began the Danish Government surrendered, realising that resistance was futile; in return, the Germans agreed to the fiction that they had been invited in to the country to maintain Denmark's traditional neutrality<sup>16</sup>...

*(Taken from "Great Naval Battles of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" by Julian O'Callaghan, CUP 1978)*

"The merit of the *Emden's* 1914 cruise was fully appreciated in Germany, for at the outbreak of the Austrian War in March 1938 the Third Reich possessed six small capital ships or "pocket battleships", designed especially for commerce raiding on an ambitious scale<sup>17</sup>. Armed with six 11-in. guns in triple turrets they were far more powerful than the *Emden*. With a maximum speed of 27.7 knots they could also out-distance all but eight of the of the British, French and Italian capital ships, which were the only craft able to oppose them in single combat with any certainty of success. Their destruction was therefore no easy problem... Over the previous sixteen days, *Seydlitz*, *Deutschland*, *Graf Spee* and *Lützow* had secretly slipped to sea as Germany prepared for possible war with the Locarno Powers. Ten ocean-going submarines were also sent to sea. Realising that he could never hope to overtake the Allied lead in capital ships even without British intervention, Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, commander of the German navy- the *Kriegsmarine*- intended to rely on a war of attrition against maritime trade. Fanning out across the Atlantic, where

thousands of miles of sea-routes converged on Europe, the surface raiders were in a position to attack enemy shipping if war was declared. *Deutschland's* operational zone was in the North Atlantic; *Lützow* was to travel south of the equator, while *Seydlitz* and *Graf Spee* were to hunt in the approaches to the Mediterranean...

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, fewer than three hours after the British declaration of war, *Seydlitz* and *Graf Spee* intercepted the Italian steamer SS *Gloria* to the west of Madeira, sinking it by gunfire. The following morning, the same fate befell the British SS *Dunster Grange* and the French vessel SS *Otarie*. The latter however managed to broadcast a distress signal; by the evening the news that two large commerce raiders were operating in the Western Atlantic had reached Admiral Bergamini, who commanded the *Regia Marina's* Atlantic Division at Las Palmas<sup>18</sup>. Theoretically, Bergamini had a powerful force at his disposal; the newly re-commissioned battleship *Gulio Cesare*, the heavy cruiser *Trento*, two light cruisers and three destroyers. However, of this considerable flotilla only the *Giulio Cesare* and the cruiser *Armando Diaz* were in port and ready for action. The *Trento* and two destroyers had left to investigate an earlier report of a suspicious ship off the West African Coast, while the light cruiser *Giuseppe Garibaldi* was having a propeller repaired and the engines of the destroyer *Quintino Sella* were regarded as too unreliable to leave port<sup>19</sup>. After informing Rome of the news, Bergamini's task-force left Las Palmas at dusk on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and steamed north-west, hoping to locate the raiders and shadow them; when the message was relayed through Gibraltar the British Admiralty ordered HMS *Hood* and HMS *Repulse* to move southwards as quickly as possible, postponing their transfer to the Home Fleet.

Unaware that their presence had been detected, the two *Panzerschiffe* continued their progress west of Madeira,

intending to round the south of the island and then split up for better hunting opportunities. Dawn was breaking and they were around 150 miles south of Funchal when they spotted the SS *Santorini*, a Cypriot vessel. The two *Kriegsmarine* ships began to repeat their actions of the previous day; however, as they accosted the *Santorini* a Caproni Ca.313 seaplane operating from Las Palmas spotted them, and radioed their location to Bergamini, who had been patrolling just to the north east. Bergamini, hoping that the *Trento* and the British ships would soon arrive to expand his force, advanced to a safe distance and then decided to shadow the two German ships; unfortunately, Captain Wenneker of the *Seydlitz* had other plans. Realising that his ships were being stalked, he resolved to engage the Italian force before it could be reinforced and turned to fight. The resulting engagement would gain the picturesque title of "The Battle of Savage Island" for the nearest point of land, 100 miles to the south west.

A running battle soon developed as Bergamini tried to lead the German ships towards the *Trento*; the *Giulio Cesare* was theoretically more than a match for the two *Panzerschiffe* but the Italian guns had trouble grouping their rounds at first, and had little effect. Around lunchtime, a lucky salvo from the *Graf Spee* hit the *Armando Diaz* and severely damaged its stern turret; at this point the cruiser was given the order to use its superior speed to peel away from the chase and return to Las Palmas. Shortly afterwards, all three ships spotted a reconnaissance plane from HMS *Hood* approaching from the north. Realising that the balance of forces was shifting, the German ships turned to escape; however, both *Giulio Cesare* and *Hood* could outpace the *Panzerschiffe*, and in a reverse of the morning's events the Allied ships harried the German raiders mercilessly, *Hood* gradually catching up with Bergamini's ship. At 15.09, a 15' shell from *Hood* burst on *Seydlitz's* stern, damaging her

rudder; minutes later a lucky hit from *Giulio Cesare* caused a fuel leak on *Graf Spee*, although a return salvo knocked out one of her bow turrets. From this moment, with both German ships damaged and more Allied reinforcements approaching the outcome of the battle was merely a matter of time; *Seydlitz* began to fall behind her sister ship around 15.30. She fought on but was unable to manoeuvre and eventually caught fire; Wenneker gave the order to abandon ship soon afterwards. *Graf Spee* tried to turn northwards and make for Funchal and internment; she too soon succumbed to plunging shellfire from *Hood* and *Giulio Cesare*, and as her engines failed the order was given to scuttle the ship to prevent it falling being taken as a prize...”

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<sup>1</sup> In both OTL and ITTL, Chamberlain dies in late 1940- Mosley is projecting forward somewhat here.

<sup>2</sup> Not that Mosley’s being catty or anything...

<sup>3</sup> Not strictly true- he tried to secure general disarmament first.

<sup>4</sup> OTL the same happened but in reverse- Chamberlain invited Labour into Government and Attlee refused. There are several reasons for the refusal ITTL- for a start, Chamberlain is unconvinced by the war and would rather be out of the tent to say “I told you so” if it all goes wrong.

<sup>5</sup> Note that Mosley doesn’t talk about this in his autobiography- as far as he’s concerned he’s been in charge all the time.

<sup>6</sup> The Blomberg-Fritsch affair has gone rather differently ITTL- While Blomberg has still had to resign as War Minister, butterflies mean that the scandal is confined to him alone and Fritsch’s reputation remains intact. Without the reorganisation that resulted from the resignations of both Blomberg and Fritsch, the Germany army will be more of an independent force than OTL in the upcoming conflict.

<sup>7</sup> Because of the threat from Germany, ITTL the Italian army has remained based around an Alpine orientation rather than the “Guerra di Rapido Corso” doctrine that was established OTL. This means that the Italian army has considerably less vehicular support and is less

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suit to manoeuvre warfare than OTL, although it is rather better at defending mountain passes and the like.

<sup>8</sup> This is slightly unfair, as the Italian experiences in Abyssinia and Spain have led to improvements in bombing techniques similar to those developed OTL in the Spanish Civil war but not quite as advanced. The Germans however have no such advantage having not fought in the conflict, and this will show in their equipment and doctrine.

<sup>9</sup> OTL, both of these problems were ironed out thanks to the experience of the Condor Legion in Spain; ITTL there is no such opportunity.

<sup>10</sup> Just as any alternative history of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has to include Zeppelins, any ATL set in the 1930's \_has\_ to have Skorzeny hanging around somewhere...

<sup>11</sup> While CR.32s aren't the best planes in the world, OTL Stukas performed very badly against any form of determined fighter cover, and at this point the German fighters are too rubbish to be of much help.

<sup>12</sup> OTL, Fuller supported the BUF- here, he is still attracted to Mosley and gains a great deal of influence in Government defence thinking into the bargain. This will lead to a rather more mechanised BEF and better coordination between the Army and RAF.

<sup>13</sup> This is slightly unfair on the Wehrmacht, but then again the Germans have rather less chance to employ 'Blitzkrieg' tactics ITTL and so their association with the theory is a little looser.

<sup>14</sup> ITTL there is no Anglo-German Naval Agreement, so there are Royal Naval ships in the Baltic; removing them is a major priority for the *Kriegsmarine*.

<sup>15</sup> OTL a similar plan existed, called "Project Catherine"; ITTL because the Baltic has been open to the Royal Navy more thought has been given to the idea and its drawbacks.

<sup>16</sup> OTL this is pretty much what happened too, although it was combined with an invasion of Norway. ITTL the Germans are far more eager to deny the Baltic to the Royal Navy and so decide to take this step extremely quickly.

<sup>17</sup> ITTL, the lack of an Anglo-German naval agreement has meant that the *Kriegsmarine* is rather different to OTL, with several more *Panzerschiffe* being built instead of larger battleships like *Bismarck* and *Tirpitz*.

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<sup>18</sup>ITTL in 1936 the Italians received permission to build naval bases in the Canaries and Balearics in return for their aid for the Spanish Republic; one of these bases is at Las Palmas.

<sup>19</sup>OTL the *Sella* class was notorious for mechanical problems.

## Chapter 17

*"I do not seek unpopularity as a badge of honour. But sometimes it is the price of leadership and the cost of conviction."*

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*(Taken from "Memories of the Austrian war: An oral history" Longman 1967)*

*(An excerpt from the testimony of Ottokar Prohaska, who commanded the 'Kaisertreu' Squadron of the Austrian Air Force)*

"You probably think I'm completely crazy. In the spring of 1938 I had an easy life, all things considered; I was a Commodore in the Polish Navy, and spent most of my time hanging around the port of Gdynia inspecting submarines. Then Otto Hapsburg arrived in Innsbruck, and within the month I was flying above the Alps in a rickety old biplane. I can see that you're thinking 'why did a half-Polish, half-Czech peasant like me decide to risk my life for a young Austrian lad barely out of university?' I can tell you why; it was my duty.

You see, the only oath of loyalty I ever took was as a pink-cheeked young cadet back in 1905, swearing lifelong devotion to Emperor and Dynasty as I tied on for the first time that sword belt of black and yellow silk. Like a nun taking the veil! That was what they used to drum into us cadets at the Imperial and Royal Marine Academy in Fiume: 'whoever puts on the tunic of a Habsburg officer puts aside his nationality'. When the Archduke raised his



banner we had a duty to come; and so I went, as did thousands like me<sup>1</sup>. The flotsam and jetsam of central Europe had their chance to be Hapsburg Officers once again.

Barely three days after I arrived in Innsbruck, I found myself assigned to a newly formed aerial squadron; while Austria had little use for naval veterans, I had also spent nine months during the last war flying reconnaissance planes over the Isonzo and it was felt that I could soon regain my piloting skills..."

*(Taken from "The Monstrous Boat: From Raj to Dominion" by Edward Bridge, OUP 1986)*

"By March 1938 Attlee's meticulous preparations for Federation had almost been completed. The Princes were reluctantly on-side; Congress was impatient but nonetheless broadly satisfied. It was at this point, at the very moment before his triumph, that Attlee's Herculean task threatened to be completely undone by events outside his control... The sudden outbreak of war in Europe had little impact on India at first, but as it became increasingly clear that Britain might be drawn into the conflict both Attlee and the Indian nationalists realised that London would expect India to shoulder some of the burden... For its part, Congress was uncompromising. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, Subhas Bose warned that any attempt to take India into the war without Indian assent would result in Congress resigning their ministries and abandoning Federation<sup>2</sup>; Gandhi was similarly explicit, announcing the following day that "India will enter the war as a Dominion or not at all". Aware that the British Government risked sleep-walking into a disaster, Attlee's messages back to London became more and more urgent. "Any unilateral move on my part will do catastrophic damage to the trust that has

built up between Congress and the British authorities” he wrote on March 18<sup>th</sup>; “The entire agreement could be endangered by anything perceived as high-handedness on our part.”

In London, Attlee’s concerns were noted but set aside for the time being; the only matter occupying the minds of Ministers was the on-going crisis over Oswald Mosley’s reluctance to go to war. Only when this matter was resolved in favour of the interventionists on the evening of March 20<sup>th</sup> was the issue finally raised in Westminster. In Cabinet the following morning, the subject of India’s participation in the war was briefly discussed. As Arthur Greenwood later wrote,

*“For such a momentous decision, it was a vague and hurried affair. I fully expected the Prime Minister to be emphatically against any concession to the Indians and was prepared to speak out in favour of Attlee’s arguments. To my astonishment though, he barely uttered a word. He looked exhausted, grey and ill. When Hastings Lees-Smith<sup>3</sup> asked if he should bring forward legislation to grant India Dominion status, he merely glanced at Graham and nodded. The discussion then immediately moved on to the best way to implement trans-Atlantic convoys. It was a queer thing to see the fate of so many millions decided so abruptly...”*

...At midnight on the 1<sup>st</sup> April the British Indian Empire formally ceased to exist, to be replaced by the Dominion of India. Gandhi’s prediction of the previous month came true; India would enter the war as a Dominion. Ten minutes after the transfer of power first Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari as Prime Minister<sup>4</sup>, and then Attlee as Governor-General signed India’s declaration of war with Germany...”

*(Taken from "East to Belgrade; the Spanish in the Austrian War" in Military Affairs, June 1971)*

"The flash of fire erupted across central Europe on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1938, as Adolph Hitler hurled the Wehrmacht against Austria and the Locarno Powers. Shock waves reverberated through the capitals of the world as the Nazi juggernaut began the struggle... The first field-grey columns had hardly crossed the Austrian frontier when the Spanish President Francisco Franco requested an audience with his brother Ramon, the Foreign Minister<sup>5</sup>. *El Jefe* asked about the prospects of sending a volunteer force to Austria if a general war began; his brother replied that the scheme was perfectly feasible, although such a force would not be particularly well equipped. The matter was dropped for a time, but was raised again the following week, as the fighting in Vienna enraged Socialists across the world and the Spanish Government came under pressure from the French and Italians to follow their lead in declaring war against Germany.

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, the President held meetings with the Prime Minister and then called for his brother again; within hours, Ramon Franco was able to report to Count Viola, the Italian Ambassador in Madrid, that he had secured the authorisation to send volunteer formations to help preserve Austrian independence. Two days later, on the 16<sup>th</sup> March, Italy's Foreign Minister Count Ciano telegraphed Madrid accepting the Spanish offer. He also pressed for a declaration of war, but Ramon Franco deftly passed the question of Spain's formal entry into the conflict to the President. His personal view, he told Viola, was that a Spanish declaration of war would mean attacks on Spanish goods, ships and nationals- a justifiable concern given the fears of German merchant raiders operating in the Atlantic. Even the sending of volunteers might precipitate such responses, but Spain was willing to take that risk...

The enthusiasm for the scheme was electric. Students, workers and militia members rushed to volunteer for the chance to fight the Nazis who had reduced Vienna. In Madrid alone, 20,000 men fought to fill 4,000 places. The Spanish contingent was to be commanded by regulars and manned by volunteers from all segments of the population. The volunteers were to be organised as a regular Italian infantry division under Spanish command. As the unit took shape, Franco remembered his 'old Africanista comrade', and named Juan Yagüe<sup>6</sup> its commander... Since Spain was not at war with Germany, the question arose of what uniforms to use and the status of the soldiers under international law if captured. Spanish uniforms could not be used, even in transport, so the troops received the dark grey 'mono' which was the traditional uniform of the Spanish worker. The proletarian appearance and leftist makeup of the force quickly led to the entire unit being dubbed the 'Red Division'..."<sup>7</sup>

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**HMS THAMES:** Famous Submarine of the Austrian War. An ocean-going submarine of the River Class, *Thames* was built by Vickers Armstrong, Barrow and launched on 26 February 1932. When the Austrian War broke out, HMS *Thames* soon found itself one of the few remaining British craft operating in the Baltic; over the next few weeks it conducted a reign of terror against German shipping in the region, gaining much fame in the British press and notoriety in Berlin. Having escaped the initial German clearance of the Baltic, on May 29<sup>th</sup> the submarine spotted and torpedoed the German merchant cruiser *Widder* off the Pomeranian coast; three days later, she sank two sailing vessels and the torpedo boat *Jaguar*. Her final action was on

April 5<sup>th</sup>, when HMS *Thames* turned the tables on her hunters and sank the light cruiser *Nürnberg*. With this victory achieved, the *Thames* found itself out of torpedoes and low on fuel; her commanding officer Captain Wanklyn<sup>8</sup> decided to make for port, and daringly sailed right under the noses of the Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe into the Polish port of Gdynia, where he and his crew were interned.

*(Taken from "Great Warplanes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", Longman 1997)*

### **Westland Pterodactyl Mk VI**

First flight: May 1935  
Span: 14.22m/46ft 8ins  
Length: 6.96m/22ft 10ins  
Max Weight: 2313kg/5100lb  
Max Speed: 165knots/306kph  
Power plant: One 600shp/447kW Rolls-Royce Goshawk  
Armament: 2 turret-mounted Vickers K .303 Machine Guns

The Pterodactyl originated in the early 1920's as part of a series of experiments by Westland Aircraft Ltd investigating how to best overcome the issue of stalling and spinning. The experiments resulted in an unusual design; a high-wing tailless 'pusher' monoplane with fully moving wingtips for control. After meeting with initial success, the Pterodactyl project was taken up by the Air Ministry and further designs were built by Westland, culminating in the Pterodactyl VI, which was first considered as a two-seater fighter<sup>9</sup>. In 1934, the Air Ministry issued the Specification A.13/34 for an "army co-operation aircraft"<sup>10</sup>. Westland decided to submit the Pterodactyl for consideration; small orders were placed to allow service evaluation, and the prototype of the Pterodactyl Mk VI first flew in May 1935.

After trials, the Pterodactyl was ordered for full production...

The Pterodactyl's extreme manoeuvrability, low stall speed and superior field of view made it an excellent platform for reconnaissance, artillery spotting and light tactical support; pilots appreciated its stable flight, near inability to go into a spin and short take off and landing distances. In the Austrian war, Pterodactyls accompanied the British Expeditionary Force to both France and Italy; in the latter theatre their utility in mountainous operations became apparent. Yugoslavian troops had a special fear of the plane, as their frequent lack of adequate air cover allowed them to operate practically at will..."

*(Taken from "The Battles of the British Expeditionary Forces, 1914-1939" by Peter Howlett, OUP 1991)*

"The journey of the British Expeditionary Corps<sup>11</sup> to Austria made a mockery of the War Ministry's aim to have a highly mobile force that could be deployed anywhere in the Empire with great speed; it took a full two weeks after the British declaration of war for Brooke's troops to be fully deployed in the Veneto, and even then vital equipment lagged behind in the French railway system... Nonetheless, by the beginning of April it had been agreed that the British would be deployed not in the Austrian mountains, but rather facing the Yugoslavian army in Slovenia; it was hoped that the deployment of the BEC would give the Allies some much-needed mobile striking power on that front... Conscious of the German advances in Styria, Brooke argued that his force should be thrown into the drive for Laibach as quickly as possible; Marshall Badoglio overruled him, arguing that the Italian 4<sup>th</sup> Army was too exhausted for further offensive actions and that a period of consolidation was needed. Deprived of their opportunity to

launch an immediate attack, the British used the time to train, establish relations with their Italian counterparts and acclimatise to the region. While Brooke was derided in some sections of the British press as 'giving the army a Mediterranean holiday', the period would prove to be a fruitful investment of time, as the results of the *Fulmini* Offensive the following month showed..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**"FULMINI OFFENSIVE (English; "Lightning Offensive"):** Major offensive of the Austrian War, known for the fact that it was the first major operation in the conflict in which British troops took part. In early April 1938, the Italian army's offensive in Slovenia ground to a halt, with massive casualties on both sides. The arrival of British forces in the theatre promised to tip the balance however, and the Allies soon decided that a renewed offensive should be launched, spearheaded by the British Expeditionary Corps. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, British forces supported by the Italians launched a major attack on Yugoslavian lines near the city of Krainburg<sup>12</sup>, hoping to drive south-westwards and take Laibach itself. The offensive itself was a qualified success; Yugoslavian forces suffered a major defeat and Laibach itself fell on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, but the Allied forces were unable to exploit their breakthrough and later stalled in the Sava valley..."

*(Taken from "The Battles of the British Expeditionary Forces, 1914-1939" by Peter Howlett, OUP 1991)*

As British forces smashed through the Yugoslavian defences defending Krainburg, it quickly became apparent that the BEC was not quite the mobile striking force envisioned by the likes of Fuller and Hobart. Coordination

between ground and air forces remained a problem, and the lack of an effective tactical bombing force to act as 'mobile artillery' presented as much of a problem to the BEC as it did to their German enemies further north<sup>13</sup>. Brooke was able to solve this difficulty to a certain extent by requesting the support of Italian Breda Ba.65 attack aircraft, but language barriers and command and control problems made this a very cumbersome process. Other problems were presented by the very speed of the BEC's advance; by the time that the 1<sup>st</sup> Mobile Division entered Laibach they had left behind the slower Italian units that supported it, and a dangerous gap between the two forces had opened up. Hobart<sup>14</sup> later noted that had the Yugoslavians been able to mount any form of counter-attack at this point he would have been forced to abandon the city to avoid encirclement..."

*(Taken from "The death of Yugoslavia, 1929-1939" by Steven Orlow, Cameron 1989)*

...The performance of the Yugoslavian Army in the first months of 1938 surprised many, from the Italian generals who confidently anticipated a complete collapse along ethnic lines to the Wehrmacht commanders who had written off Yugoslavian assistance as worthless at best and a liability at worst. While the Royal Yugoslav Army was poorly equipped and desperately lacked air support, it was nonetheless perfectly able to play an effective defensive role against the Italian troops, many of whom were just as badly equipped and poorly led. More importantly, the Yugoslavian forces kept their cohesion and Croat troops fought just as effectively as their Serbian comrades<sup>15</sup>... The 'Fulmini Offensive' in May demonstrated that the Royal Army was no match for the mechanised British Expeditionary Corps, but luckily for the Yugoslavians the small numbers British troops were present in meant that



only limited losses were suffered. On May 15th, General Petrović told Prince Paul and Milan Stojadinović<sup>16</sup> that the military situation had been stabilised; while further losses on the Slovenian front were to be expected, the nightmare scenario of an Italian entry into Zagreb had been avoided for the time being...

...However, the failure by the Locarno Powers to destroy the Yugoslavian army had only bought the Kingdom time, nothing more. What Stojadinović had envisaged as a rapid and painless means of ensuring Yugoslavia's security against Italian aggression had instead pitched the country into the very war that he hoped to avoid. Yugoslavia's strategic position remained grim, and as the summer progressed it became increasingly clear that if Yugoslavia was to stay an active participant in the war it would need German aid... More ominously, despite the fact that there was little support for the war amongst the Yugoslav public it quickly became obvious that it would be difficult to extricate the Kingdom from the conflict; faced with stalemate in Austria Allied planners increasingly came to see the Adriatic Littoral as the best means of achieving military success, while the Germans had no intention of allowing their only ally to desert them...The prospect of Yugoslavian backsliding loomed large in Berlin even as early as May, when Canaris directed the *Abwehr* to prepare a briefing on potential methods to keep Belgrade in the war should a 'peace faction' gain the ascendancy... For a time, the Croats were considered as potential allies and quiet overtures were made to Vladko Maček's Croatian Peasant Party, which sensibly decided against cooperation<sup>17</sup>. After this route was made impractical, the Germans turned to the Serbs, and on June 7<sup>th</sup> Hitler ordered that money and resources should be channelled to the nationalist group ZBOR and its leader Dimitrije Ljotić..."

*(Taken from "The foreign policies of the Baltic States, 1935-1942 by Robert Hiden" reviewed in the American Historical Review, October 1987)*

"The sudden outbreak of war and the closure of the Baltic had profound consequences for the Baltic States. Since their independence twenty years before, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had all attempted to forge an independent path between the Powers that surrounded them; with the coming of war in the spring of 1938 however all four nations were confronted by the blunt fact that their larger neighbours had the potential to dominate them completely if they chose. The book explores more than this short review can sketch; trade negotiations, the tantalising possibility that the Baltic States could have acted in a concerted manner, the intermittent interest of Britain in the region. Hiden's strength however lies in his ability to relate how each of the small states of the region adopted their own methods of dealing with the triple threat of German, Polish and Soviet expansion; differing methods that would lead one to fight, three to acquiesce, and leave only one intact..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**OPERATION THOR:** German offensive during the Austrian War aimed at capturing the strategic city of Graz. After German troops had failed to reach Graz during April, German planners immediately prepared another offensive, which was intended to take place a month later. Aside from the propaganda value of taking the city, the German High Command was particularly concerned with Allied advances in Slovenia, and hoped to open a land-link with the Yugoslavian forces to the south so that supplies and troops could be moved to assist on that front. Accordingly, on the 25<sup>th</sup> May the German 8<sup>th</sup> Army launched a broad

offensive towards. Despite stiff resistance from Allied forces, the outskirts of Graz were reached five days later, and from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 4<sup>th</sup> bitter street-fighting caused great damage to the city. Finally on June 6<sup>th</sup> the front lines stabilised in the northern suburbs, the German advantage in armour neutralised by the urban environment...

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<sup>1</sup> 'Thousands' is a slight exaggeration; however a surprising number of Hapsburg loyalists do come out of the woodwork to join the Austrian armed forces.

<sup>2</sup> OTL in 1939, negotiations in India had ground to a halt so Lord Linlithgow unilaterally declared war on Germany. This led to precisely what Congress is threatening here. ITTL negotiations have essentially been completed so Attlee is desperate to bring forward the timetable and avoid a similar crisis.

<sup>3</sup> OTL Hastings Leeds-Smith was a minor Labour figure, briefly becoming Leader of the Opposition in 1940 when Attlee joined the Government. ITTL he's India Secretary.

<sup>4</sup> Rajagopalachari is selected as the Dominion's first PM because he's a neutral figure- Gandhi doesn't want Bose to have the post, can't justify Nehru having it, and is unwilling to take on the role himself.

<sup>5</sup> Ramon Franco was a leftist agitator who nonetheless in OTL joined the nationalists to support his brother, dying in 1938 while trying to bomb Valencia. ITTL he is part of the Spanish Government.

<sup>6</sup> OTL Yagüe was a friend of Franco and one of the Nationalists' more competent commanders.

<sup>7</sup> Franco's motives for sending volunteers are largely the same as OTL; he doesn't want to commit himself to war, but wants to do something to keep himself in the good books of the Locarno Powers, especially as Italian ships and aircraft are using bases in Spanish territory. There's also the benefit of sending a load of potential leftist agitators somewhere far away where they might get killed...

<sup>8</sup> OTL Wanklyn commanded HMS *Upholder* in 1940-1942, and won a VC before being killed by Italian Destroyers in the Mediterranean.

<sup>9</sup> OTL, the Pterodactyl Mk V was entered for consideration as a fighter and didn't get very far- ITTL more money and different priorities mean that a niche opens for a viable successor...

<sup>10</sup> This is a result of JFC Fuller's activities in the War Ministry; which have emphasised close cooperation between air and ground forces.

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<sup>11</sup> ITTL the BEF is sent to the continent, as OTL; however, I Corps remains in the Pas de Calais and is gradually reinforced, while II Corps is immediately sent to Italy for duties on the Austrian front.

<sup>12</sup> OTL, the city is known as Kranj.

<sup>13</sup> ITTL Fuller's military reforms have improved things markedly, but he wasn't quite able to persuade the RAF to adopt a dive-bomber as he would have liked; this leads to obvious problems.

