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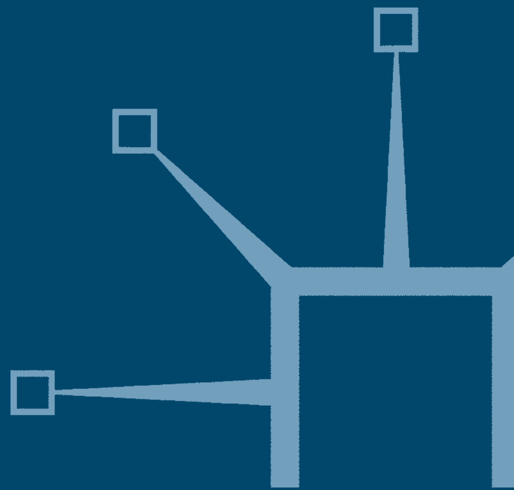
Mental Maps in the Era of Two World Wars

Edited by

Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright



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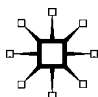

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Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright
September 2007

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Their Revolution (Oxford University Press, 1996), *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System: An Interpretation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) and *The Stalin Years: A Reader* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

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Introduction

Steven Casey and Jonathan Wright

Amongst historians, the sub-field of international history has tended to suffer by being equated with the history of diplomacy or the interaction between states. But a true international history is also the history of the interaction of societies and cultures. With the end of the Cold War, the idea that international relations could be understood mainly in terms of a balance of power has been shown up as simplistic. Instead, the importance of ideology and values in international relations is again being recognized. For the interwar period, this is even more obvious. Conflicts between states were generated not simply by the competition for territory or resources but also by worldviews – democratic, imperialist, fascist – and the fragility or stability of the political, social and economic structures of individual states and the regions of which they were part.

The multifaceted nature of a true international history makes it a daunting task. As well as drawing on national histories, it must also attempt a synthesis at a general level. But it is difficult to do both without sacrificing what is distinctive about individual cultures and complex about their interaction. One way to tackle the problem is to focus on key policy makers. Their views of the world or 'mental maps' were made up of many layers: their family backgrounds, education, political values, the domestic and external constraints within which they conceived and tried to implement their policies, sometimes the incidence of mere chance that opened or closed an opportunity. By using policy makers as a way into the study of international history it is possible to keep a sense both of the scale of the undertaking and the infinite variety of which it is composed and, at the same time, by being selective to keep the whole at manageable length.

A focus on individual statesmen raises another methodological issue: the balance between individuals and structural forces in historical explanation. At first glance, a study of leaders' 'mental maps' seems to be just another way of reviving the 'great men' approach to the study of history. But this is far from being the case. First, by uncovering the origins of different worldviews, it is possible to explore the underlying political, cultural and social environments in which various leaders

developed and rose to influence. Second, by assessing the content of these 'mental maps', it is also possible to shed light on the broader pressures at work when the leaders were confronted with a range of policy problems; after all, their 'mental maps' were in part made up of the structural forces with which they lived and with which they tried to influence. And third, although it is always important to bear in mind that beliefs do not unilaterally determine leaders choices of action, 'mental maps' are still an important intermediate variable in understanding the foreign policy of states, because, at the very least, they help explain how intelligence information is processed.[1] They also tend to be particularly important in non-routine situations, when decisions are made at the top of the government hierarchy, during crises where stress and information overload are common or in periods when the situation is confused and open to a variety of different interpretations.[2] During the turbulent interwar period, these decision contexts were particularly common.

Why 'mental maps' rather than worldviews or 'operational codes'?[3] For a start, the interwar period was a time when knowledge of political geography was becoming far more widespread. As John Keiger and Rana Mitter point out, in the nineteenth century 'Frenchmen had little sense of what geographical France represented', while the Qing dynasty and its predecessors in China 'did not have much interest in thinking of their empire as part of a wider system.' By the second and third decades of the twentieth century, however, this position was starting to change: intellectuals were pushing theories of 'geopolitics', public schools were making some inroads into ignorance of the wider world and the brute force of interdependence in the economic and security spheres was impacting on the daily lives of rural peasants and industrial workers.

More prosaically, during these years maps in the literal sense played a vitally important role in international relations. Often, conflicts between states did come down to a brutal clash over the political boundaries in the heart of Europe or Northeast Asia. Thus, while diplomats often tried to paper over such conflicts by appeasing territorial demands, general staffs analysed maps to gauge the terrain in regions where battles might be fought and propagandists used maps as an ideological tool to emphasize the centrality of their own role in the international system or to underline the threat that other countries posed to their security. As the following pages point out, these considerations were part of the 'mental maps' of the central figures of the era, men like Lenin and Stalin, Poincaré, Lloyd George, Stresemann and Briand, Atatürk,

Chiang Kaishek and Mao Zedong, Hamaguchi, Beneš, Mussolini, Hitler, Churchill and Roosevelt.

In exploring these 'mental maps', a variety of themes emerge. The first is the familiar distinction between status quo, revisionist and revolutionary figures. In Chapter 2, Sally Marks unveils Lloyd George's positions during the detailed debates at Versailles. In large part, these dealt with the complex matter of where to draw new borders in the aftermath of the collapse of the German, Austria-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empires. The wily and opportunistic British prime minister was not always on top of the subject matter – on one occasion he even admitted to never having heard of the territory of Teschen; he also had to make numerous compromises with other allied leaders, especially Clemenceau and Wilson. But Lloyd George nevertheless played an important role in the peace conferences, which in turn profoundly shaped how all subsequent leaders viewed the world: whether they were happy with the political borders that emerged in the aftermath of World War I, whether they wanted to tinker with them or whether they wanted to transform them altogether.

During the 1920s, even the major First World War allies saw problems with some of the details that emerged from the peace settlement. Although Poincaré, as John Keiger shows in Chapter 1, viewed the 'Versailles Treaty as a formal legal text that required respect', especially on reparations, the British always shied away from guaranteeing Germany's eastern frontiers. And the Americans were so disillusioned by the protracted bartering over specific territorial boundaries that they swiftly retreated from the European scene. But the biggest challenge obviously came either from countries defeated in the war or from those who felt betrayed by the territorial settlement. Even under Stresemann, Germans were never reconciled to the separation of East Prussia from the Reich by the Polish 'corridor' to the sea at Danzig or the prohibition on union with Austria. Meanwhile, in Turkey Atatürk fought to overthrow the Treaty of Sèvres. And in Italy right-wing nationalists successfully exploited the fact that the Allies had failed to deliver on their promise of Fiume.

But maps can represent more than simply political borders. A second theme is the extent to which these various leaders focused on other issues when looking at the world, not only security threats and economic factors but also race and class.[4] During the First World War, US President Woodrow Wilson gave an enormous boost to the cause of liberal internationalism. In his liberal internationalist creed, establishing legitimate state boundaries is only a prerequisite for forging a new international order. Once borders are agreed upon, it is also vital

to promote the spread of democracy and self-determination, to construct an international organization to arbitrate future political clashes and to develop a free-trade regime that can act as the central engine of prosperity.[5]

In the wake of the horrific carnage of the First World War, such thinking resonated in a number of countries. As Jonathan Wright and Julian Wright point out in Chapter 4, during the second half of the 1920s the League of Nations became an important venue for Briand's talk of a new era based around democratic politics, arbitration and renunciation of force. Others shared this vision. Leaders of small countries, such as Czechoslovakia's Beneš, made a virtue out of necessity by arguing that these small states would be at the forefront of a process that would see imperialism and war replaced by 'democratic international law'. Meanwhile, as Eri Hotta stresses in Chapter 7, under Hamaguchi, Japan briefly moved to 'rejoin the international club' by subscribing to the prevailing liberal economic orthodoxy.

For much of the interwar period, however, liberal internationalism was a creed under threat. As Chapters 11 and 12 point out, even the prominent leaders in the United Kingdom and the United States questioned some of its important elements. Indeed, Churchill was first and foremost an imperialist who liked to look at maps 'with the British Empire conspicuous in red as it was in every history text-book'. Roosevelt, for his part, was a 'renegade' Wilsonian who made some important hard-headed modifications to liberal goals like self-determination, disarmament and collective security. But it was in Germany and Japan where support for liberalism was most fleeting. Stresemann, although he worked with Briand in the late 1920s and saw the virtues of economic integration, always faced important domestic opposition to a policy of co-operation. Hamaguchi, although he pushed for naval arms control as well as economic reform, was struck down by an assassin's bullet after only 650 days in office. In both countries, as the ravaging effects of the Great Depression took hold, liberalism was replaced by more brutal philosophies. By the 1930s, autarchy supplanted free trade. Direct territorial control was deemed necessary to exploit resources. And war was viewed as a legitimate – even desirable – means to achieve such objectives. As Neil Gregor demonstrates in Chapter 10, Hitler gave the most brutal expression to such ideas. As well as the Führer's well-known determination to conquer living space and racially 'purify' areas under German control, Gregor also stresses his violent mentality: his constant use of words like 'destruction' and 'eradication', which formed such an important component of the Nazi creed.

In crucial respects, Hitler's thinking was backward looking. Not only did he openly champion direct territorial conquest, which was so at odds with liberal internationalism, but on occasion he even talked longingly of creating a German empire whose scope was similar to that of the Middle Ages. In this sense, Nazism was very different from those 'mental maps' that stressed the need to modernize. The Soviet ideology analyzed by Christopher Read is an obvious case in point. 'The Soviet state', a leading historian of the Cold War has recently pointed out, 'was founded on ideas and plans for the betterment of humanity, rather than on concepts of identity and nation'.[6] In the interwar period, one of the major dilemmas for Soviet leaders was to decide whether to focus on modernizing at home – Stalin's 'Socialism in One Country' – or to push their global vision to its extreme by fostering revolutions abroad.

Elsewhere, modernization also formed a key part of leaders' 'mental maps'. In China, as Rana Mitter points out, the conflict between the two leading figures, Mao and Chiang, was based on deep-seated differences that would ultimately result in civil war. But on one point they agreed. Both men were modernizers who saw industrialization as the key to establishing China's rightful position in the international community. Their main clash, Mitter argues, was 'emotional'. Chiang, grudgingly supported by allies who provided only relatively small amounts of aid during the Second World War, viewed the outside world as a hostile place. Mao, convinced of the certainties of the Leninist creed, believed the war provided major opportunities for external revolutionary advancement.

A third theme is the variable scales of the various 'mental maps'. All leaders tend to place their own countries at the heart of their personal map. This was obviously the case with intense nationalists like Mussolini and Hitler. It was also true of liberal internationalists, whose ideals often had to be reconciled with hard-headed security concerns. But it was leaders of countries whose geographic boundaries were in flux where this inward focus took on an additional dimension. As Clive Foss demonstrates in Chapter 5, Atatürk consistently clung to a new map of the Near East, which meant doggedly fighting to protect a smaller Turkish homeland. He also embarked on an ambitious intellectual project to instil a sense of national pride by attempting to establish the key role that Turks had played in developing Western civilization.

Other leaders in smaller, newer or fragile nation-states also had a more restricted field of vision. As Richard Crampton shows in Chapter 8, Beneš was a case in point. Although he often thought in sweeping terms, convinced that scientific advances were creating a new order based on 'individualism and constitutionalism', he was also preoccupied with

a very practical problem: Czechoslovakia's perilous position, perched between Germany and the Soviet Union. And his mental map inevitably dwelt heavily on this dangerous dilemma.

In stark contrast, some politicians sought to act on a global canvas, articulating a vision for a whole continent or beyond. This was particularly true of the war leaders who had troops fighting in both Europe and Asia between 1941 and 1945. The impressive new map rooms that were constructed in the Number Ten Annexe in London or the White House in Washington were designed first and foremost to keep Churchill and Roosevelt informed about the day-to-day fluctuations on far-flung battlefields.

The global scope of some leaders' 'mental map' had another dimension too: a faith in the broader applicability of their nation's ideas. Soviet leaders were not the only ones convinced that they knew the best path to the future. Americans shared this confidence, albeit for very different reasons. As Steven Casey demonstrates in Chapter 12, although FDR added some hard-headed qualifications to liberal internationalism, he was generally convinced that democracy and free trade had universal appeal and relevance. During the war years, he even hoped that America's efforts to act as a 'Good Neighbour' in its own hemisphere would be copied by other great powers, who would see the wisdom of non-intervention, co-operation and consultation.

Fourthly, there is the 'projection' of these different mental maps. Just as maps of the world, because they are generally rectangular two-dimensional representations of the globe, distort the size of different regions, so when individuals contemplate the world they have their own ways of exaggerating the importance of certain regions and minimizing the significance of others.[7]

Alan Henrikson has coined the phrase 'visuo-geographical salient'. This refers to areas of the world that 'capture the eye and imagination' of a policy maker.[8] For leaders like Churchill and FDR – men who, as Geoffrey Best and Steven Casey point out, 'loved maps' and frequently analysed them – certain areas often jumped out. For Churchill, it was the Ljubljana Gap and the northern tip of Sumatra that dominated many hours of his thinking in 1943, for he was convinced that both areas held the key to important military victories that would, in the first case, liberate a large portion of central Europe and, in the second, help recover Burma and Singapore from the Japanese. For Roosevelt, it was the 'bulge' of northwest Africa, which was the narrowest point across the Atlantic and thus America's most vulnerable spot in an age when air power was rapidly diminishing distances.

On the other hand, all leaders have their blind spots – regions that they care little about or simply fail to understand properly.[9] Sometimes this is merely ignorance of detail: Lloyd George's less than perfect knowledge about Central Europe or FDR's lack of understanding of the history of Sakhalin and the Kurils. On other occasions, however, it goes far deeper. In Chapter 9, Alan Cassels details Mussolini's 'lazy thinking', his 'fondness for glittering but glib generalizations' and 'his trust in the terrible simplifications of Social Darwinism'. In terms of economic resources and combat strength, Italy was clearly unprepared for war with Britain and France in 1939–1940. But Mussolini's conviction that 'virile' fascist nations were on the rise whereas the 'effete' democracies were crippled by materialism and pacifism encouraged him into the disastrous decision to enter the war in 1940. A year later, Hitler's fatal underestimation of first Soviet and then US strength plunged Germany into war with the world's two emerging superpowers.

By approaching the interwar period in this way, the following pages will thus place the mindsets of leaders in sharper context. Of course, most of them were highly practical politicians, whose daily tactics fluctuated with their assessment of what was feasible. To understand their foreign policies it is necessary to look at more than just their underlying assumptions. Yet the contexts within which they worked – volatile domestic opinion, bureaucratic politics, shifts in the external environment – did not prevent them from pursuing longer term aims. And clearly these were leaders who *did* matter.

Writing his classic book on leadership in the 1970s, James MacGregor Burns lamented the absence of major figures in contemporary politics, which, he observed, marked a clear contrast to the interwar period. Back then, Burns believed, 'titans' such as Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini had dominated international relations. 'These giants strode across our cultural and political horizons', he observed. 'We – followers everywhere – loved or loathed them. We marched for them or fought against them. We died for them and we killed some of them. We could not ignore them.'[10]

True, even during this era of 'titans', some politicians were enigmatic and chameleon-like figures, with a well-earned reputation for trimming their policies to the prevailing political winds. But even the most complex, subtle or unstable of them had a number of key assumptions about what was important in the world, which in turn influenced their calculations at critical points. The following pages will uncover these assumptions.

Notes

1. S. Smith, 'Belief Systems and the Study of International Relations', in R. Little and S. Smith, eds, *Belief Systems and International Relations* (Oxford, 1988), 32–3.
2. O. Holsti, 'Foreign Policy Viewed Cognitively', in R.M. Axelrod, ed., *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites* (Princeton, 1976), 29–31; Y.F. Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, 1992).
3. The term was first coined by A.K. Henrikson, 'The Geographical "Mental Maps" of American Foreign Policy Makers', *International Political Science Review*, 4 (1980), 495–528. For a discussion of the concept of 'operational codes', see A.L. George, 'The "Operational Code": A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making', *International Studies Quarterly*, 13 (1969), 190–222.
4. For an interesting discussion, see M. Walker, 'Variable Geography: America's Mental Maps of Greater Europe', *International Affairs*, 76 (2000), 466–9.
5. The best summaries of Wilson's thought can be found in A.S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War and Peace* (Arlingon, Ill., 1979) and T.J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton, 1992).
6. O.A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, 2006), 39.
7. For a useful discussion, see J. Black, *Maps and Politics* (London, 1997), 29–38.
8. Henrikson, 'Geographical "Mental Maps" ', 514, 525.
9. Z. Steiner, 'On Writing International History: Chaps, Maps and Much More', *International Affairs*, 14 (1990), 538.
10. J.M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York, 1978), 1.

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1
Raymond Poincaré

John Keiger

An individual's mental map of the modern world is as conditioned by their state as by their own particular upbringing, social and educational background and personal circumstances. Raymond Poincaré was born at Bar-le-Duc in Lorraine in north-eastern France on 20 August 1860 and died in Paris on 16 October 1934. His political career ran from the 1880s to the 1930s in one of the most formative periods of modern French history coinciding with the bedding in and maturing of the Third Republic. For most of that period, he held the principal offices of state repeatedly from foreign and finance minister (four times a minister) to prime minister (four times) and president of the republic and was out of government for only a few years. He played crucial roles in organising France's foreign and defence posture in the two years prior to the First World War, as well as the final decision to engage France in that conflict, the organisation of the war effort, the subsequent peace settlement, the reparations question, French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and the reorganisation of French finances and the stabilisation of the currency from 1926 to 1928. These were all critical exercises for France, Europe and, increasingly, the world. In all these actions, Poincaré's decision-making was informed by a mixture of overt and 'unspoken assumptions' about France's geopolitical position and interests that conditioned his freedom to choose.

This chapter analyses and evaluates Poincaré's mental map through a series of narrowing concentric circles beginning with the conceptual underpinnings of how, during the Third Republic, the French perceived time, space and France, then how a Frenchman such as Poincaré would have perceived the world. This will take us to the empirical underpinnings of Poincaré's world view and finally to how his mental map influenced his policy and decision-taking principally in relation to Germany.

The French, geography and history

Any understanding of Poincaré's mental map must begin with how a French citizen of this time perceived France's geography and its relationship to the wider world. Even in the nineteenth century, despite the loss of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany in 1871, France had the largest land mass in Europe, second only to Russia, approximately the same size as Germany and almost twice the size of Great Britain. This could be an advantage in terms of natural resources or when connected to an expanding population, which France no longer had after the mid-nineteenth century. But it could also be a disadvantage. For the historian Fernand Braudel, France was a victim of the immensity and diversity of its territory. This delayed its development of a unified national economy and the need to engage in international exchange in the way that smaller states such as the Netherlands and Britain did. Consequently, its largely immobile rural population was more inward-looking and locally focussed. Many Frenchmen had little sense of what geographical France represented. It was not until the introduction of free compulsory schooling in the 1880s that the French were made aware of the shape of the French state; before that time maps of France were rare.

However, with compulsory schooling the French more than compensated for their imprecise conception of France's geography. Indeed it could be argued that they developed a greater sense of their own geography and history than most other developed societies, precisely because those two disciplines were so politically important in the establishment of the French Republic. This is particularly important because history – one of the disciplines most consciously used to create a (republican) national identity in the late nineteenth century – has in modern times always been taught in conjunction with geography. One could not, and cannot today, study history in secondary schools or universities in France without geography.[1] Ever since the nineteenth century, French historians have emphasised the essential link between history and geography. Jules Michelet (1798–1874) in the preface to his *Histoire de France* (1869), the school textbook on which Poincaré would have been brought up, wrote, 'Without a geographical basis, the people, the historical actor, seems to walk in the air as in those Chinese paintings where the ground is missing.' He also wrote: 'History is all geographical.' The French geographer Elysée Reclus (1830–1905), in his *L'Homme et la terre (Man and the Earth)*, reminds us that geography is nothing more than spatial history, just as history is chronological geography and that 'each

state is a piece of land and of humanity'.[2] His brother, Onésime Reclus (1837–1916), also a geographer of considerable reputation and an exponent of French colonialism, was the inventor of the term *francophonie* in the 1880s, which allowed the map of France to be extended to wherever the French language was spoken. By 1881 French geographical societies had 9500 members with a particular passion for the exploits of French colonial explorers.[3] Poincaré shared the belief in France's imperial mission and in the French language as the cement of both metropolitan France and the empire. Another famous geographer of the Third Republic, Vidal de la Blache (1845–1918), whose maps adorned the walls of every French classroom was the inventor of 'general geography', which described all lands as belonging to a 'type'. The title of his *Historical and Geographical Atlas* of 1894 said it all. He noted lyrically in 1903, 'French soil, it too, is an historical personality. It acts by the pressure it exerts on habits, by the resources it puts at our disposal during our distress; it regulates the oscillations of our history.'[4] Ernest Lavisse's *Portrait of the Geography of France*, which was published in 1903 as the introduction to his multi-volume history of France, also tellingly devoted 180 pages to the Paris region because that was where 'national history essentially took place'.[5] The marriage between geography and history was established. The teaching of it was seen as part of moral and civic education, with good pupils able to draw freehand a complete map of France, divided into departments, with the names of all the sub-prefectures. Patriotism was advanced by the lessons, particularly as most history and geography teaching was confined to France, taught by rote and was handed down from the ministry of education, which was conscious of its republican mission.[6] As such *histoire-géo* altered French self-consciousness and confirmed the national identity.

The consequence of this immersion in the importance of geography, and especially French geography, was that the average French schoolchild and citizen had a greater spatial awareness of France than perhaps the nationals of other great powers and a better understanding of France's relationship to her near neighbours. Paradoxically, France never had her great theoretician of geopolitics like the British school of Mackinder, the German school of Haushofer or the American school of Spykman, yet for the French, in many ways, geopolitics was so natural as to be a platitude. Napoleon had affirmed well before the invention in 1916 of the term *geopolitics* that 'The policy of a state is in its geography'.[7] Closer to Poincaré's time, the most famous revelation of a French statesman's mental map was to be found with General de Gaulle. Born only 30 years after Poincaré, he elegantly remarked, 'As the sight of a portrait

suggests to the observer the impression of a destiny, so the map of France reveals our fortunes.'[8] What then was the nature of Poincaré's mental map?

Like most middle-class, well-educated French children, Poincaré was brought up on the strict French textbook diet of geo-historical analysis and reasoning inspired by the writings of Michelet and the French geographical school and, consciously or not, would have been powerfully influenced by them. This together with his social background, upbringing in Lorraine in eastern France, higher education in law and literature, foreign travel and political life contributed to the development of his mental map.

A clue to Poincaré's mental map can be found in his writings about France and patriotism in his 1910 pamphlet entitled *L'Idée de patrie*.[9] This was written after he had held office as education and finance minister in moderate republican administrations, but two years before he was to have responsibility for foreign affairs as head of government and foreign minister. Conscious of the historically divisive tendencies within France, geographically, politically and socially, he believed that patriotism could provide the social cement to unite the French. *La patrie* was a central tenet of republican thinking under the Third Republic. For moderate republicans it was a celebration of the messianic, but benevolent nationalism of the French Revolution and the 'civilising mission'. Poincaré attacked 'our antipatriots', pacifists, internationalists and extreme socialists who would only fight for the class struggle.[10] Patriotism was an important arm in that great republican goal of national unity and for Poincaré a means of drawing together Left and Right. Joan of Arc, who originated from his native Lorraine, was seen as a patriotic symbol in the late 1890s, especially for Poincaré: 'Joan can unite all the French people through all the fundamental values of patriotism, above party considerations, because she represents the passionate desire for the independence and greatness of the nation.'[11]

In 1912 Poincaré published an elementary school textbook on civic duties, *Ce que demande la cité*. Here his definition of patriotism was clearly inspired by the historians Michelet and Ernest Renan and the French republican geographers, for whom time and place, history and geography were so naturally linked:

> France is the country where you were born, where you grew up, where your relations lived, where your ancestors died. These are all memories which can be summarised in that beautiful word of *la patrie*.

> Patriotism does not contradict our duty to humanity; on the contrary it is a necessary condition of it. The best way to love mankind is first of all to love that portion of humanity which is near to us, which surrounds us and which we know best. Instead of scattering our affections and wasting our energies let us concentrate and use them productively in that corner of soil where nature rooted us.[12]

And he went on, 'It is not simply our land, it is also our national soul, that is to say our common hopes or sadness, our glories and our tribulations, our literature and arts, our scientific discoveries, all of the attendant ideas and feelings evoked in us by the name of France.'[13] This patriotism was quite unlike the xenophobic nationalism of this time associated with the radical right. It was a form of social bonding that celebrated France's strengths without decrying the virtues of other nations.