<sup>14</sup> ITTL Major-General Hobart (of 'Hobart's funnies' fame) has a rather more successful career than OTL...

<sup>15</sup> OTL in 1941, many Croat troops deserted the Yugoslavian Army because they saw their situation as hopeless; ITTL this is less the case, as most Croats would still rather be ruled from Belgrade than from Rome.

<sup>16</sup> The Yugoslav Prime Minister, ITTL as well as OTL.

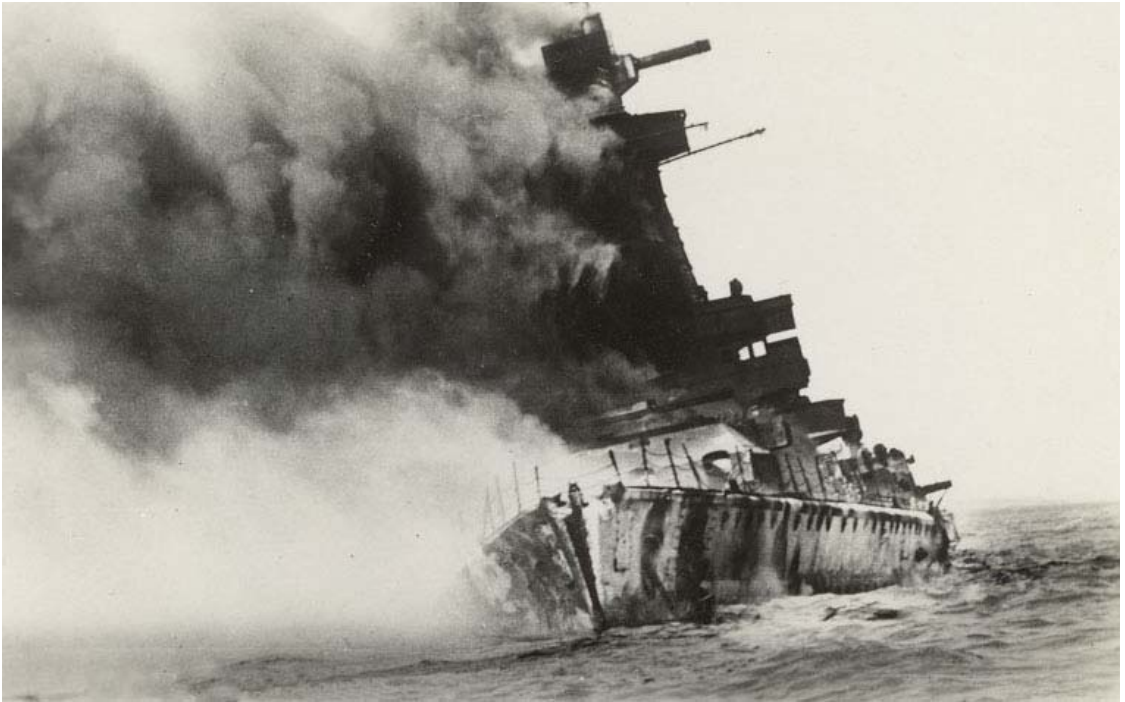
<sup>17</sup> OTL, the Maček turned down a German offer to head the Independent State of Croatia- his thought processes here are similar. The Ustase are also unavailable as Allies, as they're in Mussolini's pocket.



German troops enter Austria, March 1938



Predator and Prey: Otto Skorzeny and Otto Hapsburg



The Pocket Battleship *Seydlitz* burns, April 1938

The British Expeditionary Corps approaches Laibach, May 1938





Exhausted German infantry rest during the battle for Graz, June 1938

Mosley, Mussolini and  
Daladier at Carcassone,  
June 1938





Werner von Fritsch and Ludwig Beck

The Victory celebrations in London, December 1938



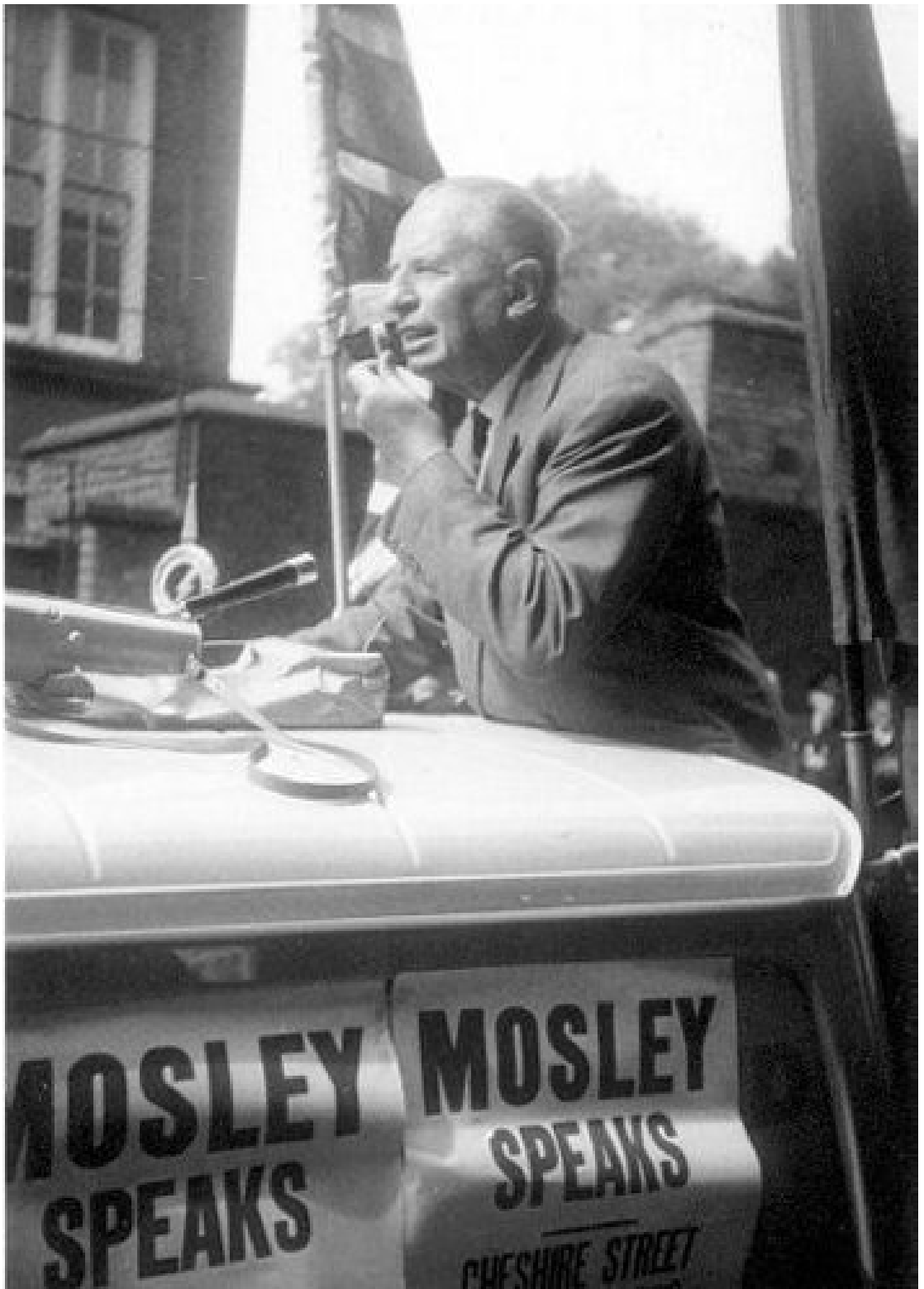




Mosley campaigns in Bristol, March 1939

Hugh Dalton and William Graham, 1940





Elder Statesman: Mosley, 1961

## Chapter 18

*"That's the art of leadership. To make sure that what shouldn't happen, doesn't happen."*

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*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

"The unfolding conflict in Central Europe had grave consequences for the Baltic States; with the Western powers distracted, the vultures quickly began to circle. The first Power to act was Poland... On April 16th, Polish and Lithuanian troops briefly exchanged fire near the village of Silenai, leaving one Pole badly injured and another dead. Skirmishes were not uncommon along disputed frontier, and since 1927 at least seven border guards had been killed and thirteen wounded in various incidents. Border incidents were usually met with little fanfare, but in the Silenai case matters quickly escalated. The next day, 'spontaneous' demonstrations broke out in five Polish cities, with crowds calling for the punishment and occupation of all Lithuania. Anti-Jewish riots also broke out as a response to their alleged unpatriotic attitude.

On April 21st, the Polish Government issued a statement calling for the establishment of diplomatic relations, the conclusion of a minority treaty, a trade and customs agreement, the right to station Polish troops in Lithuania, and most provocatively, the formal renunciation of all Lithuanian claims to Vilnius<sup>1</sup>. The Lithuanian response was to desperately seek support from overseas, but these efforts

found little success; Germany had one eye on acquiring the port of Klaipeda (Memel) and in any case was keen to ensure friendly relations with Poland to secure its eastern flank, while the Locarno Powers were more sympathetic but just as eager to retain good relations with Poland as Berlin was. The Soviet Union warned Warsaw to respect Lithuanian sovereignty and emphasised that it considered an independent Lithuania vital to its interests, but privately advised Kaunas to peacefully accept the ultimatum...On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Lithuanian Government reluctantly acquiesced to the Polish demands. Three days later under the guns of the heavy cruiser *Admiral Hipper*, Lithuanian police and Government officials withdrew from the city of Klaipeda; the city's *Landtag* unanimously voted for union with Germany that afternoon...

The Silenai Crisis sent shockwaves through a region already nervously eyeing events to the south. The humiliation of Lithuania gave ample demonstration to the remaining Baltic States that the status-quo was no longer enforceable; it was clear that new arrangements would have to be made... Even as German troops occupied Klaipeda the Latvian Government opened negotiations with the USSR; by mid May a military agreement was reached whereby the Soviet navy and air force could use Latvian ports and airbases in the event of conflict. A less wide-ranging agreement was signed with Finland in the first week of June; both nations adopted a 'joint defence plan', which involved Soviet guarantees of Finnish sovereignty, military aid and permission to fortify the Åland Islands in return for the installation of defences on the island of Suursaari to safeguard Leningrad<sup>2</sup>. Similar approaches towards Estonia failed; the Estonian Government was still keen to cling to its neutrality..."

*(Taken from "Memories of the Austrian war: An oral history"  
Longman 1967)*

*(An excerpt from the testimony of Pierre Duval, a French  
Corporal serving in the 615<sup>th</sup> Pioneers)*

"So the Regiment took up positions in Graz. This was a place that I would imagine Hell must be like. We went on 14<sup>th</sup> June and were stationed around what was left of the university, just east of the Schlossberg. Trenches couldn't be dug, so the men had to build barricades of rubble and cobbles. In daylight movement was lethal. So a call of nature had to be answered the best you could. We of the Anti-Tank Platoon couldn't make much use of our 75mm guns in this position, so we had other jobs to do. I was made a rifleman.

During the hours of darkness, smoke shells were fired into the town, to cover any movement. Those shells exploded in the air, scattering small smoke canisters over a wide area, which created an added hazard, wounding porters and defenders. The smoke became so dense it restricted any movement, as well as choking all who stayed in it. As they followed the guides, the men scrambled over heaps of rubble, house timbers, and shell and bomb craters. The smoke gave them a ghostly appearance as the leading figures in their file disappeared into it.

As you will understand, after all these years one is not able to remember every little details but I do remember about the time in July when we had to push up towards this park on the east of town. The first thing we encountered, as the first troops went forward, were German personnel mined traps, one being two dead Germans on stretchers who had mines attached to them such that when moved they would have created casualties. We then left the shelter of the buildings and came out onto open ground by a pond- the

Hilmteich I think they called it. The nearest cover was three or four hundred yards away...I would ask you to consider the feelings of all of us when approaching in broad daylight one of the finest armies the world had ever known.

The regiment did a good lot of house-to-house fighting against the Germans, and to see them coming out with their hands up was a sight you very rarely saw, but this time we'd caught them on the hop so they had no time to mount a counter-attack. We managed to capture about twenty prisoners and a good amount of weaponry. A large number of Germans died and I understand the Regiment lost thirteen dead and thirty-one wounded. We had to withdraw of course before the German artillery caught us out in the open- but it was a successful morning..."

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"While the fighting in Graz gained the attention of most observers, June and July saw an intensification of Allied efforts against Yugoslavia. While the events of May had shown that advances were possible in Croatia given the right circumstances, it was also clear that the Italian army was not yet capable of sustained offensive operations. Even as British troops entered Laibach, Marshalls De Bono and Balbo began lobbying the Duce for a change in approach; they argued that Yugoslavian morale could be sapped using a combination of limited offensives in the north and a 'strangulation strategy' along the Dalmatian coast. At first Mussolini was sceptical, worrying that a shift of emphasis would prove costly for Italian prestige. 'If we abandon Zagreb as our principal goal, we will be a laughing stock!' he told Balbo on June 14<sup>th</sup>... In the end though, two factors ensured that the Generals got their way. The first was the spectacular success of an Italian operation to take the

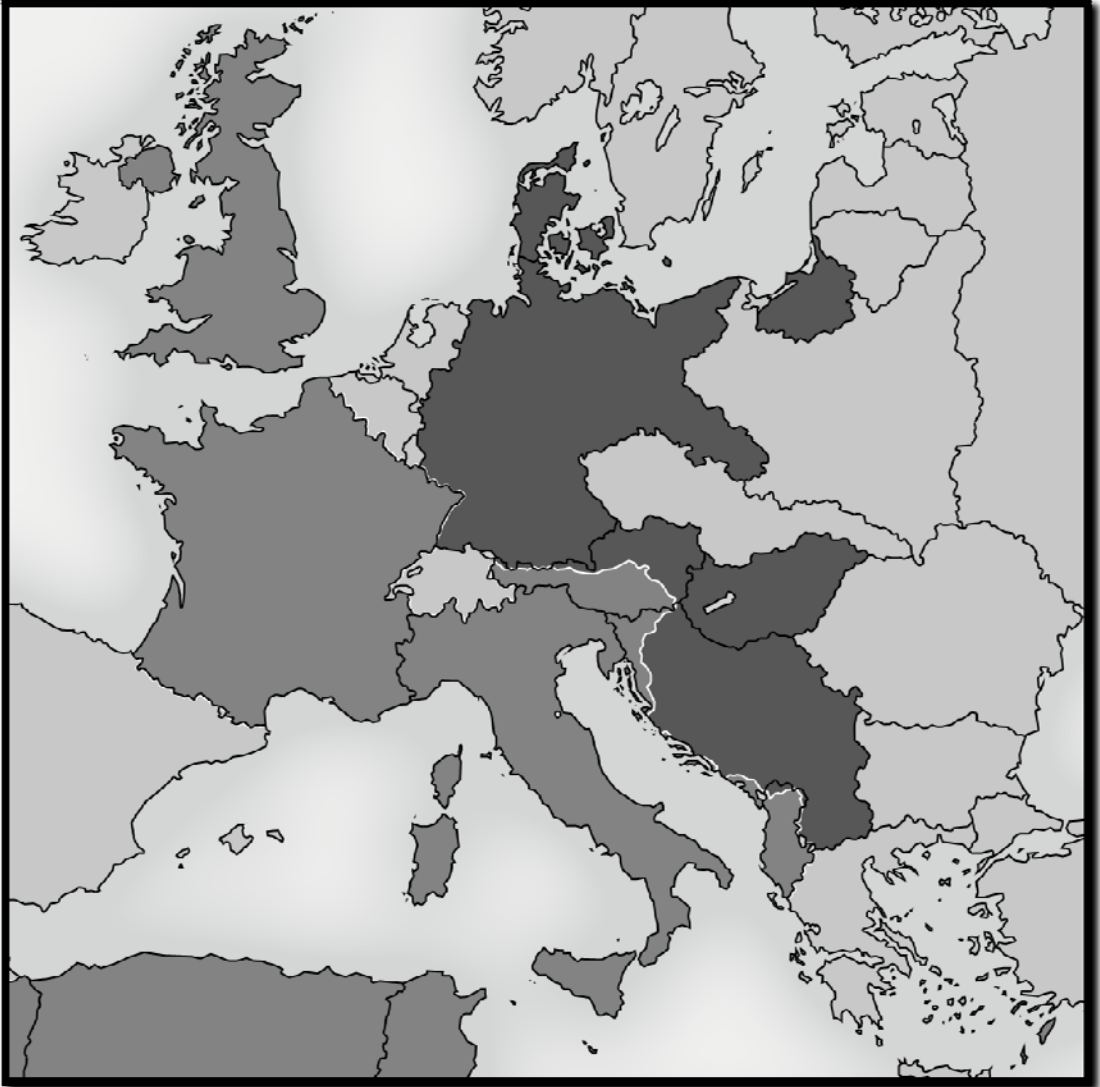
Dalmatian island of Lissa, the construction of an airfield on which allowed the interdiction of German bombing raids before they had even crossed the Adriatic, and convinced Mussolini that amphibious operations in the region were viable. The second event was the Carcassonne conference in late June, which held out the prospect of an autumn resumption of the Croatian offensive by a re-equipped Italian force..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**CARCASSONNE CONFERENCE:** The Carcassonne Conference was the meeting of Oswald Mosley, Benito Mussolini and Édouard Daladier<sup>3</sup> between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June 1938, during the Austrian War. The chief discussion was centred on how best to pursue the war, while attempts to agree on a list of war aims encountered entrenched disagreements and were postponed. Four major conclusions were reached at the conference;

1. That all three Powers would act together and would not sign a separate peace with Germany.
2. That France and Britain would provide Italy with as much surplus equipment and weaponry as possible to recognise the fact that Italian troops were bearing the brunt of the fighting<sup>4</sup>.
3. That neutral nations such as Czechoslovakia, Romania and Poland should be encouraged to enter the war.
4. That France would launch an offensive on her eastern border with Germany as soon as practical<sup>5</sup>.

**Map 5:**



Central Europe, August 30<sup>th</sup> 1938



*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Mosley had so completely lost his voice and was so generally exhausted that he was unable to join the tripartite dinner on the first night in Carcassonne and had to have his in bed. The next morning he felt little better, although he managed to croak his way through a private preliminary meeting with Mussolini. The meeting was not a productive one. Probably the basic cause of the cooling of relations between the two men was that the Duce was beginning to cast surreptitious glances over his shoulder in the direction of the third principal partner, Édouard Daladier; while Mussolini recognised the necessity of British support, he worried as much as his French counterpart about Mosley's willingness for prolonged war. Against this discouraging background Mosley performed with skill, although occasionally betraying signs of frustration at his own weak position... The first day of the conference was not an easy one. Discussion turned to the shape of post-war Europe, and after a long and wine-soaked lunch an afternoon meeting descended into bickering when Mosley unwisely advocated a plebiscite on Austrian independence as part of a potential peace deal... On the second day, the tide turned. Mosley's proposal that all three Powers would undertake not to sign a separate peace finally regained him the trust of Mussolini. From then on, it was Daladier's turn to be ganged up upon, as he tried to evade Mussolini and Mosley's requests for an offensive into the Rhineland..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**OPERATION ORCA:** Joint British-Italian amphibious operation during the Austrian War. By the summer of 1938, Allied forces had begun to blockade or occupy much of the eastern shore of the Adriatic. Landings had already taken

place on islands along the Dalmatian coast, and in June it was decided that the Yugoslavian naval base in the Bay of Kotor (Cattaro) should be occupied, denying the Yugoslavs an excellent port and aiding the struggling Italian troops in Northern Albania<sup>6</sup>. In the early hours of July 21<sup>st</sup> after a bombardment by the Battleships *Conte di Cavour* and HMS *Malaya*, 2 battalions of the San Marco Regiment and the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Marine Battalion commenced their landings. The attack was a complete success; while the fort at Prevlaka at the mouth of the bay was bravely defended by Yugoslav troops, the Royal Marines landing further east bypassed the defences and used a mountain road to move into the port of Tivat from the south. The Yugoslavian flagship the Cruiser *Dalmacija* was scuttled to avoid it falling into Allied hands; several torpedo boats and the destroyer *Beograd* were captured however, while the four boats of the Yugoslavian submarine fleet present were destroyed. The remoteness of the region made it difficult for the Yugoslavians to mount a counter-attack, and by the 23<sup>rd</sup> the approaches to the Bay were firmly under Allied control. The main Allied casualty of the operation was the Light Cruiser HMS *Durban*, which hit a mine and sank the day after the landings took place.

*(Taken from the "Radio Times", June 1987)*

### **Film of the evening:**

#### **Bratislava (1942)**

The classic and much-loved romantic melodrama *Bratislava* (1942), always found on top-ten lists of films, is a masterful tale of two men vying for the same woman's love in a love triangle. The story of political and romantic espionage is set against the backdrop of the wartime conflict between democracy and totalitarianism.

Ronald Reagan gives a career-best performance as Nick, the cynical, expat nightclub owner, whose seemingly apolitical stance is rocked by the appearance of Austrian Resistance leader Victor Heinz (Conrad Veidt) and Ilsa Lund (the luminous Marlene Dietrich). Ilsa is Nick's old flame – cue misty-eyed flashbacks of their time together in Paris and requests for Ella Fitzgerald to play *It Had To Be You*. Memorable support comes from Peter Lorre, Paul Henreid and Richard Ryen, and Max Steiner's score is superb, but the final credit must go to director Michael Curtiz, who pieces it all together with verve, symbolism and torrid emotion.

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**ERDMANNSDORFF NOTE:** Diplomatic note presented to the Hungarian Government in the summer of 1938 by the German Ambassador Otto Erdmannsdorff. As the summer of 1938 wore on and German troops struggled to take the city of Graz, Adolph Hitler became increasingly concerned with the need to establish supply links with Germany's ally Yugoslavia, whose armies were being steadily pushed back by Italian and British troops. At the same time, economic and military officials in Berlin were becoming more and more aware of the need to maintain Germany's oil supply. Hitler soon became convinced Hungary provided the solution to both these problems, thanks to the country's oil wells and location between the eastern border of Austria and the northern border of Yugoslavia<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, on July 25<sup>th</sup> the Hungarians were presented with a draft 'agreement', whereby the flow of oil would be guaranteed and German troops given transit rights west of the Danube. In return Hitler promised that Germany would do everything in its power to ensure the return of Hungarian lands lost after the treaty of Trianon in 1920, heavily

implying that the Yugoslavians would be pressured into surrendering the Vojvodina region.

Despite the enthusiasm of some sections of the Hungarian Government, Admiral Horthy realised that accepting the offer would destroy Hungarian neutrality and make his country a German puppet. Hoping to stall for time, he authorised Prime Minister Teleki to turn down Hitler's request and ask for further negotiations; unfortunately for the Hungarians the German High Command convinced Hitler that an immediate resolution to the situation was vital, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> the Fuehrer authorised the occupation of the country (see **OPERATION WOTAN**).

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

The German invasion of Hungary was swift and decisive. On the morning of August 15<sup>th</sup>, the hurriedly-created German 7<sup>th</sup> Army left its positions around of Vienna and surged eastwards towards Budapest, encountering hardly any resistance. Meanwhile, a secondary push began further south, taking the town of Sopron and advancing towards the vital oil fields around Lake Balaton. The attack caught the Hungarians completely off guard; while the Hungarian army had largely mobilised over the previous few months, the Government was convinced that Germany's threatening behaviour was merely designed as a diplomatic bluff, and so had not anticipated war. The result was a shambles; even mobilised, the *Honvédség* was no match for the Wehrmacht and the feeble border defences were quickly smashed aside<sup>8</sup>. Hungary's capacity for resistance was also undermined by the lack of enthusiasm in the country for war; almost as soon as it became clear that German troops had crossed the border there were calls for an armistice...

In an otherwise unremarkable and brief campaign, the events of August 17<sup>th</sup> provided a stunning contrast. Forty-eight hours after the invasion began the Luftwaffe launched a daring operation intended to decapitate the Hungarian leadership. In the early hours of the morning German infiltrators led by the by-now infamous Otto Skorzeny disguised themselves in Hungarian uniforms and gained entry to Buda castle, where they lit flares and guided in gliders containing soldiers from the newly constituted 1st battalion of the 7th Air Division<sup>9</sup>. The Hungarian defenders were taken completely by surprise and offered little resistance; at the cost of a handful of soldiers the Germans not only seized the heart of Hungarian Government but took the regent, Admiral Horthy alive. The people of Budapest awoke to find their Head of State held hostage and their capital partially occupied; at 7AM Horthy broadcast an order telling Hungarian troops to surrender, and that afternoon the first German troops entered the city from the West... A new Government was installed almost immediately; much to the disappointment of the Arrow-Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi, László Bárdossy was appointed Prime Minister by the Germans<sup>10</sup>...Despite the rapid collapse of organised Hungarian resistance, the German coup-de-main was not quite complete. Quite by chance the Finance Minister Béla Imrédy<sup>11</sup> managed to escape Budapest, fleeing to Italy first via Romania and then Greece. Once installed in Rome, Imrédy set up a Government-in-exile together with Admiral Horthy's eldest son István, who had been abroad on business when the Germans invaded<sup>12</sup>...

*(Taken from "The road to war" by John Coombs, Picador 1979)*

The German occupation of Hungary sent the Governments of Romania and Czechoslovakia into a state of panic. The Czechs now found themselves surrounded by Germany on

three sides, while Romania found itself uncomfortably aware of how indefensible its western border was. While neither nation had fully trusted the Horthy regime, its replacement by Bárdossy's hard-line revanchist administration was deeply worrying, especially as German 'advisors' began to reform the Hungarian army in the first months of September... Far from brow-beating them into taking a more pro-German stance, the Hungarian occupation pushed Romania and the Czechoslovaks together. On August 26th the Romanian Prime Minister Miron Christea travelled to Prague and met Edvard Beneš; three days later the two leaders signed a mutual defence pact promising to support the other militarily if one was invaded...."

*(Taken from "The death of Yugoslavia, 1929-1939" by Steven Orlow, Cameron 1989)*

"The invasion of Hungary and the swift collapse of that country's resistance came not a moment too soon for the Yugoslavian military, which was reaching the end of its strength after six months of brave resistance. Worryingly, there were signs that the Kingdom's fragile national unity was beginning to fray at the edges. Ustaše gangs organised on the same principle as the Austrian *Sturmscharen* terrorised non-Croats in Bosnia and Croatia itself<sup>13</sup>. Even moderate Croatian politicians were increasingly given to commenting on how their homeland was bearing the brunt of the conflict while Serbia remained untouched by the war, and the calls for political reform that had been muted since the previous spring came back with renewed vigour. The humiliating defeat at Kotor and the army's gradual retreat in Slovenia had driven the nation's morale to rock bottom, and there was a growing realisation in Belgrade that continued resistance merely delayed the inevitable rather than avoiding it completely... Within days of the German

action, the new Hungarian Government had agreed to allow the transit of German troops and supplies southwards through their country; the swift application of force in Hungary had achieved in little more than a week what Yugoslavian and German troops had been dying in droves to accomplish further west.

For a time, the Yugoslavian Government's mood was one of profound relief. The promise of German supplies and reinforcements promised to restore and even reverse the worrying state of Yugoslavian arms in the north, and plans began to be made for the first counter-offensive in the region since the beginning of the war. However, as August wore on, it became increasingly apparent that German aid came with a price. Berlin expected Yugoslavia to subordinate itself to German foreign policy and war aims, and the influx of German advisors and officials into Belgrade soon became so large that many residents felt that they were living in an occupied city. The first casualty of German influence came on August 30<sup>th</sup>; a series of objectionable comments by the Minister of Social Policy Dragiša Cvetković came to the attention of the German Ambassador and the unfortunate Minister was forced to step down. Cvetković's resignation emboldened the Serb nationalists, and collapsed the delicate negotiations for Croatian autonomy that had been ongoing since the spring<sup>14</sup>...

*(Taken from "The men of the Archangel" in the Journal of Contemporary History, May 1986)*

"...Even as the Iron Guard found its activities increasingly curtailed<sup>15</sup>, hope beckoned in the shape of foreign intervention. The German occupation of Hungary and the installation of a radical right-wing regime under László Bárdossy had put the Hungarian Arrow-Cross in a strong

position in that country, and from his hiding place in Arad, a frustrated Codreanu<sup>16</sup> became increasingly desperate to emulate his ideological bed-fellows. The attitude of the Iron Guard to Germany was more than reciprocated; as the war wore on Berlin became increasingly concerned with maintaining shipments from the oil-fields of Ploesti, and a Foreign Ministry memo circulated by Ribbentrop named the establishment of a friendly regime in Romania as one of the most pressing objectives of the Reich...Codreanu had had contact with German embassy staff as early as mid-May, and in July he was smuggled to the city of Pitesti, where he secretly met with the German Ambassador Wilhelm Fabricius. Before the events of August, there was little that the Germans could do to actively aid the Iron Guard; after the collapse of the Horthy regime however legionnaires increasingly saw their best chance for power coming through German influence or intervention. It was to secure precisely this intervention then that Codreanu smuggled himself across the border into Hungary in August; from there he travelled first to Vienna and then to Munich, where he met with Hitler and Himmler on the very same day that the Romanian and Czechoslovak Governments forged closer ties in Prague...

By late September the Guard was ready for action, and much to the disgust of the Wehrmacht the SS had successfully won the argument for supporting Codreanu<sup>17</sup>. German weapons had been stockpiled, buildings designated for occupation and prominent supporters of the regime, civil servants and Jews had been targeted for assassination. As these preparations were being made, the Romanian authorities remained relatively complacent. While much credence was given to the chance of German invasion, few in the Government believed there was a serious chance of internal trouble. It was only on 26<sup>th</sup> September that rumours of a rising reached the ears of the Police, but by this point preventative action was too late..."



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<sup>1</sup> All of this is similar to OTL, although some of the precise details and the date are different. The Poles are also being a more punitive, as they feel that they can get away with more. OTL this all happened a month earlier, in March.

<sup>2</sup> Both agreements were proposed OTL; here the wartime situation and Polish and German intransigence mean that the negotiations bear fruit.

<sup>3</sup> Daladier has succeeded Leon Blum as French PM after the latter resigned in early May.

<sup>4</sup> This is already happening to a certain extent, but the conference formalises the move.

<sup>5</sup> The French agreed this clause to shut everyone up, but it's really not going to happen; French Generals are determined to hide behind the Maginot line for as long as possible.

<sup>6</sup> Yugoslavian troops have actually done quite well in this theatre, and have taken the city of Shkodër.

<sup>7</sup> There's also the idea that if German troops occupy Hungary it makes it quite easy to threaten Ploesti from across the border, should the Romanians get uppity...

<sup>8</sup> OTL, Hungary's military was in a pretty poor state even in 1941- three years earlier it's going to be even worse.

<sup>9</sup> OTL, the unit wasn't created until October 1938- ITTL the outbreak of war has speeded this process up, and the operation against Buda Castle is seen as something of an experiment. I see this operation as being a sort of cross between Skorzeny's antics in Operation Panzerfaust in 1944, and the landings at Eben Emael.

<sup>10</sup> OTL, Bárdossy was Hungarian PM in 1941 and 1942; although not a fascist himself he was friendly towards them and is seen by the Germans as being acceptable both to Conservatives and the Arrow-Cross.

<sup>11</sup> OTL, Imrédy was Hungarian PM in 1938-9. A relative Anglophile, he also happened to be extremely right wing, although this will be glossed over somewhat ITTL.

<sup>12</sup>OTL, in 1938 István Horthy was a Director and General Manager of the Hungarian locomotive producer MAVAG; this is the same ITTL. István Horthy was an anti-nazi- he won't get on wonderfully with Imrédy, but then these circumstances make strange bed-fellows...

<sup>13</sup> The Italians have been parachuting Ustaše members into Yugoslavia since the spring; they don't have much popular support even amongst

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Croats but still are a considerable distraction for the Yugoslavian authorities thanks to their tendency to commit atrocities.

<sup>14</sup> These negotiations are a parallel to those which eventually resulted in the 'Cvetković-Maček Agreement' of OTL. OTL, Cvetković became Yugoslavian PM in 1939.

<sup>15</sup> Both OTL and ITTL, in February 1938 King Carol of Romania introduced a personal dictatorship after failing to create a national Government. The Iron Guard were banned during this period.

<sup>16</sup> Corneliu Codreanu was the leader of the Iron Guard. OTL he was arrested and murdered on the King's orders in late 1938. ITTL thanks to the war Carol has cracked down earlier, but less forcefully- the result is that while the Iron Guard is still officially banned, Codreanu has gone into hiding before he could be arrested, along with much of the organisation's leadership.

<sup>17</sup> The Wehrmacht correctly see the Iron Guard as a bunch of unreliable lunatics who have no chance of overthrowing the Romanian Government, while the SS see them as being irrepressible young scamps, but basically sound.

## Chapter 19

*"When people ask me why am I willing to risk everything on this politically, I do not want to be the prime minister when people point the finger back from history and say: 'You know those threats were there and you did nothing about it'*

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*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**MICHAELMAS POGROM:** September 1938 rebellion by Romanian nazis<sup>1</sup> against their Government. Ever since the banning of the movement in February 1938, relations between the nazi-sympathising Iron Guard and the Romanian Government had worsened. By the summer of that year and the German occupation of Hungary the movement's leaders were determined to seize power, an aim fully supported in Berlin, which wanted to install a friendly regime in Bucharest. The rebellion was planned to occur on September 29<sup>th</sup> in honour of St Michael, who was revered by the organisation. At midnight, members of the Iron Guard attacked the Jewish districts of the capital, burning synagogues and successfully initiating violent riots. Prominent Jews were kidnapped, tortured and executed, and Jewish women raped<sup>2</sup>. As the pogrom began other Legionnaires attempted to seize Government buildings while death-squads roamed the streets brutally killing civil servants and politicians; Romania's Prime Minister Miron Christea was himself assassinated, as Iron

Guard men broke into the Patriarchal Palace and shot him before dousing him in petrol and burning him alive<sup>3</sup>.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their horrific methods the Iron Guard's rising was doomed to failure; by morning the Romanian Army had entered Bucharest and crushed the Legionnaires using tanks and heavy artillery. During the rebellion and pogrom, the Iron Guard killed 142 Jews and several hundred others; 27 soldiers died in the confrontation with the rebels, while around 400 Legionnaires were killed across Romania. The Government's response was swift; there were mass arrests all over the country, and martial law was declared. The Guard's leader Corneliu Codreanu escaped across the Hungarian border to Germany, where he was feted as the leader of a Government in exile..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"Hitler's high-risk gamble to bring Romania into the war as a friendly Power had failed miserably; indeed, all it accomplished was to turn the country from a cautiously neutral stance to an angrily anti-German one. As the new, staunchly pro-Western Prime Minister Armand Călinescu<sup>4</sup> ordered a series of mass arrests and executions to remove the far-right threat to the Romanian state, it soon became obvious that the Government would have to make a diplomatic response to German complicity in the events of September. The result was inevitable; on October 7<sup>th</sup> Romania banned all exports to Germany, cutting off the very oil supply that German strategists were so desperate to secure. The Fuhrer's response to this provocation was predictable; he was outraged, and summoned Fritsch straight away. He would never accept this, he shouted, waving the telegram from Bucharest. He had been betrayed in the most disgraceful fashion and would smash Romania

no matter what it took. "The Fuhrer does not let himself be messed around in these matters" noted Goebbels a few days later... By lunchtime, Hitler was addressing a sizeable gathering of officers from the army and Luftwaffe. "Fuhrer is determined", ran the report of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, "to make all preparations to smash Romania militarily and secure strategic resources." Speed was of the essence. It was important to carry out the attack 'with merciless harshness' in a 'lightning operation'. The Hungarians would contribute a large proportion of the invading force and be rewarded with Transylvania for their support. Czechoslovakia would bluster, but surrounded on three sides by Germany and her allies she would not have the stomach to fight. There was no discussion. The army and Luftwaffe were to indicate their intended tactics by evening..."

*(Taken from "Disobedience and conspiracy in the German army, 1918-1941" by James Butler, Famighetti 1997)*

"Where the course of the war had previously merely worried the Army and conservative establishment, the Romanian affair caused genuine anger. While by October the military accepted that an invasion of that country was the only means of restoring Germany's parlous supply situation, it was widely agreed that the entire crisis was wholly avoidable, stretching the already over-committed Wehrmacht still further and seriously endangering Germany's fuel supplies. As Fritz von der Schulenburg put it; "there was no reason why Romania could not have sat on the sidelines of the war providing us with all the oil we needed; Hitler has turned a vital country against us for the sake of a few vicious madmen"<sup>5</sup>. As the preparations for Operation Siegfried gained pace, OKW found itself increasingly concerned by Hitler's sanguine attitude towards Czechoslovakia. The Fuhrer had convinced himself

that despite the mutual defence pact signed in August, the Czechs would not dare to declare war on Germany; even if they did, he reasoned, the swift collapse of Romania would forestall a long campaign against them... Concerned by the prospect of war with the Czechs, the head of the army and his Chief of Staff met to discuss the consequences. Beck noted three possibilities; attack, wait, 'fundamental changes'. None offered prospects of decisive success; increasingly though, the third option seemed to offer the best prospect of national survival..."

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"By the second week of October, the preparations for Hitler's great gamble were complete. Under conditions of great secrecy the Wehrmacht had scraped together as many troops as possible; even though Hungarian and Yugoslavian units had been requisitioned for the invasion, the demands of the operation had still required sacrifices elsewhere. Reserves on the Alpine front and along the Westwall had been pared down to the bone; more seriously, the troops originally intended for supporting the Yugoslavian army in Croatia had been diverted to the East.

The plan for *Siegfried* was quite straightforward. The first prong was comprised of Yugoslavian forces and the newly-created German 16<sup>th</sup> Army, and would strike north-east from Belgrade to occupy the Romanian Banat. The main attack would come from the 4<sup>th</sup> Army based in Eastern Hungary, supported by Hungarian troops. This force was given the task of destroying the Romanian border defences in Northern Transylvania, before skirting the Apuseni Mountains to swing southwards towards the city of Sibiu and the Carpathians. Wehrmacht planners hoped that the combination of a swift German advance, the pocketing and

destruction of the Romanian army and the terror-bombing of Bucharest would force a quick cease-fire and the resumption of oil supplies from Ploesti. If Romania did not capitulate then the next phase of the invasion - code-named *Sigmund* - would be activated. This involved the forcing of the Carpathian passes before the winter snowfall began and the airborne occupation of the Ploesti region...

...Even if Hitler remained optimistic, OKW had few illusions about Operation Siegfried; it was a final throw of the dice, and if it failed then there could be no chance of ultimate victory. The denial of reinforcements to Croatia risked the complete collapse of that front, and the stripping of reserves and equipment in the Tyrol and on the French border invited Allied offensives there. If the operation bogged down in the Transylvanian Basin or even failed entirely, Germany would be in dire straits. German planners fully accepted these risks, and even embraced them. As Heinz Guderian later recalled, 'We only had enough fuel for three weeks of operations anyway. What choice did we have but to gamble everything on obtaining more? ...'

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**OPERATION SLEDGEHAMMER:** Major Anglo-Italian offensive during the Austrian War. After the limited success of the previous summer (See: **FULMINI OFFENSIVE**), Allied operations against Yugoslavia had followed a 'peripheral' strategy, favouring amphibious attacks on the Dalmatian coast and a series of local attacks along the Slovenian front. The poor equipment and training of Italian troops in the region had previously made offensive operations problematic, but by the beginning of autumn this obstacle had largely been overcome and Allied

military planners agreed that the time was ripe for a renewed offensive. As the codename suggested, the attack involved little finesse. Instead, the British Expeditionary Corps and the newly-trained Italian 'Celeri' divisions organised on the British model would launch a broad offensive eastward supported by the slower Italian infantry; the aim was to take Zagreb, crush the Yugoslavian army as a fighting force and if possible remove Yugoslavia from the war entirely.

While the offensive was originally scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>, logistical problems delayed the commencement of the operation until the 14<sup>th</sup>; this had the unintended consequence of diverting planned German reinforcements to the region to Hungary, where the invasion of Romania was about to be launched (See: **OPERATION SIEGFRIED**). As a consequence, the Anglo-Italian attackers faced far lighter resistance than originally expected; in many areas the Yugoslavian defenders were routed and by October 18<sup>th</sup> British forces were at the gates of Zagreb..."

*(Taken from "General Brooke: The War Diaries", Nicholson 1997)*

*October 19*

A very good day! Got up at 5 am after a short night and after examining reports was about to proceed to the new 3<sup>rd</sup> Division HQ just north of Zagreb. I had no sooner got into my car when I received a wire from Monty saying that the Yugoslavians had withdrawn and his advance units were entering the city! All our work of the last few weeks is bearing fruit. We drew up plans for holding the area should the enemy try a counter attack, but reports suggest they are on the run. News of the Italians further south was equally good as they seem to have broken through at several points.



Also received a telegram of congratulations from Badoglio, who I suspect is fuming at not being able to claim the prize with his own troops! In the afternoon I went to see Monty to settle details of the occupation of the city. As we drove we passed endless lines of prisoners. The refugee problem is also very bad. They are the most pathetic sight, with lame women suffering from sore feet, small children worn out with travelling but hugging their dolls, and all the old and maimed struggling along. Apparently they are terrified of Pavelic's people being put in charge of the city, a sentiment I can sympathise with considering their activities in the interior. I have no desire to become involved in local politics, but I will resist entrusting the city to such terrorists for as long as possible.

*October 21*

Started the day by having to 'tell off' Monty for having issued a circular to his troops on the prevention of venereal disease worded in such obscene language that both the C of E and RC chaplains had complained to the Adjutant General!<sup>6</sup> I had already seen the circular and told Monty what I thought of it, namely that the issue of such a document had inevitably undermined the respect and esteem of the division for him, and thus seriously affected his position as commander. I also informed him that I had a very high opinion of his military abilities and an equally low one of his literary ones! He took it wonderfully well; it is a great pity that he spoils his very high military skill by a mad desire to talk nonsense.

After lunch another flood of telegrams, mostly concerned with the arrangements for occupation and the negotiations for surrender of the remaining Croat units. Received word that the Italians had approached Dr Maček about establishing a provisional Government!<sup>7</sup> This is excellent news, as the alternative does not bear thinking about. I am

growing increasingly concerned by the FO's foot-dragging on this issue. I talked to James Petersen about this, and ever forthright, he suggested I should better impress my opinion upon Maček himself! It was therefore fixed up that I should do so and I had had a very pleasant interview with the Doctor, in which I stressed my own view (as a private citizen, of course) that he should avail himself of the Italian offer<sup>8</sup>. I think I made some impression on him, but I suppose all of Croatia is giving him the benefit of their views at the moment. Afterward motored to the British consulate and spoke to the Military Attaché, who told me that Hobart's penetration through the Yugoslav front was growing rapidly. Personally, I am increasingly convinced that the Yugoslav army is closing down and will have largely stopped fighting by this time next week...

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"Two days before Operation *Siegfried* was launched, the Anglo-Italian offensive in Croatia began. Hitler was unmoved; whatever happened in Yugoslavia, the invasion would proceed. In Romania the Wehrmacht faced a considerable opponent. The Romanian army was large and relatively well armed with mostly French equipment, although a mechanisation drive started the previous winter<sup>9</sup> had not yet had any chance to bear fruit. The Romanian air force was also impressive, and although German Me109s outclassed their opponents in their Polish-built PZL P24Es, it would ensure that the Luftwaffe had a fight on their hands to gain control of the skies. Even as Yugoslavian forces abandoned Zagreb to the advancing British army, German troops made their final preparations for their offensive; in the early hours of October 20<sup>th</sup> the initial artillery bombardments and air-raids began. Ever since he had come to power Anton Călinescu had treated war with Germany as inevitable, and preparations were

being made for defence all along the border. However, the Germans had concealed their military build up well; the initial attack caught the Romanians still mobilising and out of position...

The initial stages of Operation *Siegfried* met with massive success. The main thrust into Transylvania by von Reichenau's 4<sup>th</sup> Army smashed the Romanian defenders in a textbook example of mobile warfare, and only frantic efforts by General Sănătescu salvaged enough troops for a meaningful defence of Cluj. Further west, the 16<sup>th</sup> Army under General Dollmann achieved a less dramatic success but still succeeded in taking the cities of Arad and Timisoara<sup>10</sup>. Five days after the initial attack began Călinescu asked the Defence Minister Marshall Antonescu<sup>11</sup> for an assessment of the situation. Antonescu was blunt; Romania's best chance for survival lay in trading space for time. The disaster in Northern Transylvania showed that, just as the Yugoslavians had found in Croatia, the military forces of a second-tier nation could not hope to stand against a well-equipped mechanised force on open ground. However, there was no talk of surrender. Instead of defending every inch of ground and being bled dry in consequence, Antonescu advocated a complete withdrawal to the Carpathians; here, Romania could emulate the tactics Italian forces had used in Austria and hold the passes until France and Britain could send aid. Mindful of the political consequences of such an action, the Romanian Prime Minister initially demurred; three days later, after the city of Cluj was encircled and captured, he changed his mind. After little more than two weeks' fighting the Wehrmacht entered Sibiu in the Carpathian foothills and achieved their first objective; it was an impressive accomplishment, but without the capitulation of Romania it meant little..."

*(Taken from "The development of the Australian Regular Army, 1907-1957" in Military History Review, January 1970)*

"...The leisurely training period enjoyed by the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force came to an abrupt end on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Fearing the collapse of Romania at the hands of the Wehrmacht, the Imperial General Staff authorised the immediate despatch of a force to the region. The result was a scratch force made up of whatever British and Imperial formations that could be scraped together in Egypt and Palestine; on 31<sup>st</sup> October the New Zealand 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, the Australian and British 6<sup>th</sup> Divisions and the Indian 4<sup>th</sup> Division began to embark for Romania<sup>12</sup>. The date of the force's departure was a source of great amusement to the troops; as General Wilson dryly noted in his memoirs, "A more superstitious commander may have blanched at having been posted to Transylvania on Halloween."

After passage through the Bosphorus<sup>13</sup>, the first Imperial troops arrived at Constanta on November 5<sup>th</sup>; from here they were deployed first to Bucharest, and then on the 10<sup>th</sup> they took up positions south of Sibiu as the linchpin of the Allied defence of the Southern Carpathians. It was among these steep wooded hills and high gorges that they would fight one of the most celebrated actions of the Austrian War..."

*(Taken from "Czechoslovakia in the Austrian War" in the Journal of Contemporary History, October 1988)*

The Czechoslovaks were true to their agreement of the summer. Two days after the German army crossed the Hungarian border into Transylvania, the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Berlin Stefan Osusky handed Ribbentrop an ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of German troops from Romania; with no response forthcoming,

Czechoslovakia declared war on Germany at 4PM on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Observers who expected dramatic results were disappointed; it became increasingly apparent in the days following the Czechoslovak declaration of war that neither they nor the Germans were able to make a decisive military move.

On the Czechoslovak side, only the inability of the Germans to launch a major offensive prevented a serious military crisis; the strong fortifications that successive Governments had built in the Sudetenland were entirely outflanked by German control of Lower Austria and a hostile Hungary. Those Germans who had hoped for an uprising by the Sudeten Nazis were also disappointed; in reality most of the more militant Sudetenlanders had crossed the border and volunteered for the Wehrmacht in the previous spring and summer<sup>14</sup>. The depleted state of the Sudeten German Party meant that the Czech authorities only needed to make limited arrests, and the region lapsed into a sullen stability after the initial clampdown...

Conversely, there was little that the Czechoslovaks could do to directly threaten Germany; their army was tailored for a defensive war and owing to the strategic situation they found themselves in, Czechoslovak Generals were happy to entrench themselves on the border. In this, if little else, Hitler's assessment of Czechoslovak entry into the conflict was vindicated; as he predicted, the primary result was 'Kartoffelkrieg' ..."

*(Taken from "Hitler: A Life" by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

"Already on the first day of the invasion reports began reaching Berlin of thousands of Romanian prisoners captured and Arad taken by the advancing troops. 'We'll soon pull it off' wrote Goebbels in his diary. He

immediately added; 'We must soon pull it off. Among the people there's a somewhat depressed mood. The people want peace... Every new theatre of war causes concern and worry.' Hitler was more upbeat. On one occasion, his secretaries heard Hitler, as he stood in front of a map of Europe, point to the Romanian capital and say 'In two weeks we'll be in Bucharest. Bucharest will be razed to the ground.'

Everything had gone much better than could have been imagined, he remarked. They had been lucky that the Romanians had placed their troops on the border where they could be enveloped and destroyed. Interpreting the Romanian withdrawal as a rout, he ordered the continuation of the assault. The Carpathians would be forced and Ploesti occupied; Operation *Sigmund* would take place as planned..."

*(Taken from "The development of the Australian Regular Army, 1907-1957" in Military History Review, January 1970)*

Any invader looking to cross the Carpathian Mountains into southern and eastern Romania has to utilise one of the passes that traverse the range. The most important of these was the 'Turnu Rosu', or Red Tower Pass, which was situated on the river Olt around 15 miles south of the town of Sibiu. The pass provided the most direct way for German troops to break onto the Wallachian plain and take the oil depot at Ploesti; to prevent this General Wilson's 'Imperial Expeditionary Force' took up positions in the area. On November 14<sup>th</sup>, it became clear that the Germans were preparing a major attack; there could be little subtlety about such an offensive. At the final Officer's conference before the German assault, Thomas Blarney<sup>15</sup> was blunt;

*"Do not let anybody think this is going to be a walkover. It is not. It is going to be a bloody, grinding battle: a*

*bloody, grinding battle against both enemy and ground. It will be won by the side which lasts longest. I know you will last longer than they do. And I promise you I will last longer than my opposite number."*

The 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division had deployed at the head of the pass and would take the brunt of the German offensive; over the next week the cream of the Wehrmacht would batter away at their positions. Conditions were atrocious. Heavy rain in the first days of the battle flooded trenches and caused landslips; many troops on both sides were swept away by swollen mountain streams. Despite this, by the 20<sup>th</sup> November the Germans had pushed back the defenders nearly two miles and reached the summit of the pass; then that afternoon the temperature plummeted and heavy snow began to fall. The offensive continued for two more days, but by now conditions were so bad that operations were rendered almost impossible. On the afternoon of November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the attack was called off. Operation *Sigmund* had failed, and ultimately with it the German war effort<sup>16</sup>.

The 'Bloody Red Tower' fully deserved its name; the defence of Wallachia had come at a staggering cost. In the first five days' fight the 1<sup>st</sup> German Mountain Division alone suffered nearly 6,000 casualties - 1,431 of them killed. Feuerstein, the German general<sup>17</sup>, had his head blown off by one of the British guns. Total German casualties approached 16,000. The Imperial troops suffered almost as badly with around 10,000 casualties; their defence was so fearless that 4 Victoria Crosses were awarded for bravery during the action..."

*(Taken from "Memories of the Austrian war: An oral history" Longman 1967)*

*(An excerpt from the testimony of Sam Sydney, a Private serving in the 2/3rd Australian Infantry Battalion)*

For years I have bottled up my memories, like most of the lads. But what made me go public was a book written in the fifties by James Frederick, called "The Bloody Red Tower". I remembered him from when we were marching to Raul Valc; Frederick took our photos, and had a few words with us. Reading his book, I came across his account of Enoch Powell's V.C. action<sup>18</sup>, which I realised weren't strictly true as I had taken part in it! What follows is my version...

When we arrived in the Vadului Gully, half of us in the Pioneer Platoon, myself included, were detailed to go out into No Man's Land to lay a protective belt of anti-tank mines. The order was that the other half would take the mines up, while my half rested. But the Germans had forestalled us by attacking us first! Mayhem ensued! My platoon officer, Mr Freeman, was wounded for the second time, so we became leaderless. Suddenly, Captain Powell appeared amongst us. His first order was to get us to connect our trenches together like the Great War ones.

Then, he ordered us to go back into the gully where we had previously been digging. Before I went down, I asked, "Could I do anything to help, sir?" He said, "Yes, have you got any grenades?" I said, "Yes, sir, I have a boxful in my trench in the gully." "Right," he said, "bring me as many as you can." He remained outside the gully in the open, so while my partner stayed in the gully and primed the grenades, I filled my pouches and anywhere I could with the grenades, about 14 in all. I then proceeded up the ramp out of the gully where the sheep came down to drink, to where Captain Powell was lying, off-loading my grenades.

He started throwing them immediately, as I believe he had run out of ammunition for his Bren gun. He said, "Keep



them coming!" which I did for a second time. Then, as I was approaching the ramp for the third time, suddenly, on the loft high gully, appeared three Germans! The outer two had rifles, but the middle one had raised his arm with a stick grenade in it about to throw it at Captain Powell! All this was taking place about 12 feet behind Captain Powell. I had my rifle at trail. How I did what I did next I don't know. Maybe my guardian angel told me what to do, but I whipped my rifle up and fired from the hip.

The bullet hit the German in the stomach. He doubled up and fell backwards. As he did so, he dropped the grenade into the gully about 8 feet from me. I saw it explode in the mud. The shrapnel went forward up the ramp and killed Captain Powell's No.2 on the Bren, and wounded Captain Powell in the legs. About that time, a bugle sounded. Apparently it was an order to withdraw, so we made our way to the rear of the gully, where we had a first-aid post, commanded by Drill-Sergeant Johns. Realising Captain Powell had been wounded, he ordered me and a signaller to take him out of the gully. We took him about 250 yards along, where we laid him down behind a flood bank. On the way out, our 25 pounders started firing smoke shells to cover our exit. When one landed too near for my liking, I flinched, and Captain Powell said, "Don't worry, they're our shells."

I replied, "Yes, but do the B----y shells know that?"

*(Taken from "Disobedience and conspiracy in the German army, 1918-1941" by James Butler, Famighetti 1997)*

"To Fritsch and Beck's thinking, there were three requirements for a successful Army revolt against Hitler. These were;

- (1) Resolute leadership with clearly defined responsibilities.
- (2) The fear of defeat haunting the German people, making them willing to trade Hitler for peace.
- (3) Correct timing.

All of these seemed present after the Wehrmacht's failure to force the Carpathian passes. Accordingly Fritsch felt that the time for action had come... The plan was as follows. At the given moment, Hitler would be 'detained or incapacitated' by troops loyal to the plotters. While Fritsch convinced any wavering commanders to either stand aside or throw in their lot with the putschists, General Carl-Heinrich von Stülpnagel would lead troops of the Berlin defence district in the occupation of the capital. A division commanded by Colonel-General von Leeb would prevent the SS forces in Munich from interfering<sup>19</sup>. Once control had been seized of vital points around the country, Fritsch would broadcast to the nation announcing the change of regime; it was hoped that the *fait accompli* would forestall any attempts by surviving Nazis to regain control...