France was therefore Poincaré's geopolitical window onto the wider world: from centre to periphery. France framed his vision of how that world was and how it should be countenanced. For him patriotism was a humanising concept: 'The idea of the family helps us to conceive of the idea of *la patrie*; the idea of *la patrie* helps us to conceive of the idea of humanity.' Though not very different from the views of most moderate Republicans, this was the lens for looking at what Fernand Braudel later called 'France beyond France' – France and the world. What then were the more empirical underpinnings of Poincaré's mental map?

Empirical underpinnings

In his own lifetime Poincaré was the victim of a certain geographical determinism. His geographical family origins in Lorraine were both a help and hindrance. The stereotypical character traits associated with a crude geographical determinism applied to that north-eastern region have been attributed to Poincaré-the-Lorrainer. For admirers, robust Lorraine characteristics of order, steadfastness and resolve destined him for high office; for critics, a native coldness instilled by the harsh climate of the Eastern marches rendered him calculating and heartless. Even the uneffusive republican centre prime minister at the turn of the century, René Waldeck-Rousseau, was said to have remarked of him that 'He has a stone for a heart'.[14] More specifically, admirers have seen in his Lorraine origins a guarantee of patriotism following the German annexation of Alsace and much of Lorraine in 1871, when he was ten years old. For his enemies, in France and abroad, the amputation of much of his homeland ingrained in him a rabid anti-Germanism, a ceaseless longing

for 'revanche', an intemperate desire to restore the 'lost provinces' to France by any means, even war. Myth and counter-myth have drawn on his geographical and social origins for fuel, mining deeply differing preconceived perceptions of the man, when in reality those formative years were far more ambiguous. At the time of his investiture to the *Académie Française* in 1909, the historian Ernest Lavisse said of him, 'You have sometimes been reproached for a certain coldness. It is true that being born on the banks of the Meuse, a river which flows not into the Mediterranean, nor the Gulf of Gascony, but into the North Sea, your words do not precede your thoughts and you wait until you are moved before becoming emotional.'[15] Poincaré himself was willing to indulge this geographical determinism when describing the dominant 'Lorraine character traits': 'We lack imagination, spontaneity, lazy grace. We patiently till our soil before sowing. We study our affairs laboriously before resolving them.' Or 'Nor do we favour grand gestures too much or sonorous phrases. We neither vent our emotions in speeches, nor do we spill them out across the dinner table after a copious banquet.' And he continued, 'if occasionally it so happens that a Lorrainer pushes his reserve to the point of apparent coldness . . . he has a loyal heart, an upright mind, a tenacious will. He is patient and never gives in.'[16] Yet despite this strong identification with Lorraine and the Meuse locality, it did not signal any regionalist yearnings. From early adulthood, he displayed the Jacobinist centralising tendencies of republicans, such as his father. Sentimentally he might be a Lorrainer, but he soon proved to be a 'Parisian Lorrainer', for whom national unity took precedence over all local affiliations.

For Poincaré, and his generation, Lorraine was not a region of France like any other; it was the mutilated remnant of the Frankfurt Treaty. Certainly as a ten-year-old boy in Western Lorraine, he experienced first hand the invading Prussian armies during the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. He was forced to flee the family home to a series of hotels in Dieppe and then Belgium with his mother and brother for two and a half months, leaving his father in the family home in Bar-le-Duc. When he returned, he had to live under German occupation for three years until France had paid to Berlin the 5 billion gold francs imposed at the Frankfurt peace settlement. During that time, his region was administered by a German 'gouvernement général' headquartered in Nancy. But its policy was to show goodwill to the local population. Thus local German troops were not always perceived negatively.[17] Poincaré's contemporary diaries, which he wrote every day throughout his life, reflect this muted attitude to German occupation. They show that his own

bedroom was billeted by a Prussian officer, but that there was little animosity towards the occupier: 'Today we had the very pleasurable visit of six soldiers who had come to be billeted.'[18] However, the reaction of the local population to the German occupiers was only muted until mid-December 1870. With one-third of French territory occupied by Prussians, hostility to Germany soon grew, especially in 'French' Lorraine where he lived, reinforcing France's national sentiment and cementing the new Republic whose very existence from the outset was built on hostility to Germany. A fundamental shift in the perception of Germans quickly took place which the Third Republic would strengthen and codify. This transformation was reflected in Poincaré's personal diaries for the period, which he rewrote in 1874 to make them more anti-German.

The German geographer Friedrich Ratzel writing in 1897 remarked that a state's history is always 'a part of the history of neighbouring states'.[19] For a man of the frontier such as Poincaré, Germany was part of his history. Quite naturally for someone living close to the Franco-German border he took an interest in Germany. He did so because of the recent Franco-Prussian war, but also despite it. His relationship with Germany was ambivalent, thereby mirroring Franco-German relations themselves. Borrowing from the geographical determinism and symbolism that was current at this time one can conclude that the river Meuse was the link between the Rhine and the Seine. Like the future French foreign minister and Lorrainer Robert Schuman, architect of the European community and Franco-German rapprochement, Poincaré was conscious of the need to work with Germany more than many French politicians. From 1871 Poincaré learnt German. In his diaries (the rewritten version), he confessed his motivation with typical schoolboy heroics: 'because if ever . . . and I hope so . . . I go to fight in Prussia . . . do not worry I will not get myself killed. If ever, say I, I fight the Germans in their country, I must be able to say to them, "You are my prisoner!" .'[20] Naturally there was more to it than that, and Poincaré continued to learn German in secondary school, corresponding with his French friends from boarding school in both German and Latin. He knew German history well. He also took great pleasure in tourist trips to German cities, even the legendary spa town of Ems, so closely linked to the genesis of the Franco-Prussian War. Yet his knowledge of Germany never extended, at any point in his lifetime, to having German friends; it was a clinical relationship based more on convenience than sentiment.

It is true that Poincaré was fiercely proud of his native Lorraine and his family's longstanding Lorraine origins and never shied from saying so at every conceivable moment and proving it with his active membership of the *Association des Lorrains de Paris*, of which he was since 1902 a founding member, and whose active President he became.[21] Even though he was a Parisian Lorrainer, the umbilical link to his homeland was never cut. He was a local councillor, then *député* and senator for his homeland throughout his political life. In 1908, he had built for himself and his wife a comfortable house, the *Clos*, in the small village of Sampigny in the Meuse using a local architect, local materials and Lorraine furnishings and was a regular visitor at weekends and holidays throughout his life, ending his days there. Thus he remained a man of the Eastern frontier, with a profound sensitivity to its outlook and proximity to its large German neighbour.

Although his lifelong experiences of Lorraine at war had a profound impact on him, too much has been made of this as somehow instilling in him a pathological desire for *revanche*. Of course, like most French citizens, he wanted the return of the 'lost provinces', but not by war. He knew from harsh first-hand geographical experience that any future war with Germany would have his native Lorraine as the battleground with devastating consequences. As with many other French people, the bitter memory of the Franco-Prussian war subsided. In 1874 he was already writing that 'France, everyone knows, imprudently declared war on Germany', testifying to his Republican sympathies.[22] But the fundamental ambivalence towards Germany, and how to deal with her, remained. In 1878 he explained in a speech that the time for recriminations with Germany was over: 'It was not that we fear war, we hate it. But our love of peace . . . should not seem to anyone to be marked by weakness.'[23] He wanted neither chauvinism nor submission. In 1910 he expressed his sorrow for the French living in the 'lost provinces': 'Unfortunately, we could not give them the slightest glimmer of hope. Nobody was forgetting them, but we so disapproved of the idea of a war that we kept silent in order not to give them a pretext.'[24] In 1911, following the settlement of the Moroccan crisis between France and Germany, though an opponent of the Caillaux government, he refused to subscribe to the views of other Lorraine parliamentarians who denounced the compromise with Berlin. By 1912, now in office, he was praising France's leader in the Franco-Prussian War, Adolphe Thiers, for having denounced the folly of war before it began.[25] Only a few months after his election as President of the Republic during an official visit to his native Bar-le-Duc on his birthday, 20 August 1913, he clearly pointed

out the commitment of this geographical area and its population to peace:

> Nowhere, as much as in our Eastern provinces, have the centuries taught the population the horrors of war and the benefits of peace; nowhere, has patriotism learnt so directly the harsh lesson of things. (...) There is no-one who is not ready to make all sacrifices to maintain France's great power status and the control of her actions in the world. Fed by robust farm workers and valiant soldiers, Lorraine abounds in measured spirits and in well tempered souls.[26]

As someone who had carried out his military service from 1879 to 1880 in the 26th infantry regiment of the *chasseurs à pied* at Nancy in Lorraine and who had scrupulously performed his subsequent reserve officer training on the Vosges or in Lorraine, he fully understood the military and strategic significance of his homeland. This sensitised him to all the symbolism and emotion conjured up by the 1916 German siege of Verdun and the remarkable struggle and resistance of French soldiers, in the heart of his Lorraine, with French losses calculated at the time at nearly 23,000 dead, 73,000 wounded and 53,000 lost. The dedication of a whole volume of his 11 volumes of memoirs to Verdun demonstrated the town's importance in his mental map. The final pages lay bare the emotion that the word Verdun evoked in him. More significantly still, he explained the appeal of Verdun to the enemy and the heritage dating back to Gallo-Roman times that explained why the French could not surrender a stone or blade of grass of this symbolic site. He details his six visits to Verdun from February to September 1916 as President of the Republic, where the national significance of the battle is overlaid with more personal feelings for his native region and family home, as on 1 March:

> I saw as we went by the dear home of my brother and my sister-in-law.... Nubécourt, where our soldiers are in the process of cutting down the beautiful poplars around 'Mother's grave'. Why don't they cut mine down in Courcelles-aux-Bois, or anywhere, but not these! My grand-father's statue is broken from shells which have exploded in front of my grand-parents house, which is reduced to a few rickety slabs of wall.[27]

When the battle was finally won, Poincaré visited Verdun on 13 September to decorate the town with the Légion d'Honneur and the

croix de guerre, in front of senior ministers and representatives of all the Allies. The occasion was of considerable patriotic symbolism: the heroic town that fought off the Germans where the nation spilt its blood for *la Patrie*. Poincaré's speech spelt out the destiny of the native soil: 'This name of Verdun (...) represents henceforth for neutrals and for our allies what is most wonderful, most pure, and the best in the French soul. It has become a synthetic synonym for patriotism, bravery and generosity.'[28]

From that day Verdun also became for Poincaré a metaphor for French resistance to the more political post-war German pressure on France over reparations. In November 1921, with Germany refusing to repay the sums requested and the Allies refusing to exercise pressure on Berlin, he raged, 'The hour has come to repeat to the Germans as at Verdun: No more coming through! You will go no further!'[29]

As a young man he went on trips to Savoy, Switzerland and Germany, but subsequently gained a great taste for Italy, which remained an abiding love. He made regular trips to France's 'Latin sister', to take in the art and history. He learned and spoke good Italian and eventually, in his late forties, married a French woman of Italian extraction, the love of his life and of considerable influence on him. He also travelled to Spain and in 1900 went on a cultural cruise to Palestine and Asia Minor. What is significant in his choice of destination in those early years is the absence of any account of trips to northern Europe or to the United States. He appears never to have visited Britain as a tourist (despite being able to speak tolerably good English); only in later years when, in his official capacity as premier and head of state, he became aware of Britain's role as a guarantor of French security, would he visit Britain. He did agree during the First World War to become Rector of Glasgow University, and there played upon the Auld Alliance between France and Scotland. As a man of the north he seemed drawn to the south and 'Latin' Europe.

This early passion for Italy and southern Europe displayed itself in a growing and very conscious attachment to a notion of 'Latiness' and France's cultural links with southern Europe. Ever since the establishment in 1888 of the 'Union des peuples latins', French patriots had worked to unite France with her southern neighbours. In 1902, following the signing of the Franco-Italian non-aggression agreements, the French ambassador in London, Paul Cambon, believing that this was a step to a broader 'Latin' pact had supported a Franco-Hispano-Italian union to counter German power. Although its necessity was diminished in the short term by the signing of the Entente Cordiale two years later, the

concept merely mutated. In 1912 when Poincaré became premier and foreign minister, an Anglo-Latin Exhibition was organised in London in 1912 to foster links between artists, business and commerce. During that year and subsequently as President of the Republic, Poincaré's foreign policy prioritised improved relations with Italy, Spain and Britain, symbolised by official visits to all three before war broke out in 1914. Even after the war, before the Italian fascist Mussolini's 'March on Rome' scuppered the idea of a Latin Union, in 1921 Poincaré extolled its virtues and the compatibility of Latin and English civilisations in a Belgian newspaper article.[30] In the years following the end of the First World War he appears to have switched his focus to the Latin culture across the Atlantic by writing a regular column for an Argentinian newspaper, *la Nacion*.