All the pieces were now in place, but the means of removing Hitler himself still needed to be found. Fritsch, who had no desire to dirty his own hands, wanted Admiral Canaris' *Abwehr* to do the deed. Canaris gave a great deal of help to the underground movement, but he told Fritsch through General Grosskurth that 'if the Army wanted Hitler removed they should do their own removing'. It would take until the last days of November before the plotters found a catalyst for putting their plans into action..."

(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)

“The failure of *Sigmund* was a turning point; from the moment the *Gebirgsjäger* withdrew back towards Sibiu the vultures began to circle. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, Bulgaria declared war on Yugoslavia, although pointedly not on Germany and Hungary; even as Serbian<sup>20</sup> troops fought to maintain a defensive line in Slavonia, Bulgarian forces occupied border areas in Macedonia, meeting little resistance as they did so... Far more serious for Germany were events five days later; even as Adolph Hitler travelled to Trier, the Polish Ambassador curtly presented Ribbentrop with a diplomatic note containing a declaration of war<sup>21</sup>. Polish artillery began shelling German border positions twenty minutes later...”

*(Taken from “Hitler: A Life” by Arnold Davis, Longman 1989)*

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, Hitler was scheduled to visit Trier and inspect troops stationed along the Siegfried line. The region had recently seen the construction of a series of bunkers as part of the ‘Limes Programme’, and the Fuhrer was keen to supervise the state of the Reich’s western defences. The military commander of the region, General Hammerstein-Equord, was violently opposed to the regime and had originally been dismissed in 1934, only to be recalled to military service at the outbreak of war and assigned to a backwater post<sup>22</sup>... Towards nine o’clock in the morning Hitler’s special armoured train arrived at a woodland railway siding near the village of Fercshweller. It was an icily cold, clear day, and the weather was so bitter that several cars were required to ferry Hitler and his entourage the mile from his carriage to the line of bunkers. For this particular visit Hitler was accompanied by Hermann Giesler, his favoured architect after Speer and a newly appointed director in the *Organisation Todt*, which had overseen the construction of the defences<sup>23</sup>.

Uncharacteristically, General Hammerstein-Equord had left his headquarters to greet Hitler; as the General was an inveterate and vocal critic of the Nazi Party, it had generally been assumed that we would stay away from the event. There followed a short, icily polite conversation between the two men; Gerhard Engel, Hitler's adjutant later recalled that the General remarked on the cold weather before inviting the Fuhrer inside. After inspecting the exterior of one of the bunkers, Hitler and his party were led inside by the General. No sooner had they entered than Hammerstein-Equord made an excuse to leave, telling the party that he had a gift for the Fuhrer. He left his cap and greatcoat behind to suggest that he was returning. This attracted no particular attention; Engel assumed at the time that the General was making a tactful gesture as neither he nor Hitler could stand the other's company.

Outside, Hammerstein-Equord called over his own adjutant, Lieutenant Hubert Gruber. He was just about to offer the General his coat when there was a muffled explosion from inside the bunker. Gruber gave Hammerstein-Equord a startled look. The General seemed unsurprised<sup>24</sup>... Hitler had been peering out of one of the embrasures examining the field of fire offered to a defender, when a group of stick grenades left on a table went off with a flash of blue and yellow flame and an ear-splitting explosion. For a time there was pandemonium. Twelve people had been in the bunker at the time of the explosion. Some were hurled to the floor or blown across the room. Others had hair or clothes in flames. Human shapes stumbled around- concussed, part-blinded, ear drums shattered- in the smoke and debris. The less fortunate lay in the wreckage. Seven of those who had suffered the worst injuries were rushed to the nearest field hospital, just over four miles away. Gerhard Engel lost an eye; Hitler's personal adjutant Julius Schaub had his leg blown off, and Hermann Giesler suffered severe facial burns, eventually

succumbing in hospital several weeks later. Two people had been killed outright by the explosion; one was Hitler's valet, who had taken the full force of the blast. Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's chief adjutant, relatively lightly injured in the explosion, had been composed enough to run to where the Fuhrer had collapsed on the floor. His back was a mess of shrapnel and the blast had smashed his head against the concrete wall, fracturing his skull. Hitler's head drooped lifelessly. The Fuhrer was dead."

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<sup>1</sup> ITTL, 'fascist' has a less negative connotation. 'Nazi' fulfils a similar role, particularly in anti-Semitic terms.

<sup>2</sup> OTL the Iron Guard did something similar in January 1941. Their activities rivalled anything the SS committed for sheer horror; Hitler actually sent them a letter asking them to tone things down. I was tempted to include in the narrative an example of some of the stuff they did, but frankly it's just too nasty.

<sup>3</sup> This was a common MO for the Iron Guard, occasionally combined with live burial- these guys were horrifically brutal, even by the appalling standards of the 1940s.

<sup>4</sup> Călinescu succeeded Mirom Christea OTL as well as ITTL- he was later assassinated by the Iron Guard in 1939. Călinescu was probably the Iron Guard's most dangerous enemy and a friend of the King, so in a situation like this it's inevitable he'll end up in charge.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, the Romanians were never going to provide Germany with all the oil they needed, but as mentioned before, even OTL the Iron Guard weren't exactly flavour of the month with the Wehrmacht- here, they're despised.

<sup>6</sup> ITTL, Major-General Montgomery is commanding the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, which occupies Zagreb immediately after its fall. An incident similar to this occurred OTL in France; Brooke was a deeply religious man and Montgomery's attention to the troops' welfare in this respect offended him considerably.

<sup>7</sup> OTL, Maček and the Croat Peasant Party were given the chance to run the newly formed Independent State of Croatia in 1941 but turned down the offer; ITTL there are several factors that make Maček think harder about the move, most notably the international recognition that the Locarno Powers can hold out.

<sup>8</sup> Brooke is really sticking his neck out here, and his actions are irregular to say the least. That said, no British commander would be happy about

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abandoning a town to the Ustaše, and Brooke was a highly moral person.

<sup>9</sup> This programme existed OTL too, although ITTL it does not have the chance to bear fruit. Overall the Romanian military will be a very tough nut for the Germans to crack, although the terrain the initial fighting occurs on is very favourable to the Wehrmacht.

<sup>10</sup> This may seem like a stunningly quick advance and it is; the Germans are really throwing everything they can at this, to the detriment of everywhere else...

<sup>11</sup> Antonescu was Defence Minister at this point OTL as well; I see no reason for this to change ITTL.

<sup>12</sup> As OTL, a considerable force is being built up in Egypt by the British; ITTL, they are not needed in North Africa and Abyssinia, so they can be utilised more quickly in Europe.

<sup>13</sup> The passage of troops through the Bosphorus was permitted by the Montreux Convention, which still is signed ITTL, although the exact details may be slightly different.

<sup>14</sup> Quite sensibly, the Czechoslovaks have turned a blind eye to this, reasoning that it would be best to ensure as many secessionists leave the region as possible.

<sup>15</sup> Blarney is the commander of the Australian forces, as OTL. His quote is similar to something said before the battle of Keren in OTL; as this battle shares certain similarities with Keren I think it's worth preserving.

<sup>16</sup> Of course the battle of the Red Tower isn't the only action that prevents the Germans from crossing the Carpathians; Romanian troops play a vital role in other engagements along the mountains. History has a habit of mythologising events though, which is what's happening here; 'For want of a nail' and all that...

<sup>17</sup> Feuerstein was actually one of the defecting Austrian Generals, although by this stage his command is primarily German.

<sup>18</sup> OTL, Enoch Powell took up his post as Professor of Classics at Sydney University in February 1938 before absconding to Britain on the outbreak of war and joining the army. ITTL he arrives in Australia just as the war begins and manages to inveigle his way into the Australian armed forces. An Enoch Powell who sees combat will have a very different personality than OTL's version; OTL his failure to serve on the front-line despite his best efforts was a massive source of regret for him.

<sup>19</sup> This plan is similar to the one produced by Franz Halder during the Munich crisis OTL, although the personalities are slightly different due to the wartime situation.

<sup>20</sup> There is a political change in Yugoslavia in late November- this will be touched on in the next chapter.

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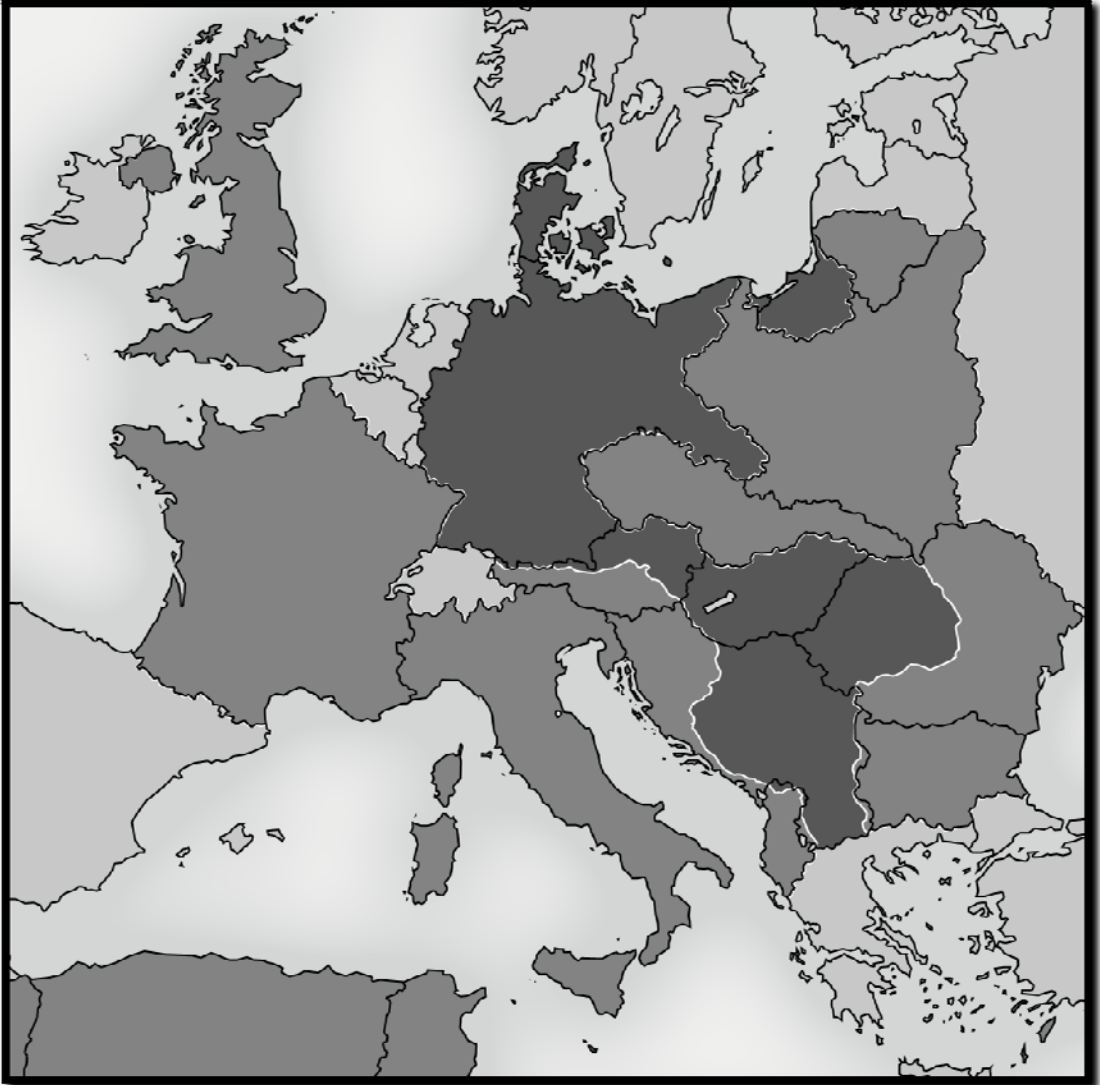
<sup>21</sup> Why have the Poles come in? Because they want to kick Germany when they're down mostly, and gain some extra territory in the process too.

<sup>22</sup> An openly anti-Nazi General who's still around in 1938? Sounds strange, but OTL Hammerstein-Equord was recalled to service in 1939 and was in charge of first a section of the Westwall, and then a defence district in Silesia. Despite his hatred of the regime it took Hitler until 1941 to dismiss him, and even then he was never imprisoned, although had he lived past 1943 he would probably have been executed in the wake of Stauffenburg's assassination attempt.

<sup>23</sup> OTL, Giesler was made a director in OT in the early 1940's- here, it's happened earlier thanks to butterflies and the earlier start to the war.

<sup>24</sup> OTL, Hammerstein-Equord planned something similar, but never had the chance to carry it out. Here he is slightly more lucky.

**Map 6:**



Central Europe, November 30<sup>th</sup> 1938



## Chapter 20

*"The kaleidoscope has been shaken. The pieces are in flux. Soon they will settle again. Before they do, let us re-order this world around us."*

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*(Taken from "Wheel of Misfortune: Germany from Hitler to Kessler" by Stefan Kraus, Picador 1979)*

"Around 10AM, a message reached Fritsch in Berlin; the Fuhrer had been killed in an explosion. There were no details. Further messages seeping through indicated that something had happened, but it was uncertain if Hitler had survived or not. Despite the fact that no contingency plans had been made for carrying out a coup if Hitler was still capable, Fritsch concluded that the operation must go ahead; hesitating would court disaster for all concerned<sup>1</sup>. At 10.30, he ordered General Fromm to begin the coup; five minutes later, a cabled message was sent to regional military commanders beginning with the words "The Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler is dead"... The events of November 30<sup>th</sup> were chaotic. Even as news of the events near Trier spread in official circles the jockeying for power in the new regime began. Wehrmacht troops ordered to secure the Propaganda Ministry and arrest Joseph Goebbels were surprised when he invited them into his office and explained that he had just been on the telephone to Fritsch to discuss a broadcast to the nation<sup>2</sup>; for his part Hermann Goering telephoned Beck just after midday, ostensibly to 'offer his condolences for the death of the Fuhrer'. Other

Nazi leaders were less opportunistic. The first Rudolph Hess knew of the coup was when he was arrested over lunch in Dresden; by the evening he had been flown to Berlin for meetings with Fritsch and Beck. Martin Bormann and Ribbentrop were both detained at their desks.

There was, however, some initial resistance. Skirmishes between Wehrmacht forces and the SS flared up all over Germany and her occupied territories, most dramatically in Vienna where the military's attempt to arrest Ernst Kaltenbrunner<sup>3</sup> resulted in a pitched battle on the steps of the Chancellery. Organised opposition was seriously undermined however by a lack of leadership; during the critical hours of the morning Heinrich Himmler was in an aeroplane flying from Belgrade, where he had met representatives of the Yugoslavian Government. Himmler was quickly arrested on his arrival at Tempelhof airfield; when reunited with Reinhard Heydrich in a cell under the Bendlerblock, he surprised his protégé by his sanguine optimism. 'If defeat is inevitable, better that we are here in custody rather than in the Chancellery- we shall let the traitors discredit themselves, and then sweep back to power!'... That evening, after hours of solemn music, Goebbels spoke to the nation. The Fuhrer had been killed in a tragic accident, he announced; rogue elements of the SS and Party had used the death as a pretext to try to take power themselves, but had been defeated. In accordance with Hitler's wishes, the new Fuhrer would be Rudolf Hess<sup>4</sup>. Because of their complicity in the plot, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Wilhelm Frick had resigned from their posts; the new Foreign Minister was Johannes Popitz<sup>5</sup> and the Interior Ministry would go to Admiral Canaris, who had also been appointed Himmler's successor as Chief of Police.

In London, Paris and Rome, the news of the coup was greeted with wariness. At this point it was still uncertain

what exactly had occurred in Germany, and while Hitler's apparent death was cause for optimism it was unclear as to what course the new Government would take. It would take until the Kleist-Schmenzin mission of December 2<sup>nd</sup> for the first diplomatic contact with the new regime..."

(Taken from "The death of Yugoslavia, 1929-1939" by Steven Orlow, Cameron 1989)

"The *Sledgehammer* offensive ultimately did more than destroy the Royal Yugoslav army; it effectively destroyed the entire Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The occupation of Zagreb and the subsequent proclamation of the Independent Croatian State on October 22<sup>nd</sup> finally collapsed the fragile unity that had prevailed since the spring; after months of fighting alongside their Serbian compatriots, Croat soldiers and even entire units suddenly surrendered or deserted, leaving gaping holes in the front lines and contributing to the general rout. By the beginning of November the Allies had penetrated into central Slavonia; further south Bosnia had degenerated into a fluid mess of competing paramilitary forces and was largely out of the Government's control<sup>6</sup>. In Belgrade, the mood was one of despair; realising that the situation was unsalvageable and fearing the complete destruction of the country, Milan Stojadinović decided to open diplomatic channels with the Locarno Powers via the Dutch embassy in Belgrade. It was a brave move. Having seen events in Hungary and Romania the Yugoslavian Government knew the consequences if their subterfuge was discovered by the Germans. It was also an act of courage that would prove fatal for the Prime Minister. Unknown to the Yugoslavians, the *Abwehr* had an agent in the embassy; it did not take long for Berlin to become aware of their ally's unwillingness to fight on...

On the morning of November 10<sup>th</sup>, armed police stormed Government Ministries and strategic buildings in Belgrade; they were joined in some locations by German troops. Prince Paul himself was placed under house arrest; across the city, cabinet ministers and civil servants were detained. The only casualty of the operation was the Prime Minister himself; Milan Stojadinović was accidentally shot in the stomach during his arrest and died in hospital later that evening. The following day Dragomir Jovanović<sup>7</sup>, Belgrade's Chief of Police, broadcast to the nation. He claimed that he had acted to prevent certain members of the Government from committing high treason. Prince Paul was safe and well, and a new administration would quickly be formed. By midnight, the Chetnik leader Kosta Pećanac<sup>8</sup> was installed as Prime Minister of a 'Government of National Salvation'; Dimitrije Ljotić became the new Interior Minister..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**"KLEIST-SCHMENZIN MISSION:** German peace mission to Britain at the end of the Austrian War. Following the assassination of Hitler on November 30<sup>th</sup> 1938, the German military regime immediately attempted to open diplomatic channels with the Locarno Powers so as to end the war. Conventional diplomatic methods were felt to be too cumbersome and slow, so General Fritsch decided to send a personal envoy to Britain. Admiral Canaris suggested a Pomeranian landowner named Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin<sup>9</sup> as the perfect candidate for the mission; it was hoped that he could use his personal contacts in the British establishment to underline his credibility. On December 3<sup>rd</sup> Kleist-Schmenzin boarded a Messerschmitt 110 and flew across the North Sea, bailing out over Dunfermline; on his arrest upon landing he asked to see the Duke of Kent<sup>10</sup>,

who lived nearby. Kleist-Schmenzin was taken to London, where through presentation of various official documents he was able to convince the authorities that he was a genuine diplomatic mission; he requested an immediate armistice followed by a negotiated peace brokered by the Swedish Government. As a token of good faith and a further measure of his own credentials, Kleist-Schmenzin also announced that German forces would soon withdraw unilaterally from Denmark, Hungary, Yugoslavia and the occupied parts of Romania...”

*(Taken from “The Austrian War” by James George, Picador 1992)*

“Around the early evening of December 5<sup>th</sup>, Hungarian and Yugoslavian troops across Central Europe watched disbelievingly as their German colleagues confiscated any vehicle with fuel and simply drove off, leaving behind any equipment that they couldn’t take with them. In Slavonia and Bosnia, the withdrawal had little effect due to the small numbers of German troops that were present; in Transylvania and the Banat however the results were catastrophic. All along the Carpathians, Hungarian commanders suddenly realised that General von Reichenau had ruthlessly redeployed their units to cover the German retreat. The Romanians were quick to take advantage of the situation; between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Hungarian troops were forced back from the mountains into the Transylvanian Basin, finally forming a weak defensive line along the Tarnava River.

In Belgrade, the sudden withdrawal of German troops proved fatal to the short-lived ‘Government of National Salvation’. Barely twenty-four hours after the last elements of the Wehrmacht departed the city troops loyal to Prince Paul and General Nedić<sup>11</sup> rescued the Regent from his

incarceration and stormed Government buildings. Pećanac himself was arrested; Dimitrije Ljotić ostensibly committed suicide after his own capture, although it is more likely that he was murdered. By now, it was clear that Yugoslavia as a single entity was unsalvageable. On the afternoon of December 7<sup>th</sup>, the Yugoslavian flag was lowered across the city and the Serbian flag was raised to replace it; a few hours later Prince Paul issued a proclamation announcing the dissolution of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the independence of the 'United Kingdom of Serbia-Montenegro'. The 15-year old King Peter was declared to be of age to become the new nation's first Head of State; the former Regent's last act was to announce the immediate suspension of all hostilities between troops of the former Yugoslav Kingdom and Allied forces<sup>12</sup>...

Even as Yugoslavia finally disintegrated, the wider war was coming to an end. On the morning of December 9<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the German, British, French, Italian and Austrian Governments met at the Gästehaus Weinberger in the boarded up Alpine resort of Obertauern, several miles behind the Allied lines. The negotiations were brief, and were mostly concerned with practical matters; general agreement had already been reached on armistice terms. At midday, each delegate put their name to the armistice agreement; two hours later the guns stopped firing along the French border and Austrian front.. The following day, a similar agreement was reached between Czechoslovakia and Germany; Poland grudgingly followed suit on the 12<sup>th</sup>. By now, the only fighting that continued was in Transylvania between Hungarian and Romanian forces; it took until December 20<sup>th</sup> and the Czech occupation of the city of Esztergom before an armistice was hurriedly agreed by the Hungarian Government. Even as this occurred preparations were being made for a peace conference in Stockholm. After ten months of fighting, the

Austrian War was finally over. Now all that was left was to shape the post-war world..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

Even before the British delegation left for Stockholm, there was trouble. Mosley had made it abundantly clear to the Cabinet that he would press for what he termed a 'just peace'; some Ministers, most obviously the fiercely Germanophobic (and ambitious) Hugh Dalton<sup>13</sup> found this attitude intolerable. When the Prime Minister announced that he would follow the advice of John Maynard Keynes and not press for German reparations<sup>14</sup>, the Chancellor swallowed his own Keynesianism and wrote a long memorandum to Mosley arguing against '*the paradoxical conclusion that the aggressor should be free from all obligation to pay damages to his victims*'. He was scornful of those who felt that it was dangerous or improper to 'interfere' with German economic life, writing that '*The sad results of insufficient interference were seen last time*'. His advice fell on deaf ears; Mosley was incensed at what he regarded to be a challenge to his authority, and departed for Stockholm without even the courtesy of responding to Dalton's memorandum. It was a significant milestone; after six years of occasionally tense cooperation between the two men, the Mosley-Dalton relationship began its long decline into the bitterness and acrimony for which history mostly remembers it..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"There are few things more valuable than a first-rate don, e.g. Keynes; conversely there are few things more frustrating than those people, while certainly intelligent, who merely imagine themselves to be a first-rate don.

Sadly, Dalton fell into the latter category. The middle layers of the great universities are as well conditioned as Pavlov's dogs. They are submerged in their information, while the first-rate dons move buoyantly on top of it as they survey the world's fresh facts and create new thought. Unhappily, few of this type have so far been attracted to parliamentary life...

Both Dalton and Keynes came from Cambridge; they shared the friendship of Rupert Brooke, who is on record as finding Dalton rather fatiguing. Later in life, Dalton's courting was transferred to the trade union M.P.s, on whose support alone he could rely for his party eminence. Never a man of the first rank in debate, where he was loud of voice but flat of foot, he was a nimble and assiduous worker in the lobbies. He patrolled them continuously, his large wall eyes rolling in search of the trade union quarry round whose shoulders the avuncular arm would be placed with the query, 'How is the family?' It was almost as safe and effective as Disraeli's classic question as leader of the country squires— 'How is the old complaint?'—except in the very rare case of a trade union bachelor.

Dalton went to the Foreign Office in 1929 as Under-Secretary when Henderson was Foreign Secretary, after MacDonald's effort to make me Foreign Secretary had failed because Henderson so strongly objected. On my assumption of the Leadership in 1931 he seemed the natural choice as Chancellor; new blood was needed in the Treasury, and I considered that his admiration of Keynes would serve to inoculate him from the siren calls of the previous economic orthodoxy. In this assumption, I was proved correct. Like all who consider themselves great intellectuals he was determined not to un-learn what he had learnt with such pains and was consequently a model of Keynesianism, with the exception of when he judged it in his interests not to be<sup>15</sup>. Dalton always appeared to me



genuinely to believe in Labour Party policy, though in a very woolly fashion. To give him his due, at the beginning his main objective was to keep the party together and for this he really worked himself to exhaustion. He was easily moved to moral indignation, and he often had good cause. Soon becoming leader I found him in his office in a state of near apoplexy. 'Look at this,' he groaned, as he handed me some local Tory leaflet which stated that the return of a Labour Government would involve the nationalisation of all the women in the country, as they alleged had already happened in Russia. I gathered that this programme was not for the pleasure of Mr. Dalton!<sup>16</sup>

Sadly although he remained a competent and reliable Chancellor, as time went on Dalton's self-regard became more and more unmanageable. A keen 'talent-spotter', he surrounded himself with bright young men<sup>17</sup> who in return for advancement shamelessly flattered his own ego. Certainly he held a watching brief for himself as next Prime Minister, and consequently over time his personal relations with me became more tense. Despite these strains, our personal dealings were never less than cordial; I realised that the constant plotting and manoeuvring that emanated from the Treasury was less of the Chancellor's doing but rather the work of the coterie of ambitious youths that surrounded him. I have no doubt that they did this for their own advancement, not that of their benefactor; being too young themselves to take high office, probably in their view Dalton had a chance to upset the established appletart for their benefit..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE:** 1939 Peace conference following the end of the Austrian War. The Stockholm

Conference took place between December 27<sup>th</sup> 1938 and January 6<sup>th</sup> 1939; it convened in the Rosendal Palace, which had been provided for the purpose by King Gustav V. The conference was characterised by clashes between the French Premier Édouard Daladier, who favoured a harsh peace, and the British Prime Minister Oswald Mosley, who was determined not to repeat what he saw as the mistakes made at the end of the Great War in Versailles (see: **TREATY OF VERSAILLES**)..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"After his angry departure from Britain, Mosley initially found Stockholm little better. The bitter cold of the Swedish winter forced the delegates to remain indoors, and made the negotiations claustrophobic and fractious; matters were not helped by Mosley's own inclination to punish Germany as lightly as possible, a sentiment antithetical to the French stance. By the end of the second day, the battle-lines were clearly drawn; as Graham later recalled, 'It soon became apparent that Daladier and Beck<sup>18</sup> were in one corner, while we were in the other; the argument would be won by whichever one of us first convinced Mussolini that we were correct.' The Foreign Secretary's analysis proved to be accurate; Mussolini had little desire to see a revived Germany threaten his Austrian ally again, but shared Mosley's view of the utility of Berlin as a 'bulwark against communism'.

The British Government's case was helped by Germany's own efforts. The scholarly and reasonable German Foreign Minister Johannes Popitz was a world away from his blustering predecessor Ribbentrop, and his detailed explanation of the futility of reparations eerily echoed that of his fellow economist Keynes. At times, the closeness of the British and German positions aroused despair in the other delegates; at one point in the Conference, the French Foreign Minister Camille Chautemps turned to Milan

Hodža and whispered 'Did I dream it, or did we fight on the same side as the British?'<sup>19</sup> At the same time, German undertakings to respect Austrian sovereignty re-assured the Italians; the swift abandonment of a German proposal to hold the plebiscite originally offered by Chancellor Starhemberg at the beginning of the war achieved the desired result of emphasising German flexibility, while dark warnings that too punitive a peace would pave the way for the ascension of a radical Government also helped matters considerably<sup>20</sup>.

By the eighth day of the Conference, a broad compromise had been reached under the auspices of the Italian delegates; it was far closer to the British position than that of the French. Germany would be punished but not especially severely, Poland being bought off with several territorial gains and recognition of her influence over Lithuania<sup>21</sup>. While Germany would not be forced to disarm, it was hoped that the wholesale plundering of her armed forces for equipment and research would have a similar effect; the Duce was reported to be particularly pleased with the acquisition of the heavy cruiser *Admiral Hipper*, which was quickly renamed *Italia* and pressed into the service of the *Regia Marina*..."

(Taken from "Wheel of Misfortune: Germany from Hitler to Kessler" by Stefan Kraus, Picador 1979)

"By the end of the Conference, a combination of skilful German diplomacy and British stubbornness had succeeded in mitigating the more punitive measures tabled by the French and Poles; the result was a treaty far less damaging than some in Berlin had feared. Territorially, Germany would retain the boundaries it had in 1933 with one exception; the southern third of East Prussia would be handed over to Poland, as would the city of Danzig<sup>22</sup>.

Elsewhere, the Saar would be administered by France for a period of seven years, and Memel would be handed back to Lithuania, in effect giving Poland a naval stranglehold over the port of Königsberg. The Rhineland would be demilitarised once again, as would the rump East Prussia and Silesia. Thanks to Oswald Mosley's entrenched resistance on the subject of reparations Berlin only had to pay limited compensation to her former enemies, the lion's share being comprised of equipment and war materiel such as the massive siege guns that were being built by Krupp<sup>23</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The death of Yugoslavia, 1929-1939" by Steven Orlow, Cameron 1989)*

"While Germany and Hungary<sup>24</sup> escaped almost unscathed from the war, Yugoslavia was completely dismembered by her jealous neighbours. Slovenia was destroyed entirely. The north of the country went to Austria, while the south came under Italian rule. The newly independent Croatian state finally had its boundaries formalised, taking half of Bosnia in the process<sup>25</sup>; while Hungarian troops still occupied the districts of Prekomurje and Medjimurje<sup>26</sup>, Zagreb had little inclination to take them back for the time being. The rest of the former Kingdom was picked over by her neighbours. Romania took the western Banat as her reward for the conflict, while the Bulgarians reaped the benefits of their opportunistic entry to the war by taking back the territory they lost in 1919. Italy also took the chance to resolve several border disputes between the former Yugoslavia and Albania in her puppet's favour, as well as taking the majority of the Dalmatian islands from her Croatian neighbour. The Serbian-Montenegrin state was a battle-scarred and impoverished rump, strangled by the indefinite Italian occupation of the Gulf of Cattaro<sup>27</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The Austrian War" by James George, Picador 1992)*

"The treaty of Stockholm was signed by all parties at 10AM on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1939. At this moment, it could well be argued that the era of struggle between the European Great Powers finally ended, and the modern world was born. One politician sensed this shift. Before the delegates departed back to their home countries, Oswald Mosley gave the conference's farewell speech. At the time, the response to his vision of the post-war order was muted, even mocking; Graham caught General Fritsch rolling his eyes at several points of the oration. Nonetheless, in retrospect Mosley's words were remarkably prescient..."

*(Taken from a speech made by Oswald Mosley at the Stockholm Conference, January 6<sup>th</sup> 1938)*

"...Today is a historic day. By adding our signatures to this treaty we have ensured that the union of Europe, itself an ancient idea, becomes not merely a dream or a desire but a necessity. We must realise that science has rendered any traditional policy entirely irrelevant in the new age. The idea I now advance is as far beyond both the doctrines of the pre-war world as the aeroplane is beyond the nineteenth-century steam-engine. The movement of science since 1914 compels a commensurate development in political thinking. Politics must bring in the new world of science to redress the balance of the old world of Europe..."

The union of Europe is now necessary to the survival of every nation represented in this room, indeed every nation on this continent. The new science presents at once the best opportunity and the worst danger of all history. It has destroyed forever the island immunity of Britain and compelled the organisation of life in wider areas. We all

love our countries, but we now must extend that love; the ideal and the practical alike now compel it. The extension of patriotism: that is the necessity and that is the hope... It is in the interest of America to have a partner rather than a pensioner. It is in the interest of the world for a power to arise which can render hopeless the Russian design for the subjection of Europe to communism. We shall thus combine in an enduring union the undying tradition of Europe and the profound revolution of modern science. From that union will be born a civilisation of continuing creation and ever unfolding beauty that will withstand the tests of time..."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is quite a change from OTL's 20 July Plot, where Friedrich Olbricht reached precisely the opposite conclusion, wasting valuable time as a result.

<sup>2</sup> Why is Goebbels doing this? Well, he's clever enough to realise that it's his best chance of remaining in power; the Autumn of 1938 was a career low point for him ITTL as OTL thanks to the exposure of his affair with Lida Baarova, and the removal of Hitler gives him a chance to make himself indispensable to the new regime,

<sup>3</sup> ITTL Kaltenbrunner has been appointed as administrator of the Ostmark prior to its incorporation into Germany proper.

<sup>4</sup> Why Hess? Mainly because the military view him as a useful puppet for the time being; his appointment also emphasises the legitimacy of the regime.

<sup>5</sup> Popitz was Prussia's Minister of Finance; a conservative authoritarian anti-Nazi, he was arrested and hanged after the 20 July plot OTL.

<sup>6</sup> Bosnia is a complete mess; there's a three way struggle going on between the Ustaše, Serbian 'Chetniks' and the new Croatian State. Everyone will be merrily massacring each other as the population is stuck in the middle.

<sup>7</sup> OTL, Jovanović was also Chief of Police in Belgrade; he was appointed Mayor by the Germans in 1941 and was influential in the collaborationist Nedić Government.

<sup>8</sup> OTL, Pećanac was the leader of the Chetnik movement between the wars; he was a collaborator during the German occupation and was assassinated by Mihailovic's supporters in 1944.

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<sup>9</sup> Kleist-Schmenzin was a friend of Canaris and a leading figure in the anti-Nazi movement; OTL Canaris and Beck sent him on a similar mission just before the Anschluss, where he met Churchill.

<sup>10</sup> The Duke of Kent was close to German conservative circles- indeed it's even been alleged that he had an affair with the German pretender Louis Ferdinand. ITTL he's an obvious first contact point for a diplomatic mission such as this.

<sup>11</sup> OTL, Nedić led Serbia's collaborationist Government during the German occupation; he was an eminent soldier however and I can see him overthrowing the Government if the situation was as hopeless as Yugoslavia's is ITTL.

<sup>12</sup> Effectively, what Prince Paul is doing here is to try and preserve Serbian territorial integrity by claiming that Serbia-Montenegro is as much a newly independent state as Croatia is- it's a pretty desperate move but it might be of some benefit.

<sup>13</sup> Both OTL and ITTL, Dalton had an irrational hatred of the Germans; this seems to stem from his experiences in Italy during the First World War.

<sup>14</sup> This was his view in OTL as well; ITTL Keynes is even more influential in British Government.

<sup>15</sup> This is quite a change from OTL, when Dalton swung quite to the Left. Dalton remains a Keynesian ITTL for several reasons- he does not visit the USSR in 1932 for a start, and the formation of the National Government changed the political views of many in Labour OTL. There is also an element of political consideration in his continued attachment to Keynes.

<sup>16</sup> This is a rather snide remark relating to Dalton's own repressed homosexuality.

<sup>17</sup> This happened OTL- Hugh Dalton launched the careers of Hugh Gaitskell, James Callaghan and Anthony Crosland amongst others. ITTL these three and others are at the Treasury, either as advisors or as junior Ministers.

<sup>18</sup> This refers to the Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck, not the German General of the same name.

<sup>19</sup> This isn't just Mosley; the Foreign Office retain their OTL bias towards the Germans and are completely behind the Prime Minister's approach.

<sup>20</sup> Effectively the Germans are engaging in smart diplomacy here; they know that there's no appetite for renewed war here, and are making the best of a bad job. The danger of a radical Nazi Government is also not an idle threat; the new regime is determined to emphasise how moderate it is.

<sup>21</sup> OTL, the West was quite pro-Lithuanian; ITTL they were not happy at all with Poland's bullying here, so this is a reasonable concession.

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<sup>22</sup> Obviously, the Poles will be a very disappointed with this, as they were hoping for chunks of Silesia, more of East Prussia and an expanded Polish corridor; that said, it's not a bad return for a few weeks' fighting.

<sup>23</sup> OTL, these guns would become the 'Schwerer Gustav' 800mm cannon and the smaller 320mm railway guns; ITTL they never see service but instead become the cornerstone of later Anglo-Franco-Italian technological development. Reparations also include large numbers of German trucks and tanks abandoned in Romania and Hungary; they will be integrated into the Romanian, Czech and Polish armies ITTL. Significantly, the Germans were able to conceal their burgeoning rocket programme from Allied attention; this means that while most other aspects of the Reich's military technology gets picked over, von Braun's projects remain untouched.

<sup>24</sup> Hungary gets off pretty lightly in the post-war settlement; reparations and temporary Romanian occupation of running along a line between Debrecen and Szeged are about as far as it goes. This is partly because Hungary was never officially at war with the Locarno Powers, and Romania had no particular wish to incorporate more Magyars into their country.

<sup>25</sup> For reference, the boundaries of the Croatian State are pretty similar to those of the "Banovia of Croatia" created in 1939 OTL.

<sup>26</sup> These districts had a sizable Hungarian minority and were annexed to Hungary after the collapse of Yugoslavia; their fate ITTL is down to a bit of opportunism on the Hungarian part. In the long term, a deal whereby Medjimurje is returned to Croatia and Prekomurje remains part of Hungary is quite plausible.

<sup>27</sup> For all this excerpt calls this result a disaster, it could have been far worse for the Yugoslavians, and Serbia has got off far more lightly than it did in 1941 OTL.

<sup>28</sup> This is similar to some Mosley's OTL pronouncements; he was a keen proponent of European Union as a means of ensuring peace on the continent, and this remains the case ITTL.



**Map 7:**



The Dissolution of Yugoslavia, 1938/9

**Map 8:**



Europe in 1939

## Chapter 21

*"I think I have a very clear idea of what the British people now expect from this Government for a third term."*

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*(Taken from "Austria in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" by Jan Drucker, CUP 1994)*

"For most nations, the Stockholm Conference represented the end of a process and the return to normality; for Austria the struggle to rebuild the nation had only just begun. Ten months of both conventional and guerrilla warfare had left Austrian cities in ruins and the economy devastated. The armistice in December 1938 had done nothing to end the civil conflict between Austrian Nazis and *Sturmscharen*, and if anything had intensified the violence; a plebiscite over Austrian independence still seemed like a possible occurrence at this point, and both sides were keen to influence the vote by killing off their opposition<sup>1</sup>. The German troops began to leave in the first week of January and Starhemberg returned in triumph to a deserted Vienna on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but he quickly realised that there was little point in moving the organs of Government back to the shattered city until order was restored...

On the 10<sup>th</sup> January, troops of the Austrian army supported by small numbers of Italian and French units began to re-occupy the north in earnest. The operation was treated less like a restoration of authority, and more like an invasion. In some places, the advancing soldiers were greeted with flowers, Hapsburg flags and a functioning civil authority run by the local loyalists; in others, they faced entrenched resistance. While many Nazis had fled northwards to Germany, a large number had decided to stand and fight,

and even as late as the summer police stations and barracks were raided and officials assassinated... Nonetheless, by mid February the ugly task of restoring order had largely been completed. The achievement was symbolised by the event that so many in Austria had fought and died for; on February 24<sup>th</sup>, a year to the day since the assassination of Franz von Papen, Otto Hapsburg was crowned Archduke of Austria<sup>2</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Some in the Government expected Mosley to return from the Stockholm Conference a hero; in fact, the truth was more prosaic. The mood in Britain was not one of triumph but rather quiet satisfaction; German expansion had been stopped and a dangerous threat to peace removed, Central Europe stabilised and Austrian sovereignty restored, all for a reasonable price in blood and destruction. While some Germanophobes on both Left and Right were concerned by the mildness of the peace, this view was confined to a minority. Despite the personal misgivings of the Prime Minister few were fixated on the gains the Soviet Union had made from the war either. It was generally felt that the Government had handled the war competently, but there was little enduring public gratitude. As Michael Foot later put it, '*Mosley wasn't a hero after the war ended, but people admired his leadership; the prevailing opinion was 'thank god he rose to the challenge after we forced him to!*'"<sup>3</sup>

Despite this ambivalent mood, the question of a snap election inevitably emerged. Ever since the armistice the previous December voices within the Government had been calling for Parliament for be dissolved for a snap poll; the main proponent of this strategy was Hugh Dalton, who expected the Government's majority to fall, but by a smaller margin than if the date was delayed to the next year or beyond. Bevan and Graham shared Dalton's assessment;

Morrison and Wilkinson<sup>4</sup> were deeply opposed, while Mosley vacillated between the two. Never an enthusiastic supporter of the War, the Prime Minister was understandably reluctant to launch an opportunistic campaign on the previous winter's victory; at the same time though he appreciated the argument that a poll taking place in 1940 or 1941 could see his majority overturned entirely... Finally, in early March Mosley made up his mind; the Government would seek a third term on April 1<sup>st</sup>..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"1939 ELECTION:** The 1939 election was held in the spring of that year as Oswald Mosley's Labour Government tried to capitalise on its wartime victory the previous year and win an unprecedented third term. The move was a strategic mistake; Mosley was unable to hide his lack of enthusiasm for the campaign's emphasis, and while voters were reluctant to swing behind Neville Chamberlain's Conservative Party they were equally unenthused by the Government's alternative. The overall result was a swing away from Labour; leaving the Government with a greatly reduced majority...

The results were as follows:

**Labour: 319 (-23)**  
Conservative: 255 (+21)  
Liberal: 33 (+5)  
Independent: 3 (+1)<sup>5</sup>

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

“Polling day on April 1<sup>st</sup> was a shock to almost everyone except Mosley, who had been uncomfortable with the campaign’s emphasis on the war and recognised that his own performances had been unconvincing. Even those such as Dalton who had expected the Government’s majority to be slashed were surprised by the scale of the Labour losses; even more unexpected than the Conservative gains were the surprise resurgence of the Liberal Party, which seemed poised to hold the balance of power were the Government to suffer a major rebellion. From June, Mosley had yet another unwelcome distraction in the Chamber. Neville Chamberlain’s leadership of the Conservative Party had been competent but had seldom posed any difficulty for the Government, as he had concentrated on healing the Party’s internal divisions. However, the pressures of the spring election campaign had proved too much for the Conservative Leader’s health; after collapsing in Parliament in May he was diagnosed with cancer, and the following month he reluctantly decided to step down. His place was filled by his protégé and ally, the young, charismatic and ruthless Richard Austin (‘Rab’) Butler<sup>6</sup>...”

*(Taken from “The Veep: My life in Politics”, by Robert H Jackson, Fardell 1953)*

“The Republicans kept talking about the 3rd term issue, but nobody who knew FDR took that too seriously. The President had told me repeatedly that he did not expect to be a candidate in 1940. I had every reason to believe that he was entirely sincere in that. He also told me that it would be necessary that he made make no announcement to that effect because he needed to hold in line those who were for him, in order to have control of the Democratic convention. In our discussions outside of official hours, he did not talk about staying on but of the kind of library he wanted to have at Hyde Park, the kind of life he wanted to lead. I

think by the beginning of 1938 he was looking forward very earnestly to retiring...

Two factors had the potential to change his mind; one would have been the spread of the war in Europe, or the outbreak of a major conflict in Asia. The other was the unwillingness of the Democratic organization to let him bring forward anybody that he wanted to as a successor. He was annoyed that the organization had not gone with me in New York State<sup>7</sup>. It was becoming increasingly apparent to the rest of us, as well as him, that he was going to have a fight on his hands to name somebody that he could be sure would carry out his general attitude to Government. By 1939 he had resolved to begin that fight; I believe he had largely already alighted on Alben<sup>8</sup> by this point. FDR recognised that the momentum of the New Deal would exhaust itself, and perhaps some of its errors would catch up with it, because there were conflicts in it, he knew. It was timely for him to retire after two terms. I think it was a very wise decision based on the conditions he faced..."

*(Taken from "Anglo-Japanese relations, 1931-1957: Papers of the Anglo-Japanese Conference on the history of the Sino-Japanese War", OUP 1987)*

"William Graham was not reluctant to confess that his concerns rested primarily in Europe. The Far East could be dismissed, he allegedly stated, as 'those wild lands'<sup>9</sup>. Graham, it is clear from this volume, was not alone in slighting the region. The English contributors to this work are at pains to explain that the Foreign Office was peopled by Europeanists with little expertise or interest in Asia, particularly Japan... It can be seen then that the Governmental disinterest in the Far East continued throughout the majority of the Mosley period, despite the Prime Minister's pro-Japanese sentiments. Indeed, the

casual observer of Anglo-Japanese relations in the period would be forgiven in thinking that the *Tarantula* Incident and the resulting war scare was the only notable diplomatic occurrence of the era.

This is, however, inaccurate. Japan made several diplomatic overtures to Britain during the 1930's, most notably in 1934 when an Anglo-Japanese non-aggression pact was mooted, and then three years later when the Japanese ambassador to London Yoshida Shigeru revived the idea<sup>10</sup>. While the latter negotiations finally collapsed in July 1937 because of the outbreak of war in China, there were far more deep-rooted reasons for the lack of progress; most notably that the Government's disinterest in Japan enabled Foreign Office officials to advance their own anti-Japanese policy. A further stumbling block was economic; the Prime Minister remained firmly wedded to the idea of restricting Japanese imports into Britain and the Empire, and even toyed with a complete embargo at times. The result was a considerable disconnection between the rhetoric and substance of British policy towards Japan; while the Government remained theoretically pro-Japanese, the Foreign Office was largely able to forge its own course..."<sup>11</sup>

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**"TARANTULA INCIDENT:** 1939 attack by Japanese troops on a Royal Naval gunboat, which sparked a major diplomatic crisis. The Royal Navy had patrolled several Chinese rivers since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of these was the West (Xi) River in South China, which reaches the sea in the Hong Kong-Macau area. Following the outbreak of war in March 1938 the Royal Navy stepped down their patrols; the Admiralty reasoned that the Chinese gunboats might be required for service along the Danube and concentrated the fleet at Hong Kong for such an eventuality. In the event the



deployment never took place, but the move had the effect of temporarily halting the patrols for almost a year; they resumed in March 1939, six months after Japanese troops occupied the city of Guangzhou and the area surrounding it<sup>12</sup>. The resumption of the patrols was not welcomed by Japan, and during the spring of 1939 Royal Naval vessels were harassed several times by Japanese troops and aeroplanes. Finally, on the 15<sup>th</sup> May the gunboat HMS *Tarantula* came under sustained artillery fire while patrolling the West River near the twin cities of Gaoyao and Zhaoqing. The *Tarantula* was unprepared for any attack and was sunk, with the loss of three lives and several wounded. When the survivors made it ashore they were briefly arrested by Japanese soldiers...”

*(Taken from “My Life” by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

“How would our interests have been served by turning against Japan? At the time, the sabre-rattlers claimed it was for ‘security’. What security would war have given us? If these people had had their way, they would have committed us to fight in the North Sea, the Mediterranean and the seas of the Far East, all at the same time. They would have antagonised Spain at one end of the Mediterranean, the Arabs at the other, Italy in the middle of our main route to our Eastern Empire. In the Far East they would taken on Japan at the same time, or not taking her on but doing what they always do, bluffing and blustering into trouble and then backing out of it to the shame of Britain.

In the Parliamentary debate on the issue I observed again: '*Britain must not be the tool of Soviet expansion in the East*', adding, '*we need not oppose the natural expansion of Japan in northern China where she seeks an outlet for her surplus goods and population*'. This is certainly not a policy I would recommend today, but at that time chaos reigned in China,

to which any form of order and peace was preferable. I have in the present period quite different proposals for affording Japan a full life... Many at that time most conveniently forgot that Japan was not only an old friend but a traditional and remaining ally<sup>13</sup>. It was strongly in our interest to give Japan an outlet in China because she could then accept exclusion from home, Indian and colonial markets. Thereby we served both peace and Britain's vital trading interests, and could have frustrated the Soviet policy of promoting in the anarchy of China a breeding-ground for oriental communism. I concluded the argument in relation to Japan:

*"The decision that she should be encouraged in northern China is reinforced by the fact that pressure in the Pacific menacing Australia and New Zealand would thereby be relieved. America, too, becomes an interested party in that settlement not only in southern China but also by the lifting of the menace to the Philippines and relief from the general pressure on her Pacific interests."*

I asked those who spoke of the 'Yellow Peril', how can that peril be surmounted by a policy of dividing and enfeebling European civilisation in the interests of Soviet policy? Was America's embargo on Japan, which prevented the financial and industrial exploitation of China, until it was thrown inevitably as a present to communism, absolutely necessary? In short, was the denial of a Japanese outlet for their surplus goods really worth the handing of all China over to a militant communism? How far can madness push the values of bedlam? If this be morality, the world is upside down."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

Despite Japanese protestations to the contrary, the attack was clearly a deliberate one. Japanese officials knew that

the *Tarantula* would be passing through the area, and despite Japanese denials the crew confirmed that White Ensigns had been displayed prominently all over the gunboat. As early as 1937 Japanese warplanes had launched dummy attack runs on American and British gunboats on the Yangtze<sup>14</sup>, and previous patrols along the river had met intimidation and obstruction from Japanese officials and soldiers. The timing of the move was also suspicious, coming immediately after an Election campaign where the Government's attempts to evoke the wartime spirit had largely fallen on deaf ears.

In Britain, the reaction was predictable. The newspapers were apoplectic; such an insult to British pride could not go un-avenged. Dark comparisons were made with the attack on HMS *Orion* three years before; that incident had ended with Royal Marines landing on the Spanish coast. Even those who pulled back from military reprisals felt that retaliation in some form should be offered; an economic embargo was a particularly popular suggestion, especially in the cotton-spinning northwest... An emergency Cabinet meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> reflected the aggressive mood. The majority of the Cabinet favoured Shinwell's proposal of a naval reinforcement of Hong Kong and Singapore as a demonstration of British displeasure; the War Secretary also agreed with Dalton, Morrison and Wilkinson that an embargo of Japanese goods would be desirable. For his part Mosley remained unmoved, much to the frustration of his colleagues. Noting that the Japanese had issued a formal note of apology<sup>15</sup>, the Prime Minister expressed his belief that escalating the situation would serve no useful purpose; any confrontation with Japan would merely benefit the Soviet Union... Even as the Government's conciliatory stance was greeted by widespread condemnation in Parliament however, events were occurring that would undermine Mosley's position still further..."

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**"JAPANESE-SOVIET BORDER CONFLICT:** Series of clashes between Japanese troops and the USSR along the Manchurian and Korean borders in 1938 and 1939. This undeclared war was founded in the belief of the Japanese side that the Soviet Union had misinterpreted the demarcation of the frontiers. In June 1938, Japanese and Soviet troops had clashed near Lake Khasan, near Vladivostok; this led to a week of fighting in the region and an eventual Soviet victory, albeit with heavy losses<sup>16</sup>. Almost a year later another clash took place, after a gunfight developed between border patrols on Tabarov Island, near the city of Khabarovsk<sup>17</sup>. In a daring night-time operation on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, Japanese troops seized Tabarov and the southern half of its larger neighbour Bolshoy; Soviet troops tried to retake the island a few days later but were bloodily repulsed. The success emboldened the Japanese; two weeks later they seized Damansky Island on the Amur, 140 miles downstream<sup>18</sup>. The USSR did not sit idly by however. After a month of preparation, on May 17<sup>th</sup> the Red Army launched a major offensive to storm the islands using tanks, artillery and aircraft. A week of fighting resulted; by the 24<sup>th</sup> Soviet troops had achieved their objectives, but at the cost of heavy casualties on both sides. Because of the death toll, the Red Army advanced no further into Manchuria than the border line they had claimed at the start of the battle; this did not stop Russian troops from seizing several other islands along the Amur and Suifen rivers however, and skirmishes would continue in the area until a cease-fire was agreed in mid June<sup>19</sup>. Both sides were embarrassed by the campaign, and the commanders involved paid for their failure to secure a complete victory. In July 1939 the Soviet commander, Marshall Blyukher, was arrested and later executed by the

NKVD; his Japanese counterpart Korechika Anami<sup>20</sup> was disgraced by his failure to retain the islands and was relegated to the reserves; he committed suicide the following winter..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"The Government's supine response to the sinking of HMS *Tarantula* had enraged many; the press, Conservatives and many within Labour were appalled that Japan was able to escape the incident with little more than a series of apologies and the paying of compensation. However, anger turned to complete disbelief on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. The fighting on the Manchurian-Soviet border had been reported in great detail by the press over the weekend; the maverick Labour backbencher Sir Stafford Cripps<sup>21</sup> saw an opportunity to needle Mosley during a Foreign Office debate that afternoon, and asked the Prime Minister if he would '*join me in saluting the indefatigability of Comrade Stalin, who knows the proper way of responding to a violation of national sovereignty?*' The question succeeded far beyond Cripps' hopes. A clearly angry and flustered Mosley replied that on the contrary, he hoped that the Japanese would be able to frustrate Soviet aggression in the region; furthermore, Britain would be willing to cooperate with Japan to this end if they requested so. After a moment's stunned silence, there was uproar. The new Conservative leader Rab Butler rose;

*'I suspect that the Prime Minister has misread the Sermon on the Mount- If someone strikes you on the right cheek, you might turn the other, but you certainly do not offer them an alliance!'*

The incident was embarrassing for Mosley in the short term, but in the long term it was far more damaging; what the *Tarantula* incident really exposed was Mosley's

increasing tendency to take quixotic policy stances and overrule the rest of his Cabinet. In the past, when the Prime Minister exhibited this attribute, his personal judgement had often been vindicated; even when it was not, Mosley's standing within the Party had been such that criticism within the Cabinet was limited. However, ever since the crisis at the beginning of the Austrian War this standing had steadily being eroded. The disappointing results of the Election earlier in the year made this shift of mood even more apparent; by the time Parliament went into recess in the summer of 1939, several Ministers had started to actively ponder the shape of a post-Mosley Government. Foremost amongst them was the Chancellor Hugh Dalton, whose relationship with the Prime Minister had already been seriously strained by the reparations controversy before the Stockholm Conference..."

*(Taken from "Turbulent Priest; A Biography of Hugh Dalton" by David Gregory, Liddell 1979)*

"Dalton's rivalry with Mosley, hinted at previously, is of considerable significance to our story. In a Parliamentary Labour Party largely comprised of working and lower-middle-class members, Dalton and Mosley were often bracketed together. Both came from Tory family backgrounds. Both were fine orators, though Mosley's skill lay in bewitching vast gatherings of the unsophisticated, whereas Dalton performed best before audiences who came to listen rather than to applaud. Both were former wartime officers, with a tendency to employ military metaphors in speeches. Both gave an appearance of ambition and aggression, of treating policies as a battleground without regard for injuries inflicted and received.