The affinity Poincaré displayed for closer ties with Britain was not replicated with relation to the United States, particularly after the failure of the American Senate to ratify the Anglo-American security guarantee pact with France in 1920. There is no record of him ever making a trip to the United States. As American power grew during the 1920s, he became more sceptical about her hegemonic political and cultural role in European affairs. But he was desirous of cultivating closer strategic ties with Russia (and its French-speaking court), making two official trips to France's foremost ally before the First World War in August 1912 and July 1914.

What is striking for someone who played an enormous role in foreign affairs from 1912 until the end of his political career in 1929, is how little interest he displayed in foreign policy matters during his numerous trips abroad before 1912 (other than noting on a trip to Italy that Italy was Germany's friend and was developing economically at a prodigious rate). In proto-Gaullist fashion he was conscious of the distinctiveness of France's temperament, even if that might not be to the liking of foreigners, as he explained in his short book *The Idea of Patrie*. He quoted the philosopher Schopenhauer: 'Other parts of the world have monkeys, Europe has the French', to which he remarked in existentialist mode, 'We are insulted therefore we exist'. Poincaré's geopolitical views were unsurprisingly Europe-centric, although he was a supporter of the French empire and a member of a number of colonial societies from the Comité du Levant to the Comité de l'Asie française. Within that Europe, despite his northern French origins, he was geo-culturally attracted to southern Europe and to cultural notions of 'Latiness', which explained his suspicions about Anglo-Saxon and American influence in Europe at the end of the 1920s.

How did this mental map affect Poincare's geopolitical outlook?

Despite having displayed no interest in foreign policy prior to his assuming the premiership and foreign ministry in January 1912, Poincaré had one foreign policy concept firmly in mind: the balance of power. For him the Triple Entente of France, Russia and Britain should balance the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. This was not particularly novel as a foreign policy goal, for Britain was committed to such an idea, albeit with greater flexibility in the application. But for Poincaré balance of power meant balancing German power. With punctilious legalism, he was opposed to any French ambassador attempting to win over members of the Triple Alliance to the Entente side, for fear that this could be construed as a provocative move by the opposing camp. Even after the First World War, he continued to believe in the necessity of a balance of power of sorts in Europe.

It could be said that ever since 1870 (arguably even up to the present), for most French politicians, French geopolitics has been dominated by Germany. As the experienced diplomat Harold Nicolson remarked in his book *Diplomacy*, published in 1939,

> French policy has, for the last sixty years, been governed almost exclusively by fear of her eastern neighbour and is thus more consistent than that of any Great Power. The eyes of all French diplomatists remain eternally fixed on the 'blue line of the Vosges', and their whole policy is directed towards defending themselves against the German menace. This constant preoccupation is apt to render French policy tense, rigid and inelastic.[31]

The central role of Germany

Contrary to an old myth, Poincaré's attitude to Germany was not built on outright hostility, as his Lorraine origins might have suggested. Ambivalence characterised his views of Germany. With ambivalence he, the Republican, viewed the Franco-Prussian War, recklessly started by Napoleon III, but through which Germany inflicted a harsh peace on France. Ambivalence also conditioned his early mental map of Germany, which mixed fascination for her culture and fear of her military strength, and was translated in foreign policy terms by a desire for peaceful co-existence. During the 1911 Agadir Crisis, which diplomatically pitted France against Germany over Morocco, he wrote in his memoirs, 'In all the ministries to which I belonged, whether from 1893 to 1895 or

1906, I approved the specific ententes with Germany. I never thought that loyalty to our memories dictated, in relation to our neighbours, a sort of chronic animosity and prohibited us, them as much as us, on all points of the globe from the hope of specific agreements.'[32] The desire to have a working relationship would characterise his foreign policy in the pre- and post-war periods. It was after all Poincaré who in 1914 was the first French president ever to dine at the German embassy in Paris; it was Poincaré who ratified the Franco-German treaties of 1914 on the two states' respective spheres of influence in the Ottoman Empire; it was Poincaré who was the first prime minister in the history of the Republic to receive a German foreign minister in Paris, which he did in 1928 for the Kellogg–Briand pact outlawing war as a means of settling international disputes. When attacked by a German journalist after the war for favouring *revanche*, he replied,

> He described me as being brought up by parents belonging to the French *grande bourgeoisie* and nourished on the idea of *revanche*. Well Henri Poincaré [his cousin], the great mathematician, Lucien Poincaré [his uncle], the deceased *recteur* of the Paris Academy, belonged to my simple and modest family and neither one nor the other said a word about *revanche*. As for myself, if I had spoken about it at twenty-six years old to my first Meuse voters, I would have been certain of being beaten and my political life would have ended before it had begun. From that time, our Lorraine region had suffered from war. It had been invaded in 1792 as in 1870; it had been ravaged. Its wounds had never closed. Therefore it was passionately attached to peace.[33]

As the French historian Francois Roth has written, 'This text somewhat idealised reality, but it was sincere and, on the basis of its conviction, one could not and one cannot find anything to contradict it. An in-depth examination of texts and speeches from 1887 to 1914 reveals numerous confirmations and carries away the argument.'[34] The German historian Gerd Krumeich, though a critical observer of Poincaré in domestic affairs, studied German reactions to Poincaré's policies before the war and concluded in the same vein: 'it is evident that the German anti-poincarism following the 1914–1918 war and such as it appears even today in historical works has no foundation in history. It is explained by the actions and bitter controversies after the war. . . . The simple fact that contemporary observers of Poincaré's policy before 1914 never concurred in the particularly aggressive nature of this policy is an important result of

our research.' Krumeich continues, 'it is more important to remember that German policy had seen in Poincaré, before 1914, a strong and of course blunt man who managed French policy for the good of France, and who was at the same time an active and positive factor in the European balance, even where it confronted the Reich's policy'. He concluded by asking whether 'the German government would not have hesitated more, in July 1914, about precipitating events, if the action of President Poincaré had not been in a certain way paralysed at that moment by the effects of domestic politics and if he had remained the strong man of 1912 and 1913'.[35]

Willingness to work with Germany did not exclude, however, taking precautions against her. Just as before the First World War Poincaré strived to build geostrategic alliances around Germany to act as a counter-weight to her, so in the post-war era he attempted to do the same. Because revolutionary Russia was no longer available, the value of Britain increased accordingly. But failing that he was still prepared to work with Germany when again he became premier and foreign minister between 1922 and 1924.

With anybody else, accommodation of Germany, where practicable, might have been seen as flexibility. Given Poincaré's cold personality, his legalism and belief in the sanctity of legal texts, perceptions of his German policy were very different from the reality, particularly when supplemented with a heavy dose of successful post-war German propaganda aimed at undermining Poincaré's credibility and that of the Treaty itself.[36] His willingness to work with Germany was, however, mitigated by his regard for the Versailles Treaty as a formal legal text that required respect. Germany had been found guilty, now she must pay the price. He made this plain as President of the Reparations Commission in 1920: 'However incomplete it might be, the treaty itself gives us the means to ensure its application. In order to apply its essential clauses, we are at liberty to take coercive measures. For any failure to carry out the contracted obligations, we have the right to delay the evacuation dates of the occupied territories.' Though in reality he was willing to show flexibility to Germany, the fact that he did so on occasions with a peevish bad grace did not help him win the public relations battle. 'With Germany more than with any other people, suspicion is mother of safety', he stated bluntly on 15 April 1920.[37] The fact that he did not believe it necessary to tailor what he said to the audience he was addressing did not endear him to many. But rhetoric not reality created the portrait of unfailing hostility to Germany. Poincaré's mental map of a Franco-German borderland ravaged by war, but characterised by economic exchange,

helped him more than many politicians to understand the necessity of a Franco-German working relationship.

There is clear evidence of Poincaré attempting to work with Germany when he returned to power as premier and foreign minister from 1922 to 1923.[38] But reparations remained the sticking point. He only 'backed into the Ruhr' and its occupation reluctantly in January 1923, even though the Treaty allowed it, when he believed all else had failed to get Germany to maintain her reparation payments. By the end of the Ruhr episode Poincaré had come to the conclusion that an international reparations settlement was only possible if France was to retain the support of the 'Anglo-Saxons' abroad and that of the Radical Party at home, as well as provide financial stability and some practical solution for French security. This meant working more closely with Germany. Poincaré had been steering a course between the nationalist Right's policy of coercion of Germany and the socialist Left's policy of unilateral abandonment of the Ruhr. As Jacques Seydoux, one of Poincaré and the Quai's most far-sighted senior advisors, put it on 27 December 1923, France was moving towards a 'financial reconstruction' of Europe by which it was no longer possible to deal with Germany as 'victor to vanquished'.[39] This is the view of recent historiography which has, in the words of the American historian Jon Jacobson, rescued Poincaré from 'the aggressive and vengeful role which at times has been assigned to him in German, British, and American historiography'.[40] In accepting the necessity of working more closely with Germany, Poincaré was also embarking French diplomacy on a route that his foreign minister Aristide Briand would take to Locarno. This did not escape the watchful Georges Clemenceau, who remarked tartly, 'Mr Poincaré let him get on with it', adding, 'He saw. He understood. He permitted.'[41]

Briand like Poincaré understood the weaknesses of the 1925 Locarno agreements for France.[42] Locarno may have stabilised the frontiers between Germany and its western neighbours, but Britain and Italy were the guarantors of the agreement and their guarantee was less than cast iron. That weakness inspired Briand's idea for a United States of Europe in 1929 as a means of completing Locarno and ensuring that German power was constrained. This commitment to a European security system was clear in Briand's speeches when the Locarno treaty was signed and again during the ratification debates the following year. On 26 February 1926, he asked the Chamber, 'Do you think I went without emotion to that rendezvous where I was to meet German ministers? [...] I went there, they came, and we talked European.'[43] It was clear, not least to Poincaré, that Briand was thinking of the European project as a solution to France's

security problems. Briand told a secret meeting of the Chamber's Foreign Affairs Commission on 23 February 1926 that the day would soon come when Europe would have to be a federal unit like the United States and that France's future lay in that direction.[44] Significantly, five months later, Poincaré formed his fourth cabinet on 23 July 1926 and called on Briand to become foreign minister. Had Poincaré also understood the importance of Europe as the key to French security vis-à-vis Germany?

It was during Poincaré's premiership that his foreign minister, Briand, developed the initial plan for a European Union which he set out in his speech to the League of Nations on 5 September 1929. That speech came just over a month after Poincare's was forced to resign from the premiership on health grounds. Although Briand spoke of his Plan to very few people, and did not even inform the Quai d'Orsay, Poincaré was most probably aware of it. Poincaré would probably have understood the more practical strategic advantages for France that lay behind Briand's seemingly starry-eyed vision. It was founded on the idea that an alternative means of delivering French security in Europe was to wrap Germany up in a series of political and economic agreements to reduce her freedom and ability to engage in military conflict with France, which is what Briand's plan intended. A sign of Poincaré's commitment to a more integrated Europe was made plain in November 1928. He and Briand became members of the *comité d'honneur* of the newly founded *Comité fédéral de Coopération européenne*, led by the fervent Europeanist Emile Borel, and dedicated to building a European union.[45]

As far as Franco-German relations were concerned, it was certainly during Poincaré's fourth cabinet from 1926 to 1928 that Briand pushed further détente with Germany. Germany was granted entry to the League of Nations on an equal footing with other nations, and the International Steel Entente was concluded between France, Germany, the Sarre, Belgium and Luxemburg, as a sort of proto-European Coal and Steel Community, a quarter of a century before the real thing. As Inter-Allied Military Control of Germany was brought to an end so a Franco-German commercial treaty was signed, which Jacques Bariéty has described as a substantial source of 'economic pacification of the continent'. During the general election campaign of April–May 1928, Poincaré spoke publicly of Franco-German reconciliation and an early evacuation of the Rhineland if a reparations settlement could be reached with Germany.[46] By June 1928 in personal conversations in Paris with the German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann, Poincaré was suggesting in proto-Gaullist vein a Franco-German rapprochement to protect Europe from Americanisation and Bolshevism. The idea was for France

and Germany to 'forget the past' and 'come together to work out the major European problems' posed by American financial power and Bolshevism.[47] Poincaré, it would seem, understood the importance of Europe to France's security and destiny. As the future President of the Republic, Georges Pompidou put it in the 1970s, France 'by its geography and its history is condemned to play the European card'.[48] Or as the French historian, native of the 'lost provinces', Marc Bloch remarked, 'There is no history of France, there is a history of Europe.'[49]