Here however the similarities ended, and from their first acquaintance Dalton treated Mosley with more ambivalence

than anybody else in his entire political career. No doubt there was a powerful element of jealousy. Mosley was ten years younger than Dalton, yet always had a more exalted position in the Party. Dalton felt Mosley a parvenu; not only in his meteoric rise to power but in terms of opportunism in policy. This is particularly evident in the field that Dalton had made his own, and which Mosley had only recently discovered. Mosley stumbled on 'progressive' economic ideas. Yet there is little evidence that he truly understood them. No intellectual himself, Mosley encouraged his 'outrider' Strachey to pick his way around the most controversial policy ideas of the moment. Where Dalton was an expert economist who could offer a sharply professional note in discussions of public finance, Mosley was a gifted amateur who was undoubtedly a brilliant advocate, yet whose background in economic and monetary matters was non-existent. In the heyday of the Labour Government the talents of the two men complemented each other perfectly, as Dalton tirelessly provided Mosley's visionary pronouncements with intellectual depth, while quietly altering the Prime Minister's less practical ideas into workable projects<sup>22</sup>.

Given this herculean - and often unappreciated- effort, it is not surprising that one further reason for Dalton's tension with Mosley emerged. This concerned Dalton's complicated, arms-length relationship with the main source of the economic ideas of Mosley and Strachey- Maynard Keynes. Whereas Keynes was happy to associate with Mosley, he regarded Dalton (when he bothered to think of him at all) as over-eager, exhausting, and lacking in either subtlety or distinction<sup>23</sup>. He did not dislike his former pupil, but simply regarded him as of no account. This indifference was intolerable to Dalton, who regarded himself, with some justification, as the intellectual motor of the Mosleyite project. Like a spurned suitor, Dalton's

admiration of Keynes turned to resentment, and his jealousy of Mosley grew..."

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<sup>1</sup> Austria will be a very, very unpleasant place by this point; think bits of Yugoslavia during the latter parts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war.

<sup>2</sup> The decision to use the title of Archduke was the result of much wrangling; while Hapsburg loyalists would prefer Otto to be crowned Emperor, Austria has no particular desire to antagonise her neighbours by doing this and so the more modest title is used instead.

<sup>3</sup> This is partly Foot projecting his own feelings on the situation, of course.

<sup>4</sup> Ellen Wilkinson is the Minister of Health, and quite influential in Government; OTL, she helped organise the Jarrow march and later became Education Secretary under Attlee.

<sup>5</sup> This is bad for the Government, especially as having the ever-fractious ILP in tow means that this small majority is even more tenuous than it first seems. It's also worth emphasising the relative strength of the Liberals- without the attentions of the National Government, Liberal Members have not been gradually peeled away and the Party is far stronger than at the same point OTL.

<sup>6</sup> OTL Chamberlain died in late 1940; butterflies have brought this forward slightly. Butler (or 'call me Rab') is an obvious choice for the Tories, coming from the same wing as Chamberlain and clearly talented and ambitious. Many will be shaking their heads sadly at the fact that Eden discredited himself so early; he would be the perfect successor to Chamberlain.

<sup>7</sup> ITTL, as OTL Jackson was blocked from standing for Governor of New York by the local Party machinery.

<sup>8</sup> Jackson is referring to Alben Barkley of Kentucky, a Roosevelt ally and at this point Senate Majority Leader.

<sup>9</sup> This is actually an alleged Churchill quote OTL; I think it accurately reflects the mood of the time though.

<sup>10</sup> Both of these efforts were made OTL, and failed, although ITTL they do so for rather different reasons.

<sup>11</sup> Mosley's policy regarding Japan was weird; it managed to be pro-Japanese while simultaneously being deeply damaging to Japanese interests. This will have strange effects on Anglo-Japanese relations; on balance though I think that the overall effect of these contradictory impulses would lead to something similar to OTL.

<sup>12</sup> This is a month earlier than OTL- this is due to butterflies.

<sup>13</sup> For his part, Mosley conveniently forgets that if he was really determined to improve Anglo-Japanese relations in the period he could have done much more himself.



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<sup>14</sup> This is a slightly butterflyed Panay Incident; ITTL the ship wasn't attacked, merely menaced.

<sup>15</sup> OTL Japanese diplomacy after the Panay Incident was swift and effective, containing the situation quickly. ITTL the Japanese Government is still apologetic, but their response isn't quite as quick.

<sup>16</sup> This is similar to OTL; one butterfly of the battle however is that thanks to the conflict in Europe Marshall Blyukher is not purged for his initial handling of the incident, and remains the commander of Soviet forces in the Far East.

<sup>17</sup> Tabarov, and the larger neighbouring island of Bolshoy are collectively known in Chinese as Heixiazi, and are on the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri rivers. OTL, the ownership of the islands was only resolved by a Sino-Russian treaty in 2004.

<sup>18</sup> OTL Damansky was the focus of the 1969 Sino-Soviet conflict; it comes to prominence somewhat earlier ITTL.

<sup>19</sup> Effectively this is a slightly more serious, and more inconclusive Nomonhan Incident; the Soviets did less well ITTL because the terrain was less suitable for them to use their advantage in armour, and also because Marshall Blyukher's strategy was rather less effective than Zhukov's. This still enables them to beat the Japanese, just less impressively than OTL.

<sup>20</sup> OTL Anami was Japan's war minister at the end of the war; he committed seppuku after signing the surrender documents.

<sup>21</sup> Cripps has had a very different career path from OTL- Mosley's ascendancy and the lack of a defeat comparable to 1931 has left him as a figure on the fringes of the Party, albeit a vocal one.

<sup>22</sup> This is rather a different narrative than what Mosley would have you believe. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two.

<sup>23</sup> Keynes had the same attitude to Dalton OTL; here, the two remain on better terms for longer thanks to Dalton's association with Mosley and his greater acceptance of Keynesian economics, but a break still comes eventually.

## Chapter 22

*"If there is one thing Britain should learn from the last 50 years, it is this: Europe can only get more important for us."*

*"My wife? At least I don't have to worry about her running off with the man next door."*

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*(Taken from "Setting up the Bomb: The story of the nuclear race" by Glenn Kynoch, CUP 1987)*

The discovery of nuclear fission in June 1938 by the 'Rome Four'<sup>1</sup> was a milestone, but one whose significance was slow to be understood outside the world of physics. It would only be in November that a group of scientists at the Collège de France realised that a self-sustaining chain reaction might be possible; after this it took another six months for the group to realise the potential of heavy water as a moderator. It was immediately apparent to the group that, in theory, an extremely powerful explosive could be created, but most scientists still thought a practical weapon was impossible. Some, however, did not. In June 1939, Enrico Fermi and Otto Frisch discussed the possibility of constructing a bomb and agreed that it was feasible; around the same time, Frisch wrote to his British colleague Rudolf Peierls for his view on the subject<sup>2</sup>.

Both convinced by the practicality of a bomb, Peierls and Fermi wrote to their respective Governments warning of the idea; around a month later Frédéric Joliot-Curie

contacted the French authorities, while in America Leó Szilárd began conducting his own research into the concept. The second half of 1939 saw the creation of three parallel nuclear research programmes in Europe; in Italy with the 'Rome Four', in France with the 'Paris Group', and in Britain under the tutelage of Henry Tizard and the 'Spode Committee'<sup>3</sup>. The tight-knit nature of the physics community ensured that all three projects were at least tangentially aware of each other; as early as March 1940 the first tentative proposals for tripartite coordination were being made..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"After the war my policies were deliberately in advance of the time, and I did not for a moment deceive myself that they could all immediately be implemented. The reader at this stage of the story may be willing to credit me with a residue of realism behind all my intransigence; in the end there must always be a considerable element of compromise to get practical things done.

The union of Europe was the subject of my passionate advocacy in foreign policy. This was in no way incompatible with our Imperial policy. Let us be absolutely clear as to our basic principles of policy at that time. National sovereignty was completely preserved, separate national armament was to be maintained with British strength equal to any in the world; the Empire was to be developed as a political and economic entity with strong measures against the introduction of sweated competition, and war was only to be fought in the defence of the Empire or in resistance to any vital threat to its interest. But it was quite compatible with this position to have a common foreign policy within Europe in relation to the rest of the

world, and commercial arrangements with the rest of Europe would have followed inevitably.

Of course in 1939 the will to bold reform was stirring, but had not been completely awoken. The urge of necessity had not yet been felt; that would come in 1941, after Vilnius. At that moment of supreme crisis the will to European Union arose everywhere from the soil of Europe, like a primeval fire<sup>4</sup>. But for that to happen, the idea had to come first..<sup>5</sup>

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"After the trials of the spring, the summer recess of 1939 proved a great relief for Mosley. Freed from the distraction of Parliamentary business for the first time since the Stockholm Conference, the Prime Minister was able to indulge his new passion; the creation of a European partnership that would render the continent impervious to Soviet expansion and finally end the 'balance of power' that Mosley felt was the cause of conflict on the continent. With this goal in mind, in late June Mosley began to enter into a series of consultations with his continental colleagues aimed at arranging a meeting to discuss the foundation of a European government with responsibilities for common defence and economic coordination. This was not the first time he had tried to gain support for the subject; at Stockholm in January he had taken part in long conversations on the subject with Daladier, Ernst Starhemberg and the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Milan Hodža. Mosley's renewed efforts met with cautious enthusiasm in some places, and lack of interest in others; few envisaged a pan-European Government as Mosley was suggesting, but the concept of permanent military and economic cooperation was appealing to many<sup>6</sup>.

Mosley's fervour for European Union was matched by a shrewd awareness of the best ways to present the scheme to the various national leaders, many of whom were already receptive. In France Edouard Daladier agreed with the British Prime Minister that a lasting pan-European combination would surround Germany and ensure that it was no longer a threat to European peace, although he vetoed any idea of German participation in the scheme; the Poles and Romanians were presented with the same arguments as well as Mosley's long-held belief that European Union would protect the continent from Soviet expansion. By the beginning of August, enough interest had been aroused for an exploratory conference to be held; even the passionate Europeanist, Archduke Otto made the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna available as the venue<sup>7</sup>...

*(Taken from "An encyclopaedia of 20th Century History" ed. Dunn, Longman 1999)*

**“VIENNA CONFERENCE:** European conference during the summer of 1939, held at the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna and generally accepted to mark the foundation of the European Union (See: **EUROPEAN UNION**). An initiative of the British Prime Minister Oswald Mosley and Archduke Otto of Austria, discussion focused on the best means of creating inter-governmental structures to preserve the peace and stability of Europe. Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and Romania all sent delegates to the conference; in the event the Belgians and Danes declined to sign the resulting declaration<sup>8</sup>. While no binding commitments were made during the conference, a declaration of intent was signed on September 3<sup>rd</sup> setting out a vision of what the participating countries wanted to achieve (See: **VIENNA DECLARATION**). While the declaration called for an immediate treaty creating a European organisation, this

would only take place the following year (See: **TREATY OF VENICE**); even then it would take until 1941 for many features of the Union to be established..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

There was no chairman at this conference. I suggested a gathering in the spirit of the round table of Aachen or King Arthur's round table, but without King Arthur, so that ideas and their authors could prevail by power of thought and persuasion, not by virtue of any vested authority. This implemented my conviction that Europe could only be conducted by an equi-pe of equals, that any attempt to impose any man from one country on the others in a position of authority would be a fatal error. The method worked perfectly, the discussion was calm, clear, orderly, courteous and constructive. I emerged with 90 per cent of the programme which I had come to recommend, far more than I anticipated<sup>9</sup>.

For me therefore Vienna remains a massive achievement. It took some time before the Union was properly established, and longer before it functioned as its founders intended, but that is to be expected. It is idle ever to suppose that after so big an advance everything will go quite smoothly ahead; that is the way neither of nature nor of politics. Setbacks, delays, frustrations are bound to occur, and must in due course by continued effort be surmounted. What matters is that we proved it was possible to bring together men from the most diverse standpoints and with the strongest national sentiments in a European policy as complete and wholehearted as the Union.

Although the German Government were not invited to send representatives to Vienna, they had seen some prospect of the reunion of their country within the union of

Europe. This reunion is for them naturally an overriding desire, as strong as our feeling would be if England were divided at the Trent and the northern or southern section was occupied by a foreign power. There was a serious hope that their disaster would be overcome by the union of Europe, neither by war nor turmoil, or even by the strength of demand for justice from so great a power, but rather by the assurance to be given to France, Poland and the world that a Germany truly integrated into a reasonable and contented Europe would no longer be a menace to anyone. The failure of this European policy would reduce to the vanishing point all hope of a natural and pacific reunion of Germany within Europe. The hope too of ceasing to become a pariah power and of regaining normal, great power status within the greater Europe was also risked. When reason is assassinated, unreason enters. Nationalism, however forlorn its prospects in the new conditions, is born again..."

*(Taken from "The Declaration of Vienna", September 1<sup>st</sup> 1939)*

"We, being Europeans conscious of the tradition which derives from classic Greece and Rome, and of a civilization which during three thousand years has given thought, beauty, science and leadership to mankind; and feeling for each other the close relationship of a great family, whose quarrels in the past have proved the heroism of our peoples but whose division in the future would threaten the life of our continent with the same destruction which extinguished the genius of Hellas and led to the triumph of alien values, now declare with pride our European community of spirit in the following urgent and practical proposals:

1. That a treaty establishing a European Union shall be drafted. The Union shall have as its task, by through the activities referred to in Article 2, to promote throughout

Europe a harmonious and balanced development of economic activities, a high level of employment and of social protection, the raising of the standard of living and quality of life, and diplomatic and military solidarity among Member States. Within the wide region of our continent the genius of modern science shall join with the culture of three millennia to attain ever higher forms of European life which shall continue to be the inspiration of mankind.

2. For the purposes set out in Article 1, the activities of the Union shall include:

- a. The gradual elimination between Member States, of customs duties and quantitative restrictions on the import and export of goods, and of all other measures having equivalent effect;
- b. A common policy in the sphere of foreign affairs;
- c. A policy in the sphere of military cooperation;
- d. A common policy in the sphere of transport;
- e. The commitment toward a common commercial policy;
- f. The commitment toward a common policy in the sphere of agriculture;
- g. The promotion of research and technological development;
- h. Measures in the spheres of energy, civil protection and tourism.”<sup>10</sup>

*(Taken from “Turbulent Priest; A Biography of Hugh Dalton” by David Gregory, Liddell 1979)*

“The increasing prominence and ambition of Dalton soon found a new outlet in the resurrection of his own pet scheme; the ‘capital levy’<sup>11</sup>. The levy was a concept close to Dalton’s heart. In 1923 he had published his first polemical book on the subject, and had been at the forefront of calls for its adoption during the Macdonald Government.



Although he had not raised the subject as Chancellor, it remained a long-term objective; *'It is my personal opinion'*, he wrote in 1934, *'that once we have made good progress with socialisation, the policy of the capital levy should be brought to the fore once again'*. For Dalton, the issue was one of re-distribution rather than economics; in combination with his other pet proposal of reforming death duties, it seemed to him the perfect method of disinheriting the wealthy and finally ending the inequality of wealth in British society. While Mosley concentrated on his own schemes of European cooperation during the summer of 1939, Dalton refined his own proposals; fatefully he decided not inform the Prime Minister about his proposals until much later...

At the Labour Conference in Blackpool that September, Dalton decided to make his move. During several meetings and debates, the Chancellor deliberately dropped strong hints that he was considering the imposition of a capital levy alongside the introduction of a 'Rignano' tax on inheritance, named after an economist Dalton had discovered in the course of his Italian reading<sup>12</sup>. After preparing the ground, during his own keynote speech on the penultimate day of the conference Dalton made his views explicit; *'I will keep the idea of a capital levy on my list of 'possibilities', accepting that there is more justification for its introduction than ever before'*. The Labour Left was delighted, and the Chancellor received a rapturous ovation from the Conference floor; the Prime Minister's reaction was less positive. Sitting on the podium behind Mosley and unaware that Dalton had not informed him of his announcement, Ernest Bevin noticed with some surprise that *'he gripped the arm rest so hard that his knuckles had gone white'...*"

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

“That evening, Mosley saw Dalton alone. They spoke at length. Dalton’s strongest impression was Mosley’s furious resentment at trying to upstage him before the rest of the Party; the Prime Minister had few illusions about the Chancellor’s ambitions by this point. Mosley was blunt. Dalton’s proposals had some merit, but it was grossly irresponsible to introduce them in such a way. When the Prime Minister told Dalton that there was little support in the cabinet for his proposals, he exploded. *‘Who are they?’* he declared, *‘I didn’t choose them. They are your creatures. They are either old men or nonentities!’* Mosley, furious, replied *‘You have got a simple and genteel way of putting things’*, to which Dalton barked back *‘well, you’ve been psycho-analysed, you should not find any difficulty in plain speech!’* At this point, the conversation descended into mutual hurling of insults; the shouting became so loud that people in adjoining rooms could hear the argument. Eventually, Mosley stormed away. While Dalton and he would stage a partial reconciliation the following week, their relationship had finally been damaged beyond repair and neither man could trust each other again...

The capital levy issue posed Mosley with several dilemmas. While accepting the popularity of the proposal, he had no intention of cravenly giving in to the Chancellor. At first, he seriously toyed with the idea of sacking Dalton and imposing the policy himself, but Bevan and Strachey convinced him that such a move was impossible; Dalton was simply too popular within the Party and Mosley’s position would be threatened still more severely with a focus for dissent on the backbenches. In the end, a compromise was reached. Dalton was permitted to introduce a ‘Special Contribution’ on investment incomes in the next budget<sup>13</sup>; his more radical proposals would be examined by a special committee, largely comprised of Mosley loyalists... While Dalton was unsuccessful in policy terms, he succeeded politically; the affair confirmed the

view of many on the Left that the Government's major stumbling block to reform was not the Chancellor but rather the Prime Minister. *'The left-wing of the Party has for some time suspected that Mr Dalton was more sympathetic to its views than was Oswald Mosley,'* noted the Observer, *'his recent speech is held in some quarters to place him at the head of those in the Government and backbenches who complain that time has rendered the Socialism of the Prime Minister and others less Socialist than it was...'*"

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

"I have previously related how my dealings with Hugh Dalton were never anything less than cordial, even when his political ambitions and the activities of his protégés put a strain on our working relationship. The bitterness unfortunately still nurtured by some in the Party did not stem from any political disagreement between the two of us; quite the reverse, for on the vast majority of issues we were in complete agreement!<sup>14</sup> Instead, the animosity came from quite another quarter; that of Herbert Morrison, whom I had appointed Home Secretary in 1936. The two men had seldom seen eye-to-eye in the early days of my administration, but for obscure reasons I am still not wholly certain about, their relationship deteriorated sharply when Morrison arrived at the Home Office. Dalton considered Morrison a narrow, rigid, vain little bureaucrat, devoid of vision and incapable of movement beyond his office stool; Morrison in turn thought Dalton a condescending fool who was far less intelligent than he pretended to be. I suspect that, as is so often the case with such rivalries, both men had more in common than they would care to admit...

No persuasion would make Morrison move as Home Secretary, and my options were limited because he was the party chief and organiser of London, the local 'Mrs. Fix-it'. An excellent adjuster of local disputes within conflicting

constituency organisations, he was less fitted by natural aptitude or experience for national administration. He had considerable gifts as a propagandist, and in the Austrian War made a stirring appeal to the young 'to go to it'—an exercise from which he was unfortunately inhibited in the First World War when young himself... No wonder people of that kind resent the entry and action of any dynamic character within the Labour Party<sup>15</sup>. The trouble is that they have the power to obstruct because their removal can bring the party down, and a Labour Prime Minister is consequently not only an executive but an equilibrist. Unfortunately the exercise of high office sometimes requires the capacity to balance on the tight-rope unless the whole crazy show falls off..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

**"RECHTAND AFFAIR:** The 'Rechtand Affair' was a scandal that engulfed Oswald Mosley's Government during the spring of 1940. It marked the first time that a Labour administration had been accused of corruption; it also saw the first resignation of a Labour Minister over the suggestion of financial impropriety. The affair centred on the activities of a Polish-born con-man and petty criminal named Stanley Rechtand<sup>16</sup>, who made a career out of representing himself as a friend of the powerful and a 'contact man' who could ensure access to Ministers and Civil Servants. In early February 1940, allegations of bribery and corruption were made within the Board of Trade and passed to the new President, Aneurin Bevan..."

*(Taken from "Great Scandals of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" Longman 1992)*

The 'Rechtand Affair' had been simmering for some time; it was a scandal in the French sense, a flurry of accusations and rumours that reflected a wider social and Governmental malaise. At first Labour hoped that the scandal would simply go away; this proved to be a tactical mistake and merely encouraged feverish speculation in the press. Hoping to draw a line under the episode, Oswald Mosley decided to set up a tribunal of inquiry under Mr Justice Simonds<sup>17</sup>; the Attorney General Sidney Silverman<sup>18</sup> presented the case and examined witnesses. The hearings lasted six weeks and aroused enormous public interest; the suggestion that rules were being bent to ease the lives of the politicians and officials who were responsible for enforcing them stirred the embers of popular resentment. Serious allegations were made against a number of public servants, including several members of the Government. The most prominent and hence the ones subjected to the most publicity were Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, and Hugh Dalton, the Chancellor.

The allegations surrounding Morrison involved the granting of planning applications by London Borough councils; Rechtand produced a letter from Morrison's office that he claimed showed that the two men were on close terms. In Dalton's case the accusation was that he showed improper interest in taking up the directorship of a company. Ironically, despite the greater evidence implicating Morrison it was Hugh Dalton who suffered the most damage from the tribunal. It was a wholly self-inflicted injury. Where Morrison simply refused to dignify the accusations with any reaction, Dalton informed Silverman that he wanted to give evidence on his own behalf. In vain, the Attorney General and Dalton's own friends tried to dissuade him, pointing out going into the witness box would only give Rechtand's fabrications credence; in the event, although the tribunal accepted Dalton's account it seemed unconvincing and there were

many who felt that he had done himself no good by appearing<sup>19</sup>.

In the end, little actual corruption was proved. As a result of Reichtand's evidence several junior civil servants were mildly rebuked, and Percy Wells<sup>20</sup>, a junior minister in the Board of Trade, was forced from public life. Stanley Reichtand himself was condemned as a liar- but not before his wild fabrications at the Tribunal, where he enjoyed legal immunity, had given the public the impression of seedy self-advancement in official circles..."

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<sup>1</sup> OTL, fission was discovered in November 1938 by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann; ITTL, thanks to an earlier war, worse Austro-German relations forcing Lise Meitner out of Germany earlier than OTL, the lack of anti-Semitic legislation in Italy and several other factors, a team comprised of Meitner, Otto Hahn, Enrico Fermi and Otto Frisch made the discovery in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> Frisch and Peierls worked together in Britain OTL; their work provided important information on the critical mass needed for a nuclear reaction.

<sup>3</sup> OTL, Tizard was one of the leading protagonists in the British nuclear project; he later led the 'Tizard mission' of 1940, which made British technology available to the US. 'Spode' was chosen as a code-word because of the West-Midland base of the group...

<sup>4</sup> Mosley is being absurdly over-dramatic here; the extension of the European Union to what it is in the period in which he is writing is far more complex than this; it suits him to claim a single event however...

<sup>5</sup> While Mosley has a lot to do with the formation of the European Union, it's presumptuous of him to claim credit for thinking up the idea; it has a long pedigree in the inter-war period, being promoted by Aristide Briand amongst others.

<sup>6</sup> Many European inter-war leaders were pan-Europeanists in some form or other; while there are massively differing views of what should result, there is a surprising amount of common ground that could have been exploited.

<sup>7</sup> Otto was a passionate advocate of European Union both OTL and ITTL, having become a member of the 'International Pan-European Union' in the 1920s

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<sup>8</sup> Belgium and Denmark declined to sign for reasons of preserving their traditional neutrality; Poland did not attend but is nonetheless quite interested.

<sup>9</sup> This is, of course, rubbish- it suits Mosley to pretend that this is the case however...

<sup>10</sup> It's worth pointing out that this is a document of intent, and little more; this means it tends towards the grandiose. Few of these functions will exist for quite a long time.

<sup>11</sup> The capital levy is a form of taxation by which the Government takes part of the capital of any person or business, as opposed to a tax on personal or business income. The concept had been a favourite of Dalton's ever since the 1920s.

<sup>12</sup> The Rignano tax was another one of Dalton's hobby-horses OTL. It was intended to distinguish between 'old' and 'new' inherited money, penalising money earned more recently far less.

<sup>13</sup> OTL, Cripps did something very similar in 1947.

<sup>14</sup> This, to put it mildly, is complete rubbish. Mosley's goal here is to appease certain Daltonites who have relevance in contemporary politics rather than be honest about the circumstances of twenty years before.

<sup>15</sup> Mosley is not a fan of Morrison, for a variety of reasons.

<sup>16</sup> OTL, Reichtand was known as 'Sidney Stanley'; his activities led to similar trouble for Attlee's Government in 1948. As Labour is in power and there isn't a war, the scandal breaks far sooner ITTL; it is still likely to happen as Stanley had the same proclivities and would be circulating in the same social milieu.

<sup>17</sup> Justice Simonds was just as eminent OTL; he became a Law Lord and then was appointed Lord Chancellor from 1951-1954

<sup>18</sup> OTL, Sidney Silverman was a Labour backbencher who was instrumental in the eventual abolition of Capital Punishment. His legal training makes him a plausible Attorney General ITTL.

<sup>19</sup> This happened in OTL's Lynskey Tribunal as well; Dalton had a tendency to keep digging long after he should have stopped.

<sup>20</sup> Percy Wells was Ernest Bevin's PPS during the 1940's OTL- here his career has taken a slightly more unfortunate course.

## Chapter 23

*"Some may belittle politics but we who are engaged in it know that it is where people stand tall. Although I know that it has its many harsh contentions, it is still the arena that sets the heart beating a little faster. If it is, on occasions, the place of low skulduggery, it is more often the place for the pursuit of noble causes. I wish everyone, friend or foe, well and that is that. The end."*

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*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

When the Simonds tribunal ended its hearings, there were jokes at the expense of Ministers; *'at least we have the best Government that money can buy'*. But the scandal was not over yet, and was about to engulf its most prominent victim yet again. Three days afterward, it was announced that 500 letters offering information, stimulated by the publicity surrounding the inquiry, were to be investigated by the fraud squad. At least one of these concerned the improper use of expenses in Hugh Dalton's constituency. The new allegations had been sent anonymously to the local Conservative Party, which passed them to the Attorney-General, who in turn ordered an inquiry<sup>1</sup>. At first Dalton believed that the source was the Tory agent in his constituency of Bishop Auckland as part of a dirty tricks campaign. As later events intervened however, he became increasingly convinced that an enemy in the Labour Party, perhaps even someone close to the Prime Minister, had been the source...



On May 15<sup>th</sup>, just as a month earlier, Dalton was acquitted of any wrongdoing. The scandals had taken their toll however, and an emotionally and physically stressed Chancellor took urgent health advice, being diagnosed with an irregular heartbeat. Less than a week after his exoneration however, a new storm broke. On May 21<sup>st</sup>, copies of a scandalous personal letter written by Dalton the previous autumn were posted to several newspapers. The sender promised more in a similar vein in return for payment..."