Conclusion

Poincaré's mental map of French geopolitics in the 1920s was in many ways little different to that prior to the First World War. Germany was key to all his strategic calculations. But his views of Germany were far more practical than he has often been credited with. As a Lorrainer, he understood better than anyone the need to preserve peace and French security. He had attempted to do that by building a system of alliances prior to the First World War that would guarantee France in the event of conflict with Germany. After the First World War he had attempted to do the same, but Russia was no longer available, the United States withdrew into its shell and Britain was unwilling to acquiesce in a treaty with France, no matter how much Poincaré and others might try through the 1920s. With increasing financial problems and unsupportive allies, he, like Millerand and Briand, was left with no alternative but to work more closely with Germany. This was not so repugnant to a Lorrainer, however great the myth to the contrary. As he explained to the Meuse councillors in 1927,

> Foreigners badly informed or resolved to distort the truth have often presented the Lorraine people as chauvinistic and less sensitive than others to the seduction of peace. That is to want to pass us off as blind or foolish. (. . .) Even before Germany's aggression, there was no region in France more anxious than this to avoid an armed conflict. You know well that in the event of a conflagration, you will be the most exposed in your person and in your possessions.[50]

Peace but also pragmatism and realism were Lorraine traits, as he explained in 1930, 'For Meusiens, the love of peace is not a vague and sentimental aspiration: it is a living idea, born of repeated invasions and the frequent sadness of war, it is a deliberate willingness,

which rests on the realities of yesterday to improve, if possible, the realities of tomorrow.'[51] That pragmatism might also extend to working with the region's closest neighbour, whose trade and commerce were already central to the region and to the French economy as a whole. As a Lorrainer, Poincaré understood more than most the need for France to work with Germany, even if it were a relationship based on convenience rather than sentiment. Given that reason and his admiration for European arts and culture, Briand's idea for a United States of Europe could seem attractive. Who knows, perhaps in his mind, he had mentally mapped a France and Latin culture dominating a United States of Europe that would be a bulwark against growing American cultural and economic hegemony. But nobody ever attributed to him the benefit of foresight . . . .

Notes

1. The subject is known familiarly as 'histoire-géo', and the body that oversees the interests of the profession is known as the 'société des historiens-géographes'.
2. All quoted in Pierre M. Gallois, *Géopolitique. Les voies de la puissance* (Paris, 1990), 73.
3. Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848–1945*, Volume II, *Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* (Oxford, 1977), 938.
4. Cited in Gallois, *Géopolitique*, 28n5.
5. Zeldin, *Intellect, Taste, Anxiety*, 36–8.
6. Ibid., 189–90.
7. Charles de Gaulle, *Vers l'armée de métier* (Paris, 1989), 19.
8. Ibid.
9. Raymond Poincaré, *L'idée de patrie* (Paris, 1910).
10. Ibid., 20–1.
11. Quoted in G. Krumeich, 'Joan of Arc between Right and Left', in Robert Tombs, ed., *Nationhood and Nationalism in France: From Boulangism to the Great War, 1889–1918* (London, 1991), 70–1.
12. Raymond Poincaré, *Ce que demande la cité* (Paris, 1912), 107.
13. Ibid.
14. Archives Nationales, Deschanel MSS, 151 AP 44, 391.
15. E. Lavisse, *Discours de réception à l'Académie française*, 9 December 1909 (Paris, 1909).
16. Metz 8 December 1918, cited in Pierre Barral, 'Raymond Poincaré et la Lorraine' in Jean Lanher et Noelle Cazin, eds, *Raymond Poincaré. Un Homme d'Etat Lorrain 1860–1934* (Bar-le-Duc, 1989), 14.
17. On the initial ambivalence of French public opinion in 1870, see S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870 La France dans la guerre* (Paris, 1989), 262–6, *passim*.
18. Cited in J.F.V. Keiger, *Raymond Poincaré* (Cambridge, 1997), 15.
19. Cited in Pierre Renouvin and Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Introduction à l'histoire des relations internationales* (Paris, 1966), 22.

20. Cited in Keiger, *Poincaré*, 16.
21. François Roth, *Raymond Poincaré* (Paris, 2000), 589.
22. ‘Manuscrits de jeunesse’, Bibliothèque de l’Ordre des Avocats, Paris, *Journal 1871* (juin-novembre) [rewritten 1874], 25 October 1871.
23. Pierre Miquel, *Poincaré* (Paris, 1961), 62.
24. Cited in Pierre Barral, ‘Poincaré et la Lorraine’, 44.
25. Poincaré, *Ce que demande la cité*, 47. In 1912 he signed a contract with publishers Hachette to write a biography of Thiers.
26. Gérard Canini, ‘Raymond Poincaré et Verdun’, in Lanher et Cazin, eds, *Poincaré*, 38.
27. Raymond Poincaré, *Au Service de la France. Neuf années de souvenirs, Verdun, 1916* (Paris, 1931), 94, cited in Canini, ‘Poincaré et Verdun’, 43.
28. Cited in ibid., 44.
29. Cited in Daniel Amson, *Poincaré, l’acharné de la politique* (Paris, 1997), 322.
30. ‘L’état présent des relations anglo-francaises’, *La Libre Belgique*, 29 August 1921. I am grateful to my PhD student Fabrice Serodes for drawing this information to my attention.
31. Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (London, 1939), 150.
32. Raymond Poincaré, *Au service de la France. Neuf années de souvenirs , volume I: Le lendemain d’Agadir, 1912* (Paris, 1926), 3–4.
33. Cited in Roth, *Poincaré*, 582.
34. Ibid., 582.
35. Gerd Krumeich, ‘Poincaré vu de l’Allemagne, avant et après la guerre de 1914–1918’, in Lanher et Cazin, eds, *Poincaré,* 136.
36. On German anti-Poincaré and anti-Versailles propaganda, see Keiger, *Poincaré*, 193–201. Recent historiography has tended to be more sympathetic to Poincaré and France and more critical of Germany’s ‘game-playing’. See for instance a number of chapters in M.F. Boemeke, G.D. Feldman and E. Glaser, eds, *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years* (Cambridge, 1998) notably Sally Marks, ‘Smoke and Mirrors: In Smoke-Filled Rooms and the Galerie des Glaces’, 337–90; William Keylor, ‘Versailles and International Diplomacy’, 469–505.
37. *Chroniques de Quinzaine*, Tome 1, 63, 67, cited in Amson, *Poincaré*, 313.
38. Keiger, *Poincaré*, 275–85; Marc Trachtenberg, *Reparations in World Politics: France and European Economic Diplomacy, 1916–1923* (New York, 1980), 174–5.
39. Cited in Trachtenberg, *Reparations*, 335.
40. Jon Jacobson, ‘Strategies of French Foreign Policy after World War One’, *Journal of Modern History*, 55 (1983): 83.
41. Georges Clemenceau, *Grandeurs et misères d’une victoire* (Paris, 1930), 315–16, 318.
42. For Poincaré’s support of Briand’s Locarno policy, see John Keiger, ‘Poincaré, Briand and Locarno: Continuity in French Diplomacy in the 1920s’ in Gaynor Johnson, ed., *Locarno Revisited: European Diplomacy 1920–1929* (London, 2004), 100–3.
43. Cited in Bariéty, ‘Aristide Briand: les raisons d’un oubli’, in Antoine Fleury, ed., *Le Plan Briand d’Union Fédérale Européenne* (Berne, 1998), 8.
44. Sitting of 23 February 1926, Archives de l’Assemblée nationale (Paris), Commission des Affaires étrangères, p. 105, cited in Bariéty, ‘Aristide Briand . . . ’, 8.

45. Thomas J.M. Guieu, 'Le Comité fédéral de coopération européenne: l'action méconnue d'une organisation internationale privée en faveur de l'union européenne dans les années Trente', in S. Schirmann, ed., *Organisations internationales et architectures européennes (1929–1939),* Centre de recherche 'histoire et civilisation de l'Europe occidentale', 2003, 73–91, quoted in Fabrice Serodes, 'Au delà des lieux communs sur l'anglophobie: dirigeants francais et britanniques face à l'anglophobie de Fachoda à Mers el-Kébir', PhD dissertation, Universities of Salford and Tours, 2007, 427–8.
46. See Jon Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925–1929* (Princeton, NJ, 1972), 162, 168.
47. See ibid., 194.
48. Cited in Alfred Grosser, *Affaires extérieures: La Politique de la France, 1944–1984* (Paris, 1984), 193.
49. Cited in Fernand Braudel, *L'Identité de la France, volume 1, Espace et histoire* (Paris, 1986), 14.
50. Conseil général du département de la Meuse, 2e session ordinaire de 1927 (26 September). Délibérations du Conseil, 7, cited in Michel Maigret, 'Le Président chez lui: Poincaré et la Meuse (1919–1939)', in Lanher et Cazin, eds, *Poincaré*, 55.
51. Conseil général du département de la Meuse, 2e session ordinaire de 1930 (29 September). Délibérations du Conseil, 8–9, cited in ibid., 55–6.

2

David Lloyd George

'An Infernally Clever Chap...'[1]

Sally Marks

When Prime Minister David Lloyd George told the House of Commons he had never heard of Teschen before the Paris peace conference, his audience understood that if details of the Czech–Polish border had mattered to Britain or its empire, he would have known them. Of necessity, his mental map was elastic. When a lad in a Welsh village, he had enjoyed history, geography, and military strategy. As his responsibilities expanded until he was participating in redrawing the maps of Europe, the Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East, his mental map stretched to meet his and Britain's needs.

As prime minister, Lloyd George was an anomaly. Unlike most of his Victorian predecessors and interwar successors, he was not English, nor educated at one of the great schools, nor a graduate of Oxbridge. Alone among them, his native tongue was not English. He did not speak French, nor was he Anglican. Most unusually, he was not the leader of his own Liberal party. Given his modest origins, his avoidance of society, the court, and the aristocracy is unsurprising; yet his closest political friend was Winston Churchill, born in Blenheim Palace as a potential duke of Marlborough.

John Grigg terms Lloyd George an Edwardian, aware that Britain's dominance was less assured when he reached the cabinet,[2] but in his village school he had absorbed the Victorian verities of the ruling classes. He acquired their philhellenism as well. He favoured the Dominions and believed in the Royal Navy, the Concert of Europe, the balance of power, and a free hand for Britain in Europe. Throughout his career, he was a social reformer, though even that flagged in the weary final year of power; his support of free trade was less consistent. As a Welshman, he supported underdogs such as the Boers, oppressed peoples (if white), and small nations unless they impeded British desires, as Belgium did in the

postwar period. Lloyd George began as a radical Welsh nationalist, rising through hard work and extraordinary ability. As his horizons expanded, he became a moderate centrist, a British patriot, and an imperialist, guarding trade, empire and navy, embodying those Victorian verities largely dictated by geography, economics, and tradition. As the British Empire spanned the globe, so now did his mental map.

The First World War catapulted Lloyd George into the prime ministership in December 1916, as extreme crisis required an unusual leader. Lloyd George was energetic and decisive; his predecessor, H.H. Asquith, was neither. So he replaced Asquith, who disgruntledly retained the party leadership. As Lloyd George depended on a precarious coalition of some Liberals and many Conservatives who could withdraw support at any time, his close attention to domestic politics and the press regarding diplomatic issues was necessary, if not always desirable. Throughout and especially postwar, his foreign policies were usually connected to domestic exigencies.

At once he instituted a small war cabinet, a key wartime personal staff, a cabinet secretariat under the invaluable Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey, and minutes of meetings. Then came the Imperial War Cabinet, drawing in the Dominions which had contributed so much manpower and other assets to Britain's war effort. Later came similar reforms on a broader stage, as he achieved an Allied Military Committee at Versailles and then a unified command under Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the latter both for efficiency and because his relations with British generals were rocky. He continued the existing pattern of secret treaties, both from military necessity and to divide future spoils, not always intending to fulfil what he had signed. Like Churchill in the Second World War, he was allergic to the Western Front and sought ways to win the war elsewhere, through a separate Austrian peace, Italian or Levantine campaigns, or keeping Russia in the war and luring the United States to Siberia. He was determined to win, though in the darkest days he wavered and briefly contemplated a negotiated peace.

Lloyd George wisely delayed speaking on the divisive subject of war aims, but a host of domestic and foreign issues prompted a government statement on 5 January 1918.[3] It endorsed the sanctity of treaties, self-determination, and 'some international organization' (in which Lloyd George did not believe). It called for restoring Belgian independence, return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, and an undefined independent Poland. Restoration of devastated European territories, soon to be called reparation of damage done, was claimed, as was democracy for nationalities under Austro-Hungarian rule, though any intention to break up

the Habsburg empire was denied, mainly in hope of a separate Austrian peace. Nonetheless, a murky passage implied some territorial transfer to Italy and Romania, and another indicated that Germany's colonies would not remain German. Similarly, the Ottoman Empire's non-Turkish realms should be 'separate'. Though this statement was overtaken a few days later by President Woodrow Wilson's somewhat more specific and snappier Fourteen Points, from which it did not deviate in any important way, it was significant for what it did not say.

Having dwelt on the sanctity of treaties, Lloyd George soon sought to alter one. When premier Georges Clemenceau, whom he liked, came to London after the Armistice, which Lloyd George had accepted partly to prevent further increase in American power at British expense, he sought revision of the 1916 Anglo-French Sykes–Picot agreement about the Levant. Clemenceau relinquished potentially oil-rich Mosul and abandoned an international regime in Palestine, both to Britain, retaining only Syria. He apparently thought he gained in return in this informal, unrecorded meeting half of Mosul's oil and support about the German Rhineland's future. He was as yet unaware that, once victory was in sight, Lloyd George began to shift to an anti-French stance, which intensified over time. As Britain had done in the past, he sought to revert to an independent position and disengage from the wartime alliance.

Meanwhile there was a general election to fight – with a tripled electorate – in the heated wartime atmosphere. International questions dominated the debate to a degree unknown before the war. The public's interest in events abroad had increased sharply during the war and remained high during the peace conference and the five years of spectacular international conferences which followed. As the same was true on the continent, the era of propaganda had arrived full-blown. Lloyd George was an outstanding orator and a master of spin, though during the campaign he was careful. He spoke of trying the Kaiser while others demanded to hang him; curiously, Lloyd George clung to his pledge long after Holland's refusal to surrender Wilhelm demonstrated its impracticality and the British public lost interest. Perhaps he was demonstrating willingness to enforce some part of the Versailles treaty, though not at Germany's expense. In the campaign, Lloyd George promised reparation for damage done (for Britain, mainly sinkings) to the utmost limit of German capacity; others sought the full cost of the war, and the prime minister did not explain further, so public expectations were vast. The election yielded a triumph for Lloyd George's coalition and a House of Commons of poor quality.

Public expectations of financial gain were further inflated by the December report of the Imperial War Cabinet's Committee on Reparation, which recommended Germany pay the astronomic sum of 480 milliard* gold marks in one generation. To escape a political problem, Lloyd George had appointed to this committee Lord Cunliffe, a former governor of the Bank of England, and as its chairman the intractable Prime Minister Billy Hughes of Australia. Though Lloyd George favoured a moderate sum realistically within one German generation's capacity to pay, he further postponed difficulties by appointing Hughes and Cunliffe, along with Lord Sumner, a jurist, to the peace conference Commission on Reparation; as a result, British figures were the highest of all. As Alan Sharp notes, Lloyd George was adept at devising short-range solutions leading to long-term problems.[4]

While Britons focused on the election, Wilson arrived and toured Europe, and France organized its battered capital for the coming conference, few paid much attention to events in Germany, where the era of propaganda had also arrived. As the inexperienced leaders of the new republic dealt with the military defeat of their predecessors, their land, unlike that of the victors, was unscathed and unoccupied except for the westernmost Rhineland. The sudden end of the war had surprised the victors as much as the German people, and they did almost nothing to bring defeat home to the latter. An Allied military march through Berlin might have sufficed, but the victors did not know how exhausted the German army was. The German people soon concluded that they had not lost and that the war had ended in a stalemate. Thus the 'just peace' Wilson promised meant nearly the status quo ante bellum with rather more rectifications in Germany's favour than otherwise. Some cabinet ministers knew better but, like politicians everywhere, told the public what it wanted to hear, interpreting Wilson's Fourteen Points in the fashion most generous to Germany, and soon deciding not to pay. An American colonel officially reminded his German counterpart of defeat but there were no public Allied statements as the victors prepared to devise a peace based on their military triumph.[5]

In January, Lloyd George proceeded to Paris with his small entourage (consisting primarily of Hankey, Philip Kerr, Jan Smuts of South Africa, and General Sir Henry Wilson), other British and imperial delegates, and hundreds of experts, whom he usually ignored. He functioned best when he had Hankey to organize him and Frances Stevenson, his secretary, confidante, and mistress (effectively a second wife) to cosset him. Both were there. He learned during the war that he enjoyed summitry, and he adored the peace conference, where he was in his element. As a child of

the nineteenth century, he thought leaders should establish policy and minions could deal with details.[6] He largely ignored the Foreign Office, which he held in scorn, relying on the chosen few. The elderly foreign secretary, A.J. Balfour, acquiesced, murmuring, 'A free hand for the little man.'[7] Lloyd George aimed at a lasting and self-enforcing peace as he did not want to enforce it, and reintegration of Germany and Russia in a new Concert of Europe including the United States with which he desired closer relations. In the British tradition, he wished to ensure that no power could dominate the continent, and, mistaking France's very brief military predominance in the temporary absence of any competition for real strength, he sought to limit French gains and to re-establish the classical European balance of power.

At Paris, Lloyd George was less dominant than some British contemporaries and later historians assumed,[8] but he had as much to say about the Versailles treaty as any man. His goals remained constant, but his tactics were sinuous, devious, not always honest, and zigzagged from one argument to another with a pronounced extemporaneous air. Sharing the disdain of the ruling classes for most other nations except Germany and their belief in British moral superiority, he played brilliantly to the historical galleries with rhetoric about justice, fairness, and the need for lasting peace. In fact, British spiritual leadership was no more substantial than American exceptionalism, and true peace was generally whatever he thought Britain needed.[9]

In the opening weeks of the conference, while the leaders of the great powers took each other's measure, days were devoted to hearing the claims of small powers and evenings to drafting the League of Nations Covenant. A month-long hiatus from mid-February to mid-March followed while Wilson, Lloyd George, and Vittorio Orlando of Italy went home and Clemenceau recovered from an assassin's bullet. Just before and after the hiatus, with dazzling diplomatic skill Lloyd George nailed down most of Britain's desiderata, including a favourable informal allocation of Germany's colonies, satisfactory decisions about its navy, and a voluntary German army with 12-year enlistments as he desired. That done, he joined Wilson on the pedestal where together they posed as impartial arbiters of Europe's destinies, sometimes in unison, sometimes not. Lloyd George was not impartial, nor above trickery. He contrived General Sir Herbert Plumer's famous telegram about starving German children, sent at his own request, and posed as the apostle of moderation combating an inhuman, vindictive France.[10]

Moreover, reparations were not settled, nor were Germany's borders, and on these subjects Lloyd George encountered stiff resistance. Thus

in an effort to take control, he gathered his entourage and retired for a weekend to the countryside, producing the Fontainebleau Memorandum of 25 March which marked the start of British appeasement and set the outlines of Britain's continental policy for years to come.[11] This document, despatched without consulting Balfour, the Foreign Office or other experts, sought the high moral ground of a just and lasting peace, primarily from concern that Berlin would refuse to sign or execute the treaty and fear of later German retribution or combination with Bolshevik Russia. It urged placing as few Germans (and Magyars) as possible under foreign rule, especially of Poles, whose capacity for stable self-government Lloyd George doubted. It made much of the Bolshevik menace, as seen in both overt rebellion and labour unrest. It urged disarmament of Germany followed by universal arms limitation (chiefly for reasons of British economy though presented as creating a lasting peace) and German admission to the League of Nations. Finally, it repeated his 14 March offer of an Anglo-American guarantee of France against renewed German aggression. But a few days later, in remarking that relations with the Americans were good, Lloyd George happily added, 'they are becoming more and more anti-French'.[12]

Clemenceau's reply noted obliquely that Britain's gains in terms of colonies, Germany's naval and merchant fleets, and markets would be permanent while those of continental states (including the guarantee) were often temporary, but that Lloyd George proposed concessions to Germany only at the expense of its fearful and devastated neighbours. If despair drove the eastern ones to Bolshevism, there would be no barrier to Russo-German combination. Trying to satisfy Germany at the expense of new states would not succeed for he doubted that Germany's view of a just peace was that of the Allies. Lloyd George's response, which ended the exchange, was clever, nasty, not entirely honest, and unwise.[13]

But the question of guaranteeing France to deter it from insisting on an independent Rhineland was not dead. In the end, Lloyd George had his way. Despite the centrality of the Rhineland to French security, Clemenceau abandoned its independence in favour of demilitarization and temporary occupation in order to gain an Anglo-American guarantee of France against German aggression. But in its final form, its duration was unclear, the Dominions were excluded, and after Clemenceau had conceded on the Rhineland, Lloyd George made the British guarantee contingent upon the American one. Moreover, the British Empire Delegation was told Britain would decide what constituted 'unprovoked movement of aggression' requiring action. As the United States did not

ratify the agreement, it lapsed,[14] leaving a frightened France without reassurance – which explains much about its policy.

On Germany's eastern border, Lloyd George was less successful, despite his occasional outbursts against the Poles. The final decisions were anchored in the Fourteen Points and probably constituted the least bad solution to an impossible problem. Lloyd George's efforts achieved some eventual alleviations which made little difference to his views or those of Germans. Had he succeeded in dismissing economic, transport, and strategic considerations entirely in order to incorporate as few Germans as possible in Poland at the expense of more Poles in Germany (a prospect which bothered few except Poles), the 'bleeding border' would still have bled, for in German eyes any district which was 10% German did not have an 'indisputably Polish population'[15] and so should remain in the Reich.

On the intricate, politically crucial reparations question, Lloyd George did better, at least in the short run, gaining a limitation of payments to one generation but not the postponable principal and interest he sought, foreshadowing his preference for non-payment. Reparations were intensely political for, if Germany did not contribute substantially to repair of the civilian damage done in Belgium, Poland, and the industrial heartland of northern France by the fighting, wholesale removals, and deliberate destruction just before the Armistice, Germany's economic domination would constitute victory. The key questions for the Big Four were probably division of the spoils, German capacity to pay, and how to conceal from electorates the fact that this capacity was not infinite. The treaty launched a history of misdirection, claiming an unlimited theoretical liability but a much narrower actual one. Lloyd George dubiously enlarged the British share by gaining inclusion of pensions and allowances to veterans and war widows, but he could not tame his own delegates to the Commission on Reparations, was recalled to London to face complaints that he was being too easy on Germany, and knew his public expected more than the 50 milliard gold marks most Allied experts deemed German capacity to pay within 30 years. So postponing setting the total until passions cooled and the stubborn British delegates were gone appealed to him and to Clemenceau, who faced similar problems with his public and politicians. Thus an interim payment was arranged and no total set,[16] enabling German complaints of signing a 'blank cheque'; similarly dividing the spoils was too contentious to face. But Allied haggles over most aspects of the reparations question were merely postponed.

When Germany received the draft treaty, public anger was intense. Many Germans had told themselves 'self-determination' meant no territorial loss except perhaps a few Polish districts and gaining Austria, the industrial Czech borderlands, German-speaking areas in Hungary, and the South Tyrol. This comforting vision would have assured German domination of the continent, which the Allies had fought to prevent. Reparations were deemed outrageous, despite German wartime plans to bleed Britain dry. Lloyd George took alarm at German fury and sought changes, supported by his delegation, for the public mood in Britain was shifting. He threatened not to sign the treaty nor to participate in the Rhineland occupation if he did not gain his modifications, notably a two-year limit to the occupation, to which no French leader could consent.[17] What he achieved probably improved the treaty but did not amount too much, for Clemenceau had already gone to the limit of political possibility, Wilson would not consider that he might have been unjust, and nobody (possibly including Lloyd George) wanted to reopen compromises so arduously achieved. Thus on 28 June 1919 Germany had to sign an only slightly modified treaty and embarked on 'the continuation of war by other means',[18] seeking to overturn the 1918 military verdict with British assistance. In reality, the Versailles treaty left Germany, despite truncations, as the strongest continental power, surrounded by markedly less mighty new states with substantial German minorities and an inherently weaker, exhausted France.