*(Taken from "Turbulent Priest; A Biography of Hugh Dalton" by David Gregory, Liddell 1979)*

"Was Dalton homosexual? There are people who, belonging to a post-Freudian generation, concluded that he must have been. In fact, no evidence exists that Dalton ever had a sexual relationship with another man, and his private life seems to have been one of blameless monogamy. On the other hand both before and after his marriage his emotions were more stirred by men- increasingly by younger men- then by women. This preference was to shape, and eventually end, his career. It is instructive that an important aspect of the late Victorian and Edwardian idolisation of handsome men was the extraordinary longing for an attachment to a boy either of far higher or, more often, of a far lower social rank. This longing was often combined with a desire to move such a boy, if he were of lower rank, away from his menial environment and into a better life. Each writer had his own preferred category of humble boy. A recurrent type, incidentally one that caused embarrassment to Dalton's royal god-father<sup>2</sup>, was the telegraph boy. The boy who would cause Dalton's downfall was the son of a carpenter.

In January 1938, Dalton was invited to dine at the high table of St Catherine's College Cambridge; he was seated next to the College's Organ Scholar, a promising student and rising star in the Cambridge Union named Edward Heath<sup>3</sup>. Always appreciative of youthful intelligence and a keen wit, Dalton was charmed by the gauche young undergraduate, and the two became close correspondents. Was there in also in Heath, as there undoubtedly was in Rupert Brooke, an emotional ambivalence that enabled him to respond to the affection of another, especially an older man? It may not be irrelevant that in his intimate Cambridge circle Dalton had been known as 'Daddy'. Late in November 1939, something passed between them that brought their friendship to a crisis. Heath had read Freud; perhaps he presented Hugh with an uncomfortable interpretation. If so, the result was to jolt the older man into introspection. In his bedroom at 11 Downing St, the Chancellor wrote his young friend, twenty-nine years his junior, a remarkable letter;

*"Dear Ted,*

*Thank you for your message. I did not expect, or try to see you yesterday. I know how well you sleep! And I shan't expect, or try to see much of you when you are next in London. I have come to the conclusion that I have been fussing you too much recently and that this has bored you and made a setback, on your side, in our friendship, which is very precious to me.*

*You are splendidly gifted – physically, mentally and socially<sup>4</sup>, and you have been going through a period of great and varied successes. I told you in the summer how I feel about you- that I believe tremendously in you and your future, and am very fond of you, and would do anything any time, if you asked me to help you.*

*But I am nearly twice your age, so that I tend to think of you, as when drunk I told you, more as a beloved son-only two years older than my beloved daughter Helen who*

*died in 1922, or when I am feeling a good deal younger than my age, as an adorably gay younger brother.*

*You've stirred me up, damn you! But being so keen on you, I've fussed you too much lately. I shall do it no more. I shall leave you alone. Any initiative must come from you now, and I don't expect many, because your life will be fuller and fuller. I shall never write or say all this to you again. But my feelings towards you shall never change.*

*Good luck always!*

*Hugh"<sup>5</sup>*

The letter in itself was certainly scandalous, but what made the publication explosive was the verse that Dalton had enclosed. It was a self-mocking poem that had been written by Dalton's patron at King's thirty years before, the academic Goldie Dickinson; while amongst the intellectual circles of Cambridge it had provoked only amusement, it was not remotely in tune with the public morals of the time;

*"He sits and at his feet I take my place,  
He plants them on my neck and face,  
Both pleasing me and pleasing himself at heart,  
Because he loves the dominating part.  
I sniff the scent of leather at my nose,  
And squirm and wriggle as the pressure grows,  
While he, more masterful the more I gulp,  
Cries 'Quiet! Or I'll tread you into pulp!'"<sup>6</sup>*

Although the poem goes on to express the writer's solution to his urges- namely, in sublimating passion through the intellectual enlightenment of undergraduates- this was a subtlety that would be lost in the furore surrounding its publication..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

Just before midday a messenger handed Dalton a note; it was from Frederick Pethick-Lawrence, the Chief Whip<sup>7</sup>. It said that a very serious situation had arisen; a scandalous, personal letter written by Dalton was likely to be published in the evening newspapers and the Tories had put down a Private Notice Question on the subject for answer that afternoon. A confused Chancellor immediately went to Pethick-Lawrence's room; the reference to a 'scandalous letter' would not necessarily have made Dalton think of Heath until his attention was drawn to the connection. He emerged ten minutes later; Gaitskell, who had heard rumours that something was going on, found him in the Member's Lobby. Dalton had gone white with shock and was swearing to himself under his breath...

...When the Prime Minister's office was contacted, Mosley was immersed in preparations for the Venice Conference. News of the crisis reached him in the form of a note from Pethick-Lawrence; on reading it, he immediately abandoned his work and asked Dalton to come to the cabinet room. The Chancellor turned to Mosley and formally offered his resignation. Dalton recalled that it was a '*sad but short conversation*'; he was moved to see that Mosley seemed genuinely upset.

*'He said he hated- hated- he repeated the word several times- hated to lose me. He thanked me for what I had done as Chancellor and hoped that I should be able to rejoin the Government later, in some department, as an 'elder statesman''*

Mosley said that the new Chancellor would be Bevan. Dalton left sadly, returned to No.11 and prepared for bed. His physician was summoned shortly afterwards, presumably to administer a sedative..."

*(Taken from "Great Scandals of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" Longman 1992)*

"Was there a conspiracy within the Government, and if so, who orchestrated it? The evidence is ambiguous. Certainly in his final years Dalton was convinced that his downfall had been ordered directly from Downing St, and the way in which Dalton was hit by allegation after allegation seems too unlucky to be random. It is also true to say that Mosley had ample motive. Beyond the well-known personal rivalry between the two men, it made political sense for the Prime Minister to remove a powerful competitor when his own leadership was under pressure, and while Mosley's slim Parliamentary majority could not have survived the uproar caused by the unprovoked sacking or demotion of Dalton, a scandal would be another matter. Mosley was not the only suspect however; whatever could be said of Dalton he did not lack powerful enemies. While several Cabinet Ministers and even the King himself disliked the Chancellor<sup>8</sup>, perhaps his most obvious enemy was the Home Secretary Herbert Morrison. Morrison and Dalton despised each other, and while it is arguable that the Home Secretary would stoop to such a level he certainly had the means. It is known that the intelligence services had previously monitored ministers and while the relevant files will be sealed until 75 years after the event, the involvement of MI5 would explain how copies of the 'Heath letter' were obtained and also the odd behaviour and subsequent disappearance of the 'blackmailer'.

While this speculation is intriguing, it is of limited utility. Would a sitting Prime Minister- even one as ruthless as Mosley- personally authorise a smear campaign against his own Chancellor? The notion seems implausible to say the least, and even the majority of those who favour a conspiracy accept this. Instead, much of the speculation centres on the flamboyant figure of Tom Driberg<sup>9</sup>. Driberg,

who was Ellen Wilkinson's PPS at the Department of Health, is known to have had links to the intelligence services; his own scandalous lifestyle made him well placed to hear the gossip and dark secrets of others, and his links with Herbert Morrison through Wilkinson gave him ample motive. Curiously, Driberg's otherwise disarmingly frank autobiography omits any mention of the affair..."

*(Taken from "Turbulent Priest; A Biography of Hugh Dalton" by David Gregory, Liddell 1979)*

"For Dalton's supporters, their leader's downfall was shockingly sudden; 'in the space of a few hours,' noted Gaitskell in later years, 'Hugh had gone from being the most powerful Chancellor for a generation and the keystone of the Government to being a nonentity, to be pitied at best and despised at worst'. The appointment of Aneurin Bevan as Dalton's successor did nothing to assuage the Daltonites' anger. Indeed it only rubbed salt in the wound. Mosley's choice of Bevan was at best an act of extreme insensitivity; Bevan had long been a protégé of Mosley<sup>10</sup>, and his elevation to the Treasury was seen as confirmation that he was the Prime Minister's chosen successor. For some, it provided further evidence that Dalton's fall had been engineered by Downing St. Even for the less excitable Daltonites it constituted a grave provocation. The Treasury had long been Dalton's personal fief, and his Junior Ministers and senior advisors had been hand-picked by the former Chancellor. Bevan's installation was deeply resented by his own officials, and over the months to come he would face repeated efforts to undermine his position.

The attitude of Dalton himself played an important part in events to follow. In the days immediately following the catastrophe he remained virtually incommunicado, even refusing to see Gaitskell for a time. At the end of May he gradually began to re-emerge, and by then his sorrow and

humiliation had turned into anger. Mosley's sensitivity on the receipt of his resignation was forgotten, and an upset and increasingly bitter Dalton gradually became convinced that his downfall had been orchestrated by the Prime Minister himself. This was not a view shared widely amongst his friends. Gaitskell and Crosland both privately felt that Dalton's downfall was of his own creation but were moved by personal loyalty and political consideration to support him, while Callaghan found himself '*repulsed and saddened*' by the whole affair and gradually began to drift away from the clique.

At a dinner party at Gaitskell's house on June 10<sup>th</sup>, the former Chancellor's supporters discussed what action they could take. It was agreed that Mosley's leadership was unsustainable; his quixotic leadership style and alienation of influential sections of the Party meant that if he were to remain in power Labour would suffer a massive defeat at the next election, enabling a revived Conservative Party to reverse all the reforms of the previous eight years. With Dalton incapable of providing a challenge, his acolytes agreed that an alternative candidate should be found; despite the general dislike of the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison was thought an obvious contender, as was the Labour Secretary Ernest Bevin. These discussions achieved little in the short term. However, one important resolution was made; it was decided that the best way to test the ground for Mosley's removal would be the circulation of a letter calling for new leadership..."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"On July 4<sup>th</sup>, the Leicester MP Herbert Bowden<sup>11</sup> began to privately circulate a letter around the Parliamentary Labour Party. Its contents represented an open challenge to Mosley's authority;

*“It is with the greatest sadness that we have to say that we no longer believe that your remaining in office is in the interest of either the party or the country... How and why this situation has arisen no longer matters. We share the view of the overwhelming majority of the party and the country that the only way the Party and the Government can renew itself in office is urgently to renew its leadership...”*

The Daltonites had played their hand well; the Whips' Office only became aware of the letter on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup>, and by then it was too late. The following morning Bowden delivered the letter to Downing St. It eventually had been signed by 16 MPs including three Junior Ministers, all of whom handed in their own resignations a few hours later. The results were dramatic; the Daltonites had at a stroke laid bare the divisions and frustrations that had been simmering under the surface of the Government...

At this crucial moment, the Prime Minister was unable to react swiftly to the situation. Mosley was in Paris for discussions with the French Government, and only heard of the crisis several hours after it had broken. Early the next morning he decided to fly back to London, but by then matters had become more serious. Although prominent ILP members such as Fenner Brockway and David Kirkwood had signed the Bowden letter, their grouping had not officially endorsed it. However, after a meeting on the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> the anti-Mosley faction won out and the ILP recommended that its members should add their names to the ever-growing list. This support was crucial; it meant that the number of signatures on the letter had exceeded 28, the size of the Government's majority.

Although the number of rebels fell well short of the 20 per cent of the Parliamentary Party that would be required to spark an immediate leadership challenge, by the morning



of July 7<sup>th</sup> it was clear that Mosley was facing an unprecedented challenge to his authority. Despite this, the Government's reaction was a confused one. The Prime Minister had never been good at facing down dissent in his own party, and the extent of the rebellion took the Whips by surprise. It had generally been felt that the circumstances of Dalton's resignation would prevent much more than muttering in the backbenches; this complacency was to prove fatal in the long run..."

After his initial indecision, Mosley resolved to make a direct appeal to the Parliamentary Party; in a meeting on the evening of July 7<sup>th</sup> he tried to stem the flow of defections through sheer force of personality. It was a successful evening; Mosley was at his most forceful and magnetic. The Prime Minister's efforts convinced many wavering MPs, and an unwise Conservative attempt to hold a vote of no-confidence the following day drove still more backbenchers back towards the Government. By the 9<sup>th</sup>, the situation had calmed enough for Frederick Pethick-Lawrence to cheerfully term it a '*wobble*'. But the crisis was not over. The grass-roots plot had failed, but it had done enough damage to inspire another, more dangerous threat..."

*(Taken from "Morrison" by Benjamin Mandelson, Longman 1989)*

"On the 18<sup>th</sup>, Shinwell<sup>12</sup> came to see Morrison; he had some '*very striking ideas, including a 'pilgrimage' by several in the cabinet*'. These ideas provided the framework for the August plot. Shinwell proposed that he, Wilkinson and Morrison should persuade Bevin<sup>13</sup> and Graham to join the three of them in a united delegation to Mosley in order to force the beleaguered Prime Minister to resign. If the plot failed, Morrison and Wilkinson and he could resign themselves to force the issue<sup>14</sup>. What would be the fate of

Mosley, as ex-premier? Shinwell also had a solution to that problem. The best course, he suggested, would be to appoint him as the head of the prospective European organisation that was then being discussed<sup>15</sup>. It was a novel approach- palace revolution, 'banana republic' style- and it startled Morrison. But there was a cold logic to it. The Home Secretary listened attentively. When Shinwell spoke of Mosley's increasing quixotry and lack of radicalism, Morrison certainly did not demur. He found Shinwell's proposal flattering, entertaining and extremely tempting. But there was one problem; if Mosley was to be deposed, there must not be an open leadership contest. Any result must be a *fait accompli* in his favour. Shinwell was disappointed, but not surprised. After some thought, he decided to abandon the involvement of Bevin; whatever Morrison said, he knew that a contested leadership competition was the more likely outcome.

Parliament went into recess on July 20<sup>th</sup>. The following day, the 'pilgrimage' began. Morrison, Wilkinson, Shinwell and the Scottish Secretary George Buchanan<sup>16</sup> came to see Mosley; they told him that irrespective of the outcome of the meeting, Morrison would challenge the Prime Minister for the Labour leadership at his annual re-election during the Party Conference<sup>17</sup>. It would be better for all concerned, they maintained, that Mosley resigned before being challenged; in a contest he was unlikely to win with enough of a margin to stay in power. The Prime Minister demurred; unsure of his own support, he decided to consult the rest of his Cabinet. The results were not encouraging. Later, Bevin would argue that had Mosley seen the Cabinet as a group rather than individually, the resulting peer pressure may have produced a different result<sup>18</sup>; as it was, only Graham, Bevan and Strachey<sup>19</sup> remained supportive..."

*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

“Although I wrote once: '*Revenge is the hallmark of small minds*', such an elevated sentiment is easier when you are again breathing fresh air than when a fat chap is sitting on your face. Nevertheless, I harboured no bitterness toward those I felt had betrayed me, but perhaps it should be admitted that this was not entirely magnanimity. The truth is that men only feel bitter towards those for whom you have some respect...

My own feeling was simple and was perhaps derived from my early agricultural experience, which brings one close to nature: if through error or a sense of duty you take too big a risk and have a fall into the manure heap, every little runt in life's farmyard will take the chance to stamp his small hoof in your face; it is the way of nature. The experience is instructive but not embittering, because it is all too natural. The redeeming happiness is that the higher intellects and finer spirits do not participate, even though they may disapprove your opinion, and in some cases they assist in your adversity...”

*(Taken from The Times, August 5<sup>th</sup> 1940)*

### **“MOSLEY RESIGNS!**

Oswald Mosley is to stand down as Prime Minister after his Cabinet refused to back him were his leadership to be challenged at the next Labour Party Conference. He will remain in office until a successor is elected, but will not fight Herbert Morrison for the Labour Party leadership. The Home Secretary indicated that he would challenge the Prime Minister after a string of rebellions from the Left and allies of the former Chancellor Hugh Dalton seriously damaged the Government's authority. The Prime Minister said pressure from colleagues had forced him to conclude

that party unity and the prospect of victory in the next general election would be better served if he stepped down.

Downing Street issued a statement at nine o'clock last night after Sir Oswald had informed his Cabinet and the King of his intention. By midnight, Labour Secretary Ernest Bevin had announced that he would now stand against Mr Morrison in the next stage of the leadership contest. The Chancellor Aneurin Bevan said it was a typically brave and selfless decision from the Prime Minister; "*Once again, the Prime Minister has put his country's and Party's interests before personal considerations*", he said.

There were tributes to Sir Oswald from both sides of the House of Commons following his statement; the leader of the opposition, Mr Butler said the Prime Minister's decision showed he amounted to more than those who had recently turned against him..."

*(Taken from "The Encyclopaedia of 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Politics", Eds. June + Peterson. Longman, 1999)*

### **1940 Labour Leadership Election:**

The 1940 Labour Leadership contest took place in the summer of that year after Oswald Mosley announced his intention to resign once a successor had been elected. It was the first Labour Leadership Election since 1922<sup>20</sup>; it was also the first where the winner would become Prime Minister. In the event, five candidates came forward to contest the leadership. As expected, the Home Secretary Herbert Morrison put his name forward, as did Ernest Bevin, the Labour Minister. It was widely assumed that the Chancellor Aneurin Bevan would stand as a candidate but he elected not to, instead endorsing the Foreign Secretary William Graham as a compromise candidate whom both Mosleyites and Daltonites could support. Two contenders from the

Left also stood; The Independent Labour Party nominated the brilliant young Michael Foot as their choice for the leadership, while the maverick backbencher Stafford Cripps also threw his hat into the ring. The first ballot took place on August 10<sup>th</sup>. The results were as follows;

**Morrison: 119**

Graham: 85

Bevin: 77

Foot: 32

Cripps: 6

Although the first ballot put gave Morrison a commanding lead, Labour Party rules required a majority of MPs (in this case, 160) to vote for the winner, so another round was required. The second ballot was held on August 17<sup>th</sup>; by this time, Michael Foot and Stafford Cripps had dropped out of the race, leaving their votes to be distributed amongst the other three candidates.

**Morrison: 126**

Graham: 106

Bevin: 87

Herbert Morrison won the second round as he had the first, but still failed to obtain the majority of MPs that he needed; in fact, most of the Left-wing MPs that had supported Foot and Cripps moved behind Graham. Realising that he had little chance of eventual victory, Ernest Bevin withdrew from the race on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, endorsing Graham as his candidate. The third ballot took place on September 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Graham: 167**

Morrison: 152

This result gave the decisive outcome required; despite Morrison's initial lead, William Graham was more successful at obtaining the second preferences of other

Labour MPs and so became the Labour Party's third Prime Minister."

*(Taken from "The Mosley Era" by Tobias Griffin, Picador 1987)*

"Around eight o'clock that morning, the final results were announced; at the last minute, Graham had edged ahead of Morrison and obtained the majority of MPs that he needed to be elected leader. Mosley was delighted, not only by Graham's victory but by Morrison's defeat; he quickly rang the former Foreign Secretary to offer his congratulations, and then Bevan to advise him to seek the role of Foreign Secretary in the new Government. With this done, only the formalities now remained. Eight years, one month and twenty days after he had first kissed hands with the King, Mosley left Downing St. It was a low-key departure; all eyes were on William Graham, who was travelling to Buckingham Palace. As Mosley's car turned on to Whitehall, the political cartoonist David Low spotted the former him looking back at his long-time home. For a second, the former Prime Minister looked emotional, even tearful; then he noticed Low looking on and gave him an cheerfully ironic wave. With that, his car passed the Treasury and he was lost from view. The Mosley era was over."

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<sup>1</sup> Something similar happened OTL, although in that instance Dalton over-reacted and made his situation worse. Here he's more sensible, but events overtake him nonetheless...

<sup>2</sup> Dalton's father was a royal chaplain; consequently his godfather was Prince Albert-Victor, also known as 'Eddy'.

<sup>3</sup> OTL, Heath ended up at Balliol after St Catherine's rejected his application to be Organ Scholar. ITTL butterflies have intervened, with interesting results.

<sup>4</sup> Considering this is Ted Heath we're talking about Dalton is probably laying it on a bit thick on this point...

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<sup>5</sup> OTL, Dalton wrote a similar letter to Anthony Crosland which was only published after both of their deaths. I think it's really quite heart-wrenching.

<sup>6</sup> The poem is a real one. OTL, it was not published until after Dickinson's death. While it can't be certain it is likely that Dalton knew of it, and it certainly seems to fit his attitude towards his protégés.

<sup>7</sup> Pethick-Lawrence was Financial Secretary for the Treasury until 1931 OTL, and briefly became Leader of the Opposition in 1942. ITTL he remained at the Treasury for the first term of the Mosley Government, until his appointment as Chief Whip in 1936.

<sup>8</sup> Despite his Royal links, Dalton was never popular with the Royals, who found him gauche and irritating.

<sup>9</sup> Tom Driberg is one of the most entertaining British political figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; described by Churchill as the man who "gives sodomy a bad name" he was a promiscuous homosexual and devout high-church Christian who in his life was variously a close friend of Aliester Crowley, a Communist, a Soviet spy, in the pay of MI5 and eventually by the 1960s the Chairman of the Labour Party. OTL he came into Parliament in 1941 as an independent; ITTL he has come to the Labour fold earlier and was elected to Parliament in 1939.

<sup>10</sup> OTL, Bevan was briefly a Mosleyite and then turned against him when he left Labour to found the New Party; here he has retained his connection throughout the 1930's.

<sup>11</sup> Bowden was the president of Leicester Labour Party throughout the 1930's, and in OTL was elected to Parliament in 1945. ITTL he was elected in 1936, and has become identified as a Daltonite.

<sup>12</sup> ITTL, Emmanuel Shinwell has been War Minister since 1936; his ILP connections make him an obvious source of dissent against Mosley. OTL, Shinwell was Chairman of the Labour party from 1942, Minister for Fuel and Power from 1945 Secretary of State for War from 1947.

<sup>13</sup> Bevin is the Labour Secretary ITTL; OTL he did the same job for the wartime coalition and was made Foreign Secretary under Attlee.

<sup>14</sup> This plot is similar to some that Stafford Cripps thought up during the Attlee Government.

<sup>15</sup> ITTL, the Treaty of Venice establishing the European Union is signed in September 1940.

<sup>16</sup> Buchanan is Scottish Secretary ITTL and an ILP member; OTL Attlee appointed him Minister of Pensions.

<sup>17</sup> The Labour constitution provides for the annual re-election of the Party Leader. Normally, this is unopposed; OTL, it took until 1960 for a sitting leader to be challenged in this way.

<sup>18</sup> OTL, Margaret Thatcher discovered a similar problem.

<sup>19</sup> Strachey returned to the Cabinet in 1939 as the Lord Privy Seal.

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<sup>20</sup> In 1922, Ramsey MacDonald unseated John Clynes as leader in an election; Mosley was elected unopposed in 1931, so this is the first genuine contest in a generation.



**Map 9:**



Europe in 1950

## Epilogue

*"I know I look a lot older. That's what being leader of the Labour Party does to you. Actually, looking around some of you look a lot older. That's what having me as leader of the Labour Party does to you."*

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*(Taken from "My Life" by Oswald Mosley, Longman 1961)*

It is not my habit to keep options open; I always have a clear order of priorities. My desire through most of my political life has been a union of the nation for the reconstruction of the national life which I believed to be a vital necessity. This consensus of the nation is much the most desirable thing, because it unites and does not divide. I tried for it long ago and thankfully succeeded for a time. Unfortunately I did not succeed for long enough. If it is impossible to achieve for great and necessary purposes a union of everything vital to the nation, drawn from politics, the business world, the trade unions, the universities, the Civil Service, the fighting services, a true consensus of our people—then something else must be tried. If it be impossible to unite, the division of conflict must be risked. National union was made possible for a time by the particular instinct of the British genius in adversity, but division and strife, with all the bitterness which should be avoidable, is better than acquiescence in decline and death.

I hope that this record of my own small part in these great affairs and still greater possibilities has at least shown that I

have 'the repugnance to mean and cruel dealings' which the wise old man ascribed to me so long ago, and yet have attempted by some union of mind and will to combine thought and deed; that I have stood with consistency for the construction of a worthy dwelling for humanity, and at all cost against the rage and folly of insensate and purposeless destruction; that I have followed the truth as I saw it, wherever that service led me, and have ventured to look and strive through the dark to a future that can make all worthwhile.

*(Taken from The Times, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1976)*

## **HERR KESSLER'S GAMBIT THREATENS THE ENTIRE WORLD**

Like a thunderbolt piercing a murky sky, the revelation that the German Fuhrer Ernst Kessler<sup>1</sup> has established a space-station that could rain down nuclear weapons against the United Kingdom and the whole Northern Hemisphere casts a lurid light on the nature of the present crisis. This is no longer a bearded German revolutionary fulminating against us. This is a revived Reich stretching out its nuclear arm into space to confront us and therewith the whole free world with a deadly challenge.

That is why Mr Powell is right in placing the responsibility squarely on Germany. That is why the imposition of a "quarantine" blockade against the shipment of further offensive materiel to Germany was necessary. That is why this action now meets with the approval of our allies, notably the European Union, many of the neutrals and even the USSR. All must realise that at last we really are in the same boat.

The world will hope that the Prime Minister's appeal to Herr Kessler to remove this reckless and provocative threat

to world peace will not go unheard. But it must be recalled that this act is merely the latest manifestation of German aggression stretching back over a century. This record has made Germany the one of the most dangerous countries in history and puts the previous 'Communist challenge' in true perspective<sup>2</sup>.

It is this record which has forced that United Kingdom and other free nations to unite in mutual defence alliances, starting with the 'Entente Cordiale' before Germany's invasion of France in 1914. It is this record which, following the invasion of Austria, aligned the whole European continent against German aggression and forced the free nations to reverse their unilateral disarmament and to rearm in self-defence. It is this record which prompted our allies to participate in building mutual defence bases on their own soil- bases which were created to forestall further aggression, no to launch a free world offensive. It is this record which prompts and requires the blockade of Germany.

If nevertheless there has been some slim basis for hope these past three years since the overthrow of the old German regime, it has been because the Soviet leader, Premier Kosygin<sup>3</sup> has appeared to understand some of the imperatives of the terrible new age in which we live. Kosygin makes no secret that he wants and expects world Communism. We cannot accuse him of deception on that score. But he has repeatedly shown that knows his objective cannot be achieved through thermonuclear war, and he has repeatedly stressed his faith in economic competition, in the alleged superiority of the reformed Soviet economic system over that of the West, as the chief means for convincing the world's people to adopt the Communist ideology. At this tense moment in history, above all we must not forget that Premier Kosygin's moderation has allowed the world to

present a united front against the Kesslerite 'cultural revolution' we are now faced with.

The most dangerous international crisis since the Chinese Revolution<sup>4</sup> has been brought about because of the reckless effort of the Fourth Reich to upset the Status quo in Europe, to extend its military might into a totally new area, to implant a nuclear-weapons base that threatens us all. All this constitutes a direct and offensive challenge that had to be answered. It was answered by the Prime Minister's imposition of a quarantine on the shipment of major arms to Germany, a partial blockade that is now in effect and is being carried out by the European naval and air forces with the express approval of the majority of the rest of the world.

If Herr Kessler is ready to negotiate honestly and not merely to conceal aggressive designs, he can prove it by dismantling the orbital missile base. He will find the United Kingdom and her allies ready- as we have been at Venice, at the League of Nations, in Moscow and Paris and Washington and anywhere else in the world-to meet him in good faith. But we must not and cannot permit him to use negotiation any longer as a cover for creeping aggression in Orbit, Danzig, Austria, Bharatavarsha<sup>5</sup> or the many other danger-spots that circle this tiny globe.

*(Taken from The Manchester Guardian, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1976)*

The former Labour Prime Minister Lord Mosley died today on the eve of his 80th birthday at his home in Staffordshire, a family spokesman said. Lord Mosley was one of the longest serving Prime Ministers in British history and also one of the youngest, entering into office at the age of 36. He dominated politics throughout the 1930's and early 1940's, steering Britain through the darkest days of the depression and heading one of the most reforming Governments of

recent times. Mosley's bold economic programme shielded Britain from the worst effects of the economic crisis Europe found itself in the early 1930's, and his Government reformed the House of Lords, laid the foundations for the modern welfare state, helped take Britain into the European Union and in the process rendered the Conservative Party irrelevant for almost a decade.

Mosley articulated the mood of a generation and signalled the shift from the old-fashioned politicians and parties of the Edwardian era to a much more modern political style. He almost single-handedly convinced millions that it was safe to vote Labour for the first time, and at a stroke turned his Party into the true rival to the Conservatives that it is today, ending the period of political upheaval that his ideological antecedent and political mentor David Lloyd George had started two decades previously.

Yet despite his personal impact on Labour, Mosley's legacy will always be bound up in the Austrian War. An instinctive pan-European and anti-communist, Mosley had always disagreed with the voices at home and abroad that had called for stern action against Germany, reasoning that Britain's interests were not served by a return to conflict and that renewed war would only serve to invite Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe. When the crisis of 1938 blew up the Prime Minister found himself in an unenviable position, compelled by international agreements and the clamour of the press and sections of the public to take action yet failing to be convinced himself. Mosley's reluctant decision to enter the war spared his party the prospect of immediate division, but the pent-up pressure of years of tension between Mosleyites, the far Left and more traditional Labour moderates continued to grow and expressed themselves in an ever more fractious Party.

The successful conclusion of the war ensured Mosley his historic third term in office, but the Prime Minister found himself ever more distant from the party he led, unable to take any comfort in victory for a war he regarded as pointless and seen by many across the political spectrum as both a coward who had to be forced into decisive action by public pressure, and a half-hearted negotiator who threw away the chance to solve the age-old German Question for good. For a time Mosley was able to immerse himself in causes such as his championing of the European project, but his authority was increasingly in question and the uproar surrounding the ugly circumstances of Chancellor Hugh Dalton's resignation in the summer of 1940 finally forced him to step down, hated by large sections of the very Party that had relied on him for three election victories.

Even after leaving office however, Mosley remained a vocal commentator on world affairs. His passionate advocacy of Western intervention during the Baltic War of 1941 drew criticism and admiration in equal measure, and his work in Venice as the European Union's first President did much to shape that organisation's development and outlook. Mosley's lifelong love of German culture did much to draw that nation into the European orbit again, and while he never succeeded in bringing Germany into the Union he retained the respect and trust of that nation's former regime, and sought to gain the trust of the new Government.

On his retirement in 1949, Mosley originally intended to spend the rest of his days in Tuscany, the guest of his lifelong friend and confidante Benito Mussolini. However with Mussolini's sudden death eighteen months later, Mosley changed his mind and returned to his family home in Staffordshire where he lived the rest of his life. Once freed from the responsibility of his position, he became a vocal commentator on British political affairs again, and

published his autobiography in 1961 to both acclaim and acrimony. Lord Mosley saw his position as being the Labour Party's conscience, and made frequent interventions in the press on issues such as the National Hospital Service and Europe. His last public intervention came in the General Election campaign of 1973, when he contributed to the defeat of the then Prime Minister George Brown by remarking that the Election was "*a fight between two or three big money combines, that and nothing else*"<sup>6</sup>.

Prime Minister Powell left emergency meetings in Venice to pay tribute to Lord Mosley;

*"I am very sad indeed to learn of Lord Mosley's passing. However much I disagreed with his views, there was no doubting the strength of his convictions and his unswerving devotion to our country. Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas Regumque turres."*<sup>7</sup>

The Leader of the Opposition Anthony Crosland said;

*"For those who heard and saw Oswald Mosley, the image is indelible- the black moustache, the burning eyes, the hypnotic voice, the precision of language, the agility in debate. He helped to shape the history of our party and of our times. He shall not be forgotten."*

A spokesman for the King expressed the monarch's "*sadness at the loss of a trusted advisor and dear friend*"<sup>8</sup>.

*(Taken from "Into Politics: Diaries, Volume 1" by Alan Clark, Phoenix 1998)*

*Saltwood*

*November 13 1976*

Heavy pain from shoulder, weak wrist etc, but not so ghastly as last year. After a baddish night did a morning's



estate work. Feeling v old and creaky. Actually would have been totally low, but call from M<sup>8</sup> this morning gave burst of adrenalin.

*Later*

Woken at three by the telephone. I knew something was wrong from the moment I opened my eyes. It was Diana; Tom suffered a stroke in the night and has died<sup>9</sup>. Poor Alex<sup>10</sup> is inconsolable, and I am little better. We are both utterly grief-stricken. Poor, poor Tom. It is not an exaggeration to say that I owe him everything. What would my life be like if Basil<sup>11</sup> hadn't introduced me while I was writing *The Donkeys*? An ageing amateur historian with massive gambling debts, no doubt. Maybe I would have entered politics, but too late. One of those ghastly Powellites most probably. I suppose I would never have met Alex either- something else I would rather not dwell on.

It brings a tear to my eye to think of him in these last years, fighting to preserve his reputation against those fucking pygmies who hated him because they knew he was right. Michael Foot has it dead on. In this country 'safety first' always stands in the way. Always! What cowards. The failure to act never solves problems.

So now the old order passeth, and it is the turn of the new guard. Ha, as if I am new! At times I am certain that I am hopelessly decrepit. When Tom was my age he had already fallen from power, while I am still merely a backbencher, an eminent one perhaps but a comparative non-entity in the grand scheme of things. And yet... Everyone hates that smarmy Daltonite toad Crosland. And if Jim<sup>12</sup>, or Wilson, or even that fat windbag Jenkins gets in, I would be in favour again. I am the anointed standard bearer of Tom's clique after all; a shadow cabinet job is mine for the taking. Defence maybe? Or even Foreign Affairs? I have decided

that my best chance would come under Roy. He is not an old man in a hurry like Wilson, but has compensations. If he were leader, I would be impossible to pass over for promotion, but ideally placed as a focus of opposition—assuming that we aren't all burnt to a crisp before then of course....

Still, the chances are good. And now, sadly but inevitably, the torch that Tom lit so many years ago has been passed to the new generation. I only hope that I am equal to the task. I keep thinking back to the film I saw a few days ago, 'Goodbye Berlin' I think it was called<sup>13</sup>, and that wonderful, uplifting scene in the beer garden when the young SA boy leads the singing of 'Tomorrow Belongs to Me'. One can never be sure with these things, but I rather fancy that it might.

---

*The sun on the meadow is summery warm.  
The stag in the forest runs free.  
But gather together to greet the storm.  
Tomorrow belongs to me.*

*The babe in his cradle is closing his eyes  
The blossom embraces the bee.  
But soon, says a whisper;  
'Arise, arise,  
Tomorrow belongs to me'*

*Oh Fatherland, Fatherland,  
Show us the sign  
Your children have waited to see.  
The morning will come  
When the world is mine.  
Tomorrow belongs to me!*



---

<sup>1</sup> Ernst Kessler (b.1929; OTL he was killed as a teen during the firebombing of Hamburg) swept to power in Germany in 1973, overthrowing the increasingly decrepit military regime. The leader of the revived SA, he's not a particularly nice man. Naturally, he has a goatee.

<sup>2</sup> Between the mid 1940's and 1960's, the USSR was regarded as the main threat to world peace- not on OTL Cold War levels, but there were significant tensions. In recent years however relations have warmed.

<sup>3</sup> OTL, Kosygin was premier of the USSR from 1964-1980 and first an ally, then a rival of Brezhnev. Kosygin and his predecessor Nikolai Bulganin have gradually been implementing Deng-style economic reforms.

<sup>4</sup> In the late 1950's, the Japanese withdrawal from China and the resulting upheavals resulted in the collapse of the KMT Government and the installation of a Communist regime in the country. This sparked an international crisis.

<sup>5</sup> Bharatavarsha is not the happiest place in the world; its Government has been forging close links with Germany as a means of imposing pressure on the nations of the Indian Union to the south...

<sup>6</sup> Mosley is very much the former PM from hell- he just can't resist being far, far worse than Thatcher could ever dream of being. This significantly harms his reputation, and it'll only really recover a few decades after his death.

<sup>7</sup> Ah, Enoch Powell- which other Prime Minister could quote Horace in the original Latin during an official statement?

<sup>8</sup> 'M' refers to 'Red' Peggy Roberts, the firebrand MP for Thaxted and Clark's occasional lover.

<sup>9</sup> Everyone in Mosley's circle of friends and family called him "Tom"

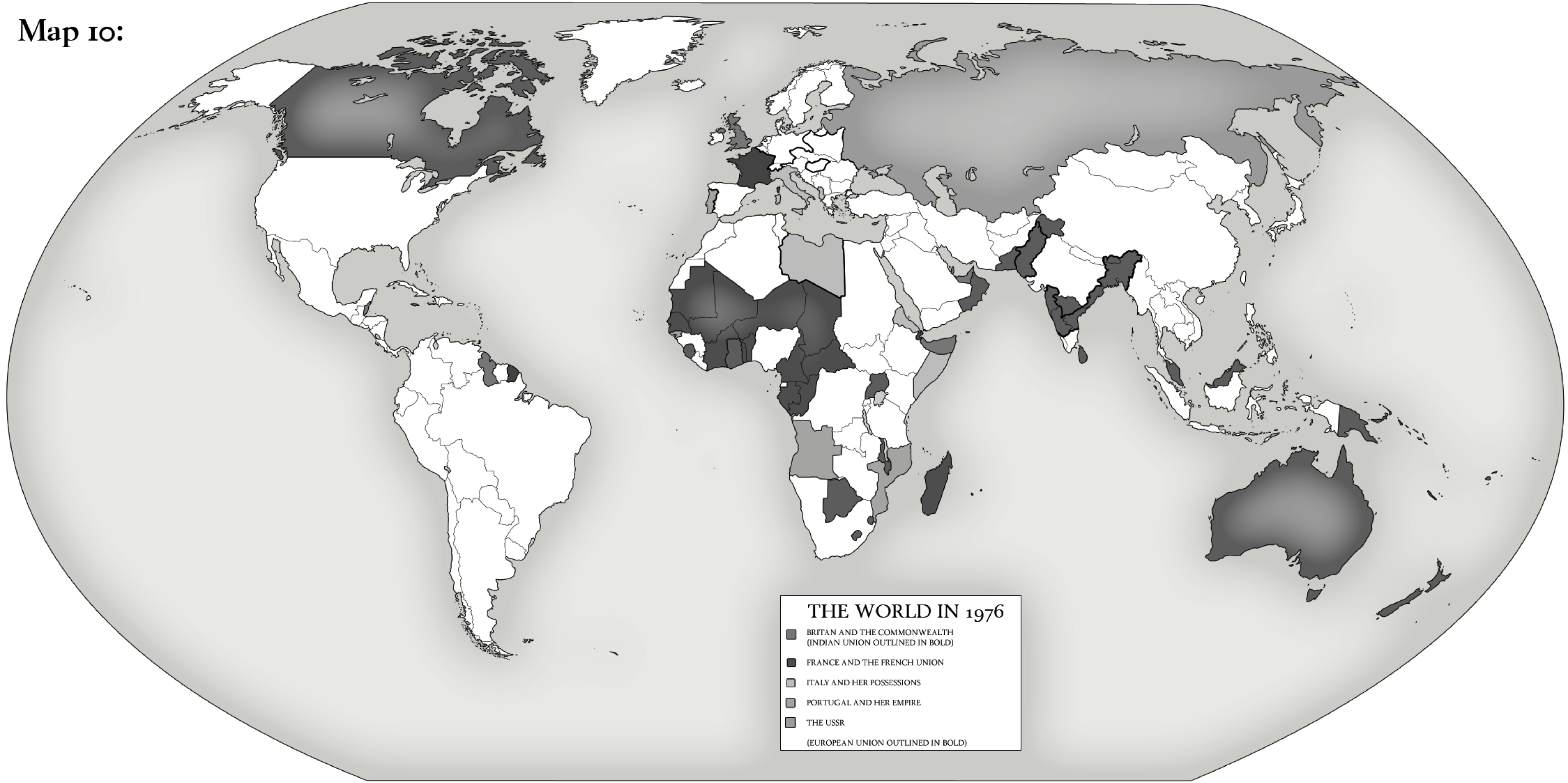
<sup>10</sup> Alexandra Mosley, born 1937 and a counterpart to OTL's Alexander Mosley.

<sup>11</sup> Basil Liddell-Hart

<sup>12</sup> James Callaghan

<sup>13</sup> "Goodbye Berlin" is a close analogue of OTL's "Cabaret"; Christopher Isherwood's novel of the same name is still published, although it's a little different to OTL's version.

Map 10:



**THE WORLD IN 1976**

- BRITAN AND THE COMMONWEALTH  
(INDIAN UNION OUTLINED IN BOLD)
- FRANCE AND THE FRENCH UNION
- ITALY AND HER POSSESSIONS
- PORTUGAL AND HER EMPIRE
- THE USSR  
(EUROPEAN UNION OUTLINED IN BOLD)

# Appendix 1: The Mosley Cabinets

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## Mosley's first term: July 1932

<b>Prime Minister:</b>	Oswald Mosley
Chancellor of the Exchequer:	Hugh Dalton
Lord Chancellor:	Charles Cripps (Lord)
Lord President of the Council:	Arthur Ponsonby (Lord)
Lord of the Privy Seal:	Frederick Jowett
Foreign Secretary:	Arthur Henderson
Home Secretary:	William Graham
First Lord of the Admiralty:	A V Alexander
Minister of Agriculture:	Jack Lawson
Air Secretary:	William Wedgwood Benn
Colonial Secretary:	Phillip Noel-Baker
Dominion Secretary:	J H Thomas
President of the Board of Education:	Margaret Bondfield
Minister of Health:	Christopher Addison
Scottish Secretary:	William Adamson
President of the Board of Trade:	John Strachey
War Secretary:	Clement Attlee
First Commissioner of Works:	Ellen Wilkinson
Minister of Labour:	George Lansbury
India Secretary:	William Lunn

## Mosley's second term: May 1936

<b>Prime Minister:</b>	Oswald Mosley
Chancellor of the Exchequer:	Hugh Dalton
Lord Chancellor:	Charles Cripps (Lord)
Lord President of the Council:	John Anderson (Lord Waverley)
Foreign Secretary:	William Graham
Home Secretary:	Herbert Morrison

First Lord of the Admiralty:	A V Alexander
Minister of Agriculture:	Christopher Addison
Air Secretary:	William Wedgwood Benn
Colonial Secretary:	Jack Lawson
Dominion Secretary:	Aneurin Bevan
President of the Board of Education:	John Strachey
Minister of Health:	Ellen Wilkinson
Scottish Secretary:	William Adamson
President of the Board of Trade:	James Chuter Ede
War Secretary:	Emmanuel Shinwell
Minister of Labour and Works:	Ernest Bevin
India Secretary:	Hastings Lees-Smith

### **Mosley's final term: April 1939**

<b>Prime Minister:</b>	Oswald Mosley
Chancellor of the Exchequer:	Hugh Dalton
Lord Chancellor:	William Jowitt (Lord)
Lord President of the Council:	John Anderson (Lord Waverley)
Lord of the Privy Seal:	John Strachey
Foreign Secretary:	William Graham
Home Secretary:	Herbert Morrison
First Lord of the Admiralty:	A V Alexander
Minister of Agriculture:	Christopher Addison
Air Secretary:	William Wedgewood Benn
Colonial Secretary:	Jack Lawson
Dominion Secretary:	Hastings Lees-Smith
Education Secretary:	James Chuter Ede
Minister of Health:	Ellen Wilkinson
Scottish Secretary:	George Buchanan
President of the Board of Trade:	Aneurin Bevan
War Secretary:	Emmanuel Shinwell
Minister of Labour and Works:	Ernest Bevin
Minister of Information:	John Reith (Lord)

## Appendix 2: 1976- Where are they now?

---

**Tommy Baker** is a pop icon. A native of Liverpool, Baker came back to the city in 1955 after losing his faith as a novice monk; he quickly became involved in the city's skiffle scene, and sang in several bands during the period. In 1961 Baker formed his own band, and 'The Who?' rapidly became the most popular British act since 'The Humphrey Littleton Band' five years previously, kick-starting the 'Liverpool sound' in the process. With his trademark slapstick humour and disheveled appearance, Baker quickly became one of the most recognisable men on the planet; he remained reluctant to let the band's style evolve however, and by 1969 'The Who?' had been largely supplanted by the new psychedelic 'Kraut-rock' sound. The band broke up that year, and since then Baker has been pursuing both solo projects and his own acting career.

**Subhas Chandra Bose** has done many things in his long and chequered political career, but few would have guessed that the revolutionary Indian Nationalist would spend the fading years of his life as President-for-life of the Republic of Bengal. The transition has been a complex one. Following the establishment of the Dominion of India, Bose found himself isolated by his rivals within the Congress Party; forming his own organisation in 1946, he espoused radical economic policies and tried to stem the rising tide of inter-communal tension in the country. The assassinations of Gandhi and Nehru by Muslim nationalists in 1953 plunged the Dominion into chaos, and during the resulting upheavals Bose placed himself at the centre of the unionist



movement; his opposition to radical Hindu nationalists put his views on Indian unity to severe strain though, and after the Dominion finally collapsed into civil war three years later he found himself leading the secessionist forces in his own home province, where he fought for a secular Bengali Republic. Bose's efforts during and after the war were pivotal in the foundation of the Indian Union in 1964; many feel that his vision of a loose confederation of Indian States remains the only means of achieving the united subcontinent envisaged by the Nationalists in the days of the Raj.

**Gerald Bull** is the head of the European Union's satellite programme. After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1951 Bull became involved in advanced ballistics research, spearheading the development of rocket-assisted artillery projectiles. In 1958, Bull became the head of the Commonwealth "High Altitude Research Programme", which aimed to place an object in orbit using a high-velocity artillery piece. In 1965, Bull's team were successful; their ascendancy was short-lived however as the demonstration of the German A-14 missile the following year led to the cancellation of the HARP project and its merger with the French and Italian programmes. Artillery projectile technology still filled a useful niche however, and since 1968 Bull's creations have been used to launch a range of communications and observation satellites into orbit.

**Muammar al-Gaddafi** awaits execution in an Italian jail in the Fezzani city of Murzuk, having been captured in a bungled sabotage operation on nearby power lines in December 1975. Born to a family of peasants in the Sirte region in 1942, the young Gaddafi was inspired by the Egyptian 'Free Officers' and adopted their creed of Arab Nationalism; he eventually secured a place in an Askari

regiment of the Italian army and by the late 1960's had become a leading figure in the clandestine Libyan nationalist movement. In 1968, the example of Algerian independence encouraged the young officer to lead an abortive mutiny of colonial troops; while the attempt was quickly crushed, Gaddafi and many of his compatriots escaped across the Algerian border and became a constant thorn in the side of the colonial administration. While periodic tensions still surface in the largely Muslim south, the capture of Gaddafi is largely felt by Italian commanders to mark the end of meaningful native resistance in the colony.

**Ernesto Guevara** is a popular Argentinean politician and former President. Having graduated as a doctor in 1953, Guevara found himself having to use his medical skills during the bloody coup that deposed Juan Perón in 1956; the experience turned him into a committed Perónist, and by 1964 he was a leading light in the Perónist Left. That year, Guevara played a significant role in the uprising that brought down Pedro Aramburu's dictatorship. In the new Perónist Government he was made Minister of Economics, a move that infuriated the right-wing of the party. After the attempted coup and the assassination of President Perón in 1967, Guevara soon found himself installed as the General's successor; he was never able to reconcile the left and right wings of the Perónist Party however and in 1970 he was himself deposed by his rival José López Rega. He currently resides in exile in Spain.

**Reinhard Heydrich** has become the grand old man of Ernst Kessler's Fourth Reich, having been in charge of the regime's security apparatus ever since his triumphant return from exile in 1973. After the end of the Austrian war in 1939, the relationship between the SS and the military

Government was a tense one; years of intriguing and jockeying for power finally came to a head in 1941 when Heydrich and Himmler launched 'Operation Valkyrie', an attempt to decapitate the Army's leadership and allow the SS to sweep to power. The putsch was a bloody failure and Heydrich was forced to flee Germany, first to Sweden and then to South America. Here he lent his expertise in the suppression of internal dissent to the various regimes in the region; in the late 1960's he also found employment in Bharatavarsha, and has been instrumental in forging closer ties between that state's regime and Germany.

**Jan Ludvik Hoch** is the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia and has been since 1975; his period in office has been brief and eventful so far, Hoch himself being investigated for political corruption and widespread bribery.

**John Fitzgerald Kennedy** is a respected Massachusetts Senator who is hoping to gain the 1976 Democratic Presidential nomination and thwart President George Romney's hopes of re-election. After a career in journalism, Kennedy was elected to the House of Representatives in 1958; he assisted his brother Joseph on his election campaign in 1964 and on his victory was rewarded with the post of Secretary of State. In his time at the State Department Kennedy assumed an internationalist position; his reluctant decision to adopt a pro-Japanese stance in the wake of the Chinese-Soviet schism of 1965 represented a historic shift in American foreign policy. In 1972 Kennedy broke with his brother over his controversial decision to seek a third term in office; while the elder Kennedy paid for his hubris with an embarrassing defeat at the polls, the younger won a seat in the Senate.

**Nikita Khrushchev** lives in quiet retirement as a pensioner in Moscow, constantly watched by agents of the MGB. After being appointed the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party in 1938 and becoming a member of the Politburo the following year, Khrushchev was seen by many as one of the rising stars of the USSR. With the outbreak of the Baltic War in the autumn of 1941 Khrushchev served as a political commissar in the Red Army; his indifferent coordination of the Soviet thrust into Galicia slowed his political rise for a time, but by the early 1950s he had regained his previous influence, and in 1952 he was placed in charge of Soviet cultural policy. On Stalin's death in 1954, Khrushchev initially supported his Ukrainian ally Stanislaw Kosior for the succession, but when he was forced to resign quickly shifted his support to Georgy Malenkov. This proved to be an unwise move; when Malenkov was forced from office by Nikolai Bulganin in 1957, Khrushchev was sidelined and appointed the head of a hydroelectric power plant in Kazakhstan.

**François Mitterrand** is the second Prime Minister of the French Fourth Republic. Having emerged from the Austrian War with decorations for his service in Styria, Mitterrand finished his studies in 1940 and spent several years as a successful lawyer in Poitiers before entering politics in 1947 as a deputy for the right-wing PSF Party. Briefly a Minister in Pierre Laval's 1951 Government, he soon clashed with the Party leadership and in 1954 he founded his own movement, the "Parti Populaire pour la Démocratie Française" (PPDF). Mitterrand was appointed Justice Minister in 1959 and oversaw the beginning of the Algerian War of Independence the following year; he briefly became Prime Minister at the head of a centre-right coalition in 1964 and 1965 and adopted a *pro-pied noir* policy, reversing Jean Monnet's attempts to negotiate with the Algerian Nationalists. Despite his stance on Algeria

Mitterrand was a fierce critic of General Salan's 1967 coup; he was also a key figure in the restoration of civilian rule the following year after the nuclear destruction of Khenchela. By now the unquestioned leader of the French constitutional Right, Mitterrand was heavily involved in the drafting of the Fourth Republic's constitution, and swept to power in 1972 following the retirement of Monnet, his longtime rival and friend.

**Lin Piao** is the ruler of the People's Republic of China. An ascetic radical and ultra-leftist, Lin had been prominent within the Red Army ever since the Long March; his successes during the long guerilla struggle with the Kuomintang and the Japanese made him a contender for the role of Chairman of the CCP after the assassination of Mao Tse Tung by the Nationalists in 1949. After the Japanese withdrawal in 1957 and the triumph of the People's Republic the following year, Lin became China's Defence Minister. As the leader of the Party's radical faction he soon clashed with Chairman Liu Shao-chi over industrialisation and agricultural policy, and after Liu vetoed the formation of agricultural communes in 1965 he launched a coup with like-minded officers of the People's Liberation Army and other radicals in the Party. Internally, Lin's efforts to restructure the Chinese economy and end the traditional divide between town and country have led to massive death through famine; abroad, Chinese sponsorship of violent anti-colonial movements have made the regime an international pariah.

**Elvis Aaron Presley** leads thousands of worshippers in song every night from his church in Memphis, Tennessee; the sermons of the 'singing vicar' are broadcast across the USA. The son of a sharecropper, Presley grew up just above the poverty line; the sudden death of his mother in 1953

made him turn to God, and he was ordained in 1956. Presley was an unconventional minister and incorporated his music into his preaching; during the late 1950s his reputation spread and soon he was greeted by massive crowds wherever he went. Although his music and style of preaching was criticised by white racists for having a heavy black influence, Presley remained aloof from politics and the civil rights movement; his 'Assembly for God' was notable in attracting both black and white worshippers however, and this led to several attempts on his life during the late 1960s.

**Anwar Sadat** lives in exile in Syria, a guest of Amin Hafiz's military regime. Graduating from the Cairo Military Academy in 1938, Sadat gradually became involved in nationalist politics; by 1955 he was a prominent member of the so-called 'Free Officers' who attempted the overthrow of the Egyptian Government. The coup attempt failed amid chaotic scenes and British retaliation; Sadat and his confederates were forced to flee, first to Turkey and then to Syria, whose Ihyaa Party had overthrown Adib Shishakli's military Government in 1961 and considered themselves ideological soul mates to the Egyptian putschists. After the overthrow of the Egyptian Monarchy in 1967, Sayyid Qutb invited Sadat back to Egypt to participate in the country's Government; the former General wisely declined, suspecting a trap, and has been active in opposing the Muslim Brotherhood's regime ever since.

**Ian Smith** is the Foreign and Defence Minister of the Rhodesian Federation. A student politician at Rhodes University in South Africa, Smith bought a farm on the completion of his studies and soon owned a considerable amount of land in Southern Rhodesia. Smith entered politics, being elected as an MP in 1953; during the decade

he became increasingly prominent, and his agitation for the Federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia during the period made him a key ally of Prime Minister Huggins. While the goal of Federation was achieved in 1962 Smith remained unhappy with the exclusion of Nyasaland from the Union; he also became increasingly concerned by what he saw as British efforts to impose Black majority rule on the Federation and in 1966 resigned as Chief Whip to become a founding member of the Rhodesia Reform Party, which aimed to prolong White rule indefinitely. Following the election of Pieter van der Byl as Prime Minister and the subsequent unilateral declaration of Rhodesian independence, Smith has played a major role in securing South African and Portuguese support for the new regime; as Defence Minister he has also provided a ruthless response to the growing guerilla problem in parts of the Federation.

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## WHAT IF THIS MAN BECAME PRIME MINISTER?

Today, Oswald Mosley is remembered as one of Britain's most unpleasant and despised political figures. Yet at the opening of his career he was a rising star of British politics. Charismatic, talented and intelligent, it seemed that that Mosley was destined for greatness. If he had not abandoned mainstream politics for his journey towards fascism, he could have reached 10 Downing St.

So what if things had turned out differently?

In "A Greater Britain" Ed Thomas charts the alternative career of a successful Oswald Mosley, who scales the heights of power in inter-war Britain, becoming one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's most influential - and divisive - figures in the process. As Mosley entrenches himself in power, befriends Benito Mussolini and reforms Britain along his own, corporatist lines, it quickly becomes apparent that world history will never be the same again...