Negotiation of the Versailles treaty was complicated by forays demanded by Italy into awkward Balkan and Levantine topics. Lloyd George told Italian leaders they would be unwise to insist on everything promised to them by the 1915 treaty of London. They sought it all plus Fiume (Rijeka). As the other three leaders opposed cession of Fiume (the only possible port for the new Yugoslavia), when the Italians indignantly withdrew from the conference, Lloyd George convinced the rest to let Greece occupy Smyrna (Izmir in Anatolia), which Italy claimed and which contained a Greek enclave. His motives included romantic philhellenism, hatred of Turkey stemming partly from Armenian massacres, contempt for Italy, and friendship for Greece's prime minister, the enchanting Eleutherios Venizelos. Lloyd George also wished to further the latter's aspirations to a greater Greece so it could police the eastern peace settlement, which Britain could not do – and, as it turned out, neither could Greece. When the Italian delegation returned posthaste to Paris, his explanations were misleading at best. Lloyd George had created a major problem which ended bloodily and contributed to his own political demise three years later.

The other non-German issue which strained Allied relations through the spring and the summer was Syria. The problem was composed of Britain's conflicting wartime promises and Lloyd George's notion of how to resolve them. In 1915 Britain had promised a Levantine Arab kingdom (excluding part of Syria) to the Sharif Husain of Mecca. In 1916, the Sykes–Picot agreement effectively divided the area between Britain and France. In 1917 the Balfour Declaration, in whose genesis Lloyd George was involved, promised a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine, now subject to three clashing arrangements. Lloyd George was considerably more interested in a secure British base near the Suez canal and the route to India than in Zionist aspirations. After the Bolsheviks published the Sykes–Picot agreement and other secret treaties they found in Russian archives, Britain and France on 7 November 1918 issued a sweepingly vague promise of Arab emancipation and national governments, which neither intended to honour. Immediately after, Sykes–Picot had been revised to leave France Syria and give Britain Mosul and Palestine. Lloyd George decided France could have British support on the Rhineland only if it abandoned Syria, which he would use to fulfil the promise to Husain. At the peace conference, he argued that signature of Sykes–Picot meant French acceptance of the 1915 McMahon pledge to Husain on which Sykes–Picot was allegedly based (despite evident conflict of terms).[19] When the French said they had never received the McMahon correspondence and so were not bound by it, Britain could not prove otherwise.[20] Thus Lloyd George began to complain constantly of French greediness.[21] Reasons existed to question French control of Syria, but comparative imperial greed was not among them, and France clung limpet-like to Syria, one of its few territorial gains. Finally in September, an array of domestic problems, imperial crises, and foreign policy considerations, especially the damage being done to the Anglo-French entente, led Lloyd George to face reality and give way. The final terms agreed soon after differed from the 1918 London agreement only in France's smaller oil percentage.

Meanwhile, Lloyd George had left Paris upon signature of the Versailles treaty to turn to domestic and imperial problems, but returned in August for the first of the 33 additional international gatherings he attended before leaving office in October 1922. These meetings, usually with maximum press coverage, addressed implementation of the German treaty, completion of treaties with other Central Powers, the contentious Levantine problems, and then German defaults on reparations and disarmament along with growing Turkish resistance to the Treaty of Sèvres. Lloyd George's contempt for Italy and Poland did not

change; his hostility to France and Belgium only grew as their devastation was a barrier to large reparation payments to Britain. Diplomatic gossip suggested he was anti-Catholic.[22] More substantively, he feared France's army, submarine-building, and air force, the only one capable of striking Britain. At home he was more autocratic, as if the wartime emergency still existed, but relied heavily on dispensing patronage; abroad his stature increased as he soon became the only member of the peace conference's Big Four still in office, as the United States withdrew from the peace process, and as German leaders discovered he provided the speediest route to treaty revision.[23] On many issues, especially German ones, he continued to conduct British policy without reference to the Foreign Office whose new leader, Lord Curzon, fumed without effect.

To a large degree and particularly regarding Germany, Lloyd George practised the politics of nostalgia. He and the British public, like their American cousins, wanted to return to what President Warren Harding called 'normalcy' in peaceful isolation. Where possible, he wanted to revert to Britain's prewar circumstances, before war and American entry into European politics had diminished its ascendancy, and he sought to lead a revitalized Concert of Europe with free hands, as Britain had done in its prime. Without altogether abandoning France – the hereditary foe – he edged as far away as Versailles treaty clauses permitted. For domestic reasons, he wanted to restore European economies and trade quickly. He remembered Germany had been an important prewar trading partner, forgetting it had also become a worrisome competitor, and he wanted to strengthen Germany to balance France's seeming but evaporating predominance. Lloyd George knew Germany remained strong and would be stronger if Versailles treaty shackles, often temporary, could be thrown off. He tried to hasten that day, partly to diminish Berlin's desire for revenge, which he feared. His policy, which usually gave France the form and Germany the substance, amounted to gradual de facto revision of the Versailles treaty. This did not satisfy Germany, which felt entitled to dramatic renunciation and renegotiation, as its leaders said, 'around a green table on even terms'.[24]

After 1919, the key European question, encompassing most others, was whether the treaty should be enforced. For Lloyd George, who apparently assumed the treaty could be enforced only by force, which he opposed, the answer was usually no. When Germany resisted, he generally pressed for concessions. It is uncertain whether he saw the implication: should the 1918 military verdict be upheld or overturned? As France struggled to maintain key clauses affecting her security, he and other Britons saw French imperialism in Europe which Germany could block. Lloyd

George knew of French fears but never truly understood them, mistaking France's temporary predominance for genuine power. However, he emphatically wished to avoid another costly clash in Flanders field[25] and so launched a policy which eventually rendered that feasible.

Britain's policy under Lloyd George and his successors was based on a misreading of the power balance, dwelling on the surface and temporary, not on underlying strength. Lloyd George was too anti-French to notice that active treaty enforcement was unnecessary when Britain and France stood together, for Germany never defied a united Entente, resisting only when Britain afforded room for manoeuvre. Similarly, France never moved against Germany when the rest of the Entente opposed her. But Lloyd George largely ignored Belgium and Italy, often shoving them to France's side. Either backing France or lining the Entente up against her would have been more effective than his lonely course which emboldened Germany, created Anglo-French impasse, and rendered the Entente ineffectual.[26]

Britain's sharp recession and mounting unemployment in 1920 impacted on Lloyd George's policies. Demobilization accelerated to save money though troops were needed to meet crises in Ireland, India, and Egypt. At the peace conference, Lloyd George's mental map had enlarged to include Teschen but most decisions focused on Europe. Now it had to encompass the outer reaches of an uneasy empire as Britain's sway stretched beyond its resources to cope. Where Europe was concerned, he concluded that trade (which provided jobs) was more important than reparations. German leaders insisted they could pay reparations only by an export drive impacting on British industry and trade. In fact, Germany could have borrowed from its citizens, as France did after 1870; ended lavish subsidies; reformed its fiscal and monetary shambles; or taxed to the level of the victors, as the treaty required. But Lloyd George accepted their argument and, over French resistance, tried to reduce the total bill. Similarly, he met Berlin's disregard of disarmament deadlines with strong words but no action and was more receptive to plaints about the need for German economic reconstruction, though it was unscathed, than to the realities of French industrial devastation. Above all, he resisted any Franco-German economic agreement as detrimental to British exports.

In these circumstances, German resistance meant that treaty enforcement required the Allied action Lloyd George opposed.[27] He found this constant problem an irritant, often agreeing to enforcement but adding conditions rendering it virtually impossible. It was so much easier not to enforce the treaty. He convinced himself that what was easy was wise and just. His oratory stressed that Berlin should detect no crack in

the Entente, but, from mid-1920 on, he told German delegates how he had blocked action and often served as intermediary between them and France.[28] Thus he did much to abet Germany's drive towards renewed continental predominance, a pattern his successors continued throughout the decade and perhaps beyond, equally out of misjudgement of the continental power balance.

One conference after another wrestled with the reparations problem, producing steadily shrinking totals, usually with some percentage scheme tied to German exports affording a politically desirable ambiguity about amounts to be received. Allocation to the victors was decided but little else. Meanwhile, Germany paid no cash or 'kind' (chiefly coal and timber) beyond the cost of the occupation and food imports. Finally, the treaty forced decision, so in May 1921 the Allies imposed an ostensible total of 132 milliard gold marks disguising an actual total of 50 milliard gold marks, much of it to be paid in kind.[29] In mid-1921, Germany paid its first cash milliard, partly in borrowed funds. Then it pleaded poverty, causing more Allied Supreme Councils where it became increasingly difficult for the victors to reply in unison and to devise expedients to disguise the fact that Germany was paying little.

Meanwhile, Lloyd George had some partial successes, chiefly in 1921. By the end of 1919, all British forces were withdrawn from Russia despite Churchill's calls for an anti-Bolshevik crusade. Now he gained an Anglo-Russian trade agreement amounting to de facto recognition but producing little trade to ease the stricken domestic scene. A reluctant decision to abandon the expiring Anglo-Japanese alliance at Canadian–American request, leaving Pacific portions of the Empire undefended, preceded the Washington Naval Conference at the end of 1921. There an Anglo-American campaign forced France to abandon overdue plans to enlarge its navy and reduced it to humiliating parity with Italy in capital ships. Outside the Mediterranean, wartime access to its empire would depend on Britain.[30] But, to avoid a naval-building race it could not afford, Britain itself accepted parity with the United States and ruled the seas no more.

Lloyd George was not in Washington because he was coping with Ireland. He had lost all sympathy for Irish underdogs, sent in the notorious 'Black and Tans', and finally gained a treaty but little credit for a settlement nobody liked. The resulting Irish Free State was called a Dominion to save face, but it wasted no time in enlarging its autonomy. Lloyd George returned his attention to Europe, hoping to create a situation where Britain could turn away from it to deal with an increasingly recalcitrant empire, which had noted the Irish victory. Having failed to

create a kingdom in Syria for Husain's son Faisal, Britain imposed him in Iraq and his brother Abdullah in a newly created Transjordan. Both monarchies were British protectorates; Arabs knew and resented that. Egypt refused a similar arrangement; Palestine was restive, as was India. As the British army shrank further, only the Royal Air Force could maintain order in some areas as the concept of self-determination took root in the Empire. Lloyd George was largely oblivious to this trend and to the human factor, seeing these territories in the traditional Victorian way in terms of economics, communications, or strategic imperial bases bolstering Britain.

Late in 1921, Lloyd George devised a new approach to Europe. He offered French premier Aristide Briand, a fellow Celt whom he liked, a carefully limited guarantee of French soil against German aggression, subject to several conditions, including a pan-European economic conference at which Lloyd George hoped to revive trade to the point where the intractable reparations question would fade into insignificance. As he saw this pact as the precursor of another with Germany, he intended to place Britain again at the centre of the power balance.[31] He was hoping as well for a smashing diplomatic victory to restore his weakening political position. Rumours circulated with new vigour about the sale of honours by one of his private secretaries. The Conservative majority of his coalition was restive, refused the election he wanted, imposed restrictions (which he mainly ignored) on the negotiations ahead with Russia, and was starting to realize that a coalition was no longer necessary. He was tiring, though still less than 60 years old. The proposed conference and the guarantee were added to the crowded agenda, including reparations, of yet another conference at Cannes in January 1922.

There Lloyd George gained his largely undefined economic conference, but nothing else was decided before Briand's resignation after an uproar over Lloyd George's efforts to teach him golf, seen by the Paris press as symbolic of British domination of French policy, ended the conference. Lloyd George and the premier-designate, Raymond Poincaré, detested each other and reached no agreements. But while Poincaré did not attend the economic conference, he could not prevent it. Most European states, including the Soviet Union, gathered at Genoa in April.

Though he said he planned to 're-establish European peace',[32] exactly what Lloyd George expected to accomplish there has always been unclear. Some have wondered whether he sought Anglo-German co-dominion over Europe.[33] He wishfully thought Russia was moving away from Bolshevism and the troublesome question of Tsarist debts to western bondholders could be settled. He proposed a toothless

pan-European non-aggression pact to which he attached importance, though it would not induce Poincaré to concede on reparations. The French supposed he sought a mirage of pacification for electoral purposes.[34] After a week, the conference was stricken by signature of the Russo-German treaty of Rapallo; the two pariahs came together as Lloyd George had feared. Their ensuing collaboration was significant but small scale. In the short term it defeated the Genoa conference. For five more weeks Lloyd George soldiered on, summoning one and then another to his villa, but in vain. To conceal defeat, matters were referred to a later meeting at The Hague, which accomplished nothing, but Lloyd George returned home weakened. To make matters worse, the Balfour Note of 1 August urging broad cancellation of reparations and war debts, intended to embarrass the United States into war debt reduction, not only failed in its purpose but threw French plans into such disarray that an August Supreme Council on reparations had to adjourn without the slightest semblance of agreement.[35] This unheard of failure heightened the crisis coming at the end of 1922 when all temporary expedients would expire and something must be done about reparations. But after August the British cabinet was too distracted to deal with the issue.

The chief problem was Lloyd George's Turkish policy, which precipitated his fall. When the sultan was forced in 1920 to sign (but never to ratify) the severe Sèvres treaty, a startlingly nineteenth century imperialist document, a nationalist rebellion erupted under General Mustapha Kemal (later Atatürk). Over the next two years, this movement dislodged the sultan, created a secular republic, moved the capital to Ankara, and expelled Greece from Smyrna, Britain having provided only oral support, even to Venizelos. Lloyd George saw Kemal as a bandit, underestimating him and the Turkish nationalist revival, but when Kemal moved towards the straits and European Turkey late in 1922, he took alarm and decided British forces would stand and fight if need be at Chanak on the Anatolian side of the straits. He carried the cabinet for an ultimatum and war but not his French and Italian allies, who had come to terms with the Turks, nor the larger Dominions, nor the British public, nor most Conservatives. The general commanding at Chanak ignored his orders and gained an armistice,[36] but the Conservatives withdrew from the coalition, ending Lloyd George's prime ministership.

He left Downing Street in October 1922 at the age 59, never to return to any office. His six years as prime minister started well but ended weakly. Lloyd George contributed substantially to the Allied military victory in terms of energy and efficiency, the unified command and the modernized cabinet office system. At the peace conference, where he had to

devote some attention to Africa, Asia, and Dominion concerns, he began brilliantly but then was decreasingly effective regarding Germany. Thereafter, focusing on Ireland, the Middle East, and Europe, he progressively strained the Entente and contributed to Germany's drive to undo the 1918 military verdict and regain continental predominance. This was neither his intent nor in Britain's interest. His hostility to France, to whom he was yoked by the Versailles treaty he was trying to revise, became so intense that he broke with his close friend, Lord Riddell, over it.[37] A France trying to cling to Britain was not a threat, only an obstacle to German resurgence. For all his facility, Lloyd George scanted the long-term power balance. His likes and dislikes of individuals and nations distorted policy while his exclusion of the Foreign Office from his intermittent interventions in its sphere left British policy uncoordinated and himself sometimes uninformed.

Lloyd George was a small man who seemed larger than life. He dazzled, and he was a spectacular negotiator, but his dartingly erratic tactics and deviousness evoked distrust. The French disliked his duplicity as much as his policy. Undoubtedly, he was clever, but was he wise? Aside from his enthusiasm for frequent international conferences, his policy was traditional and nostalgic, but his attempt to apply the principles of the past foundered on misperceptions of the present and future. He misread Russia; wishfully underestimated Turkey and overestimated Greece; misjudged the power balance; feared a faltering France, foolishly trying to eliminate it from the Middle East; and appeased Germany in vain, wrongly but perhaps understandably thinking that gradual de facto treaty revision would satisfy it. His apparent concept of the Genoa conference was unrealistic on several counts.

The enormity of the problems was a factor, and some were insoluble, at least without American or Russian help. Lloyd George moved Germany a bit towards a new Concert of Europe, Russia very little, though he pioneered for coexistence – perhaps too soon. He fared better in Ireland and in his effort for closer relations with the United States. But for the most part, Europe defeated him. His self-image did not help. He told his Frances that he herded Supreme Councils like a sheepdog,[38] but the archives of other participants paint another picture. He also thought he manipulated German leaders when, more often than not, they were using him.

It is sometimes said that Lloyd George lacked vision or long-term goals.[39] This is not so. He knew what he wanted, and his goals, though not always realistic, were consistent unless events forced revision. But he had a fatal tendency to seize the shortest route to an immediate aim

or temporary fix which often made real solutions knottier. As a brilliant tactician, he had too many tactics and little if any strategy, especially long-term. His mental map was completely elastic in space but not in time and did not stretch to systematic projections into the future. Thus Lloyd George contributed much to the disintegration of the Versailles treaty almost from the moment it took effect and unwittingly set Britain and Europe on the path to losing the peace.

Notes

* A milliard is an American billion, a British thousand million. The gold mark existed as currency prewar but not postwar, yet it was an essential bookkeeping device since the value of paper marks fluctuated greatly. There were four gold marks to the dollar, about 20 to the pound.

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15. The wording of Point 13 of the Fourteen Points.

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3

The View from the Kremlin: Soviet Assumptions about the Capitalist World in the 1920s and 1930s

Christopher Read

For the Bolshevik mind, political maps were not of prime importance. Real history lay in the mainly class and other historical forces which had produced the nations themselves. Borders were arbitrary, nation states transient. They were, however, important from the pragmatic point of view. They had to be dealt with. The question, from a Marxist point of view, was 'How?' This, in turn, was shaped by the Bolshevik mental map, something quite different from its 'bourgeois' counterpart. The Bolshevik mind was revolutionary, scientific, internationalist, illiberal, confrontational and brimming with robust confidence. This study is devoted to discussing the origin and some consequences of this mentality.

Pre-revolutionary assumptions

It would seem obvious that the answer to the question 'What was the basis of the mental maps of Stalin and the Soviet leadership?' would be 'Marxism'. While Marxist ideas were a major component, a momentary pause to think of the variety of Marxists and Marxisms shows that we need more. For Gramsci, Marxism was largely anti-fascism. For Castro, it is a tool to fend off the United States. For Pol Pot, it was a millenarian guide to a nightmare social transformation of a dependent peasant economy. For Edward Thompson, it was a tool for analysing the origins of the English working class. In all cases the Marxist component combined with other crucial elements to form a new substance. In fact, if one believes that it is radicalization that turns someone towards Marxism, rather than Marxism that turns people to radicalism, it is the other elements that can be crucial in the formative stages. Local conditions create revolutionaries. Revolutionaries turn to Marx. This was true of most of those who became Soviet leaders in the 1920s and 1930s.

The generation born in the 1870s, which includes Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, by no means began Russia's revolutionary tradition. They grew up into an extensive web of pre-existing revolutionary cultures. On the left, the main lines of this culture had been laid down by the populists. From around 1861, when the long-hoped-for but disappointing Emancipation of the Serfs was implemented, to the assassination in 1881 of Tsar Alexander II who promoted it, populism dominated radical political thinking in Russia. It was composed of several fundamental elements. First, its moral base was a belief that the duty of the intellectual was to 'serve the people'. For the populists, the people, led by the radical intelligentsia as its 'mind, honour and conscience', were the fundamental force that would revolutionize Russia and build a future of small peasant and workshop socialism. Significantly, after the revolution the same slogan was adopted by the Communist Party to describe its own role.

The problem was, how would that revolutionary potential be realized? Here, populism developed serious differences. Initially it was believed that the masses could be persuaded into revolution, what was called 'propaganda by the word'. After a fruitless decade a few younger populists turned to bombs and assassination, 'propaganda by the deed'. Despite killing Tsar Alexander II in 1881, still no revolution appeared. It was here that Marxism made its breakthrough in Russia. In focusing on the *narod* (the people) and its customs and institutions, populism had, the new Marxists argued, made a fundamental mistake. The *narod* was rooted in the past. The future belonged to industry and to its new labouring class, the proletariat, as yet minute but destined to grow rapidly.

In addition, there were a number of pre-existing features of Russian radical thought to which Marxism gave an up-to-date form and gloss. The populist notions of revolution and duty survived the new critique. Also the holistic, almost religious, nature of revolution as an all-embracing world view was already rooted in the mind of the Russian intellectuals who formed the main cadres of all the radical strands. Revolution in Russia was also closely connected to science and Darwinism. Engels' graveside speech, eulogizing Marx as the Darwin of the social sciences, fitted well with existing Russian preoccupations. The strong conviction that Marxism was scientific remained fundamental to the generation of 1917, to the point of dogmatism in the case of Lenin, Stalin and others.

In many ways, these Russian 'peculiarities' were a response to the underlying nature of pre-revolutionary Russia. What exactly was 'the situation' of Russia which the revolutionary movements were addressing? Essentially, in a word used at the time, the overwhelming aspect was

Russia's 'backwardness' (*otstalost')*. Russia was one of the first countries to realize how badly it was 'falling behind' the West's increasing industrial wealth and power. In response, the key question of the last half-century of tsarism, 'What is to be Done?', was first formulated in 1864 by the leading economist and populist writer and long-term political prisoner, Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828–1889). This coruscating question was later echoed by people as diverse as Tolstoy and Lenin and most of the political and philosophical schools of late-tsarist Russia were responses to it.

The modernizing critics of tsarism were, however, immediately brought up abruptly against the brick wall of autocracy even if they only wanted to discuss the issues. Before 1905 there was no legal way to publish critical works, utter critical thoughts or set up institutions like political parties or trades unions. Even after 1905 it was very difficult. Obviously, this reinforced the tendency to revolution by pushing many of those working for a brighter future for Russia into illegality, conspiracy and revolution. Even the liberal party had to be formed abroad as late as 1903.

One of the important lessons the revolutionaries learned under these circumstances was that liberalism and democracy as understood around 1900 were either irrelevant or a sham. No major groups in Russia before 1900 saw the Western parliamentary system as the way forward for Russia. The autocracy hated it. The right dreamed of a slavophile utopia based on moral hierarchy and 'superior' spiritual values compared to the grubby materialism of the West. The populist left dreamed of self-governing peasant communes and worker artels. The Marxist left thought little about it until they eventually seized on Soviets as the answer to a question they had not really asked. Only a handful of liberals looked to Britain and France for inspiration. In this atmosphere, Marx's strictures about the hollowness of liberal democracy were swallowed whole. This also meant that they were ill-digested. Where Marx's critique was subtle and based in part on 'liberal' values, in Russia the ideas became much cruder.

As Marxism grew and matured in Russia itself, it increasingly came into contact with the wider international movement and its arguments and obsessions. Dominating the Second International was the debate begun in the 1890s by Eduard Bernstein, conventionally known as the revisionist controversy. This name perhaps conceals the main point. Underlying the debate was a question which, by 1900, was puzzling many Marxists. Why had the revolution not happened?

To greatly simplify the debate, two poles of argument emerged. The one championed by Bernstein was that Marx's analysis was wrong in

crucial respects. Observation of late-nineteenth-century Britain led him to conclude the opposite of Marx. Poverty was decreasing not increasing, the middle class was growing not disappearing and property ownership was expanding not contracting. His conclusion was that capitalism was evolving into socialism and a revolutionary phase was unnecessary. It was from this that the description of his movement as revisionism and, more helpfully, as evolutionary socialism, derived.

The radical wing was not content to go along with what they saw as Bernstein's cowardice, compromise and lack of resolve. The most influential injection of intellectual energy into the revolutionary wing came from the today relatively unknown and unread Austrian Marxist Rudolf Hilferding (1877–1941). It was not, Hilferding argued, weaknesses in Marx's analysis which were exposed by the failure of any revolution to materialize, rather it was the creative tendencies within capitalism to postpone its own death which provided the explanation. What is more, those tendencies had been foreseen by Marx. What were they?

The central feature was that the nature of capital itself had changed since the Marxist heyday of the 1860s. In place of individual owners of capital, great, collective pools of capital were forming. A whole new type of bank capital controlled by managers rather than the classic individual capitalist investor was dominating the market. The title of Hilferding's major work *Finanzkapital* (*Finance Capital* 1910) pointed to the new phenomenon. But that was not all. Marx had argued that the rate of profit would fall. It was not doing so. Hilferding argued that new mechanisms to give it artificial, that is non-market-based, support, notably monopolies and cartels, were coming into existence. They were strong enough to conscript states into the process of pursuing their business interests.

While these new, powerful forerunners of later international corporations might seem to be formidable foes, socialists including Lenin were quick to note that they took on elements of socialism in one important respect. The essence of socialism was control, even replacement, of market anarchy by rational decision-making. Capitalism itself, the optimists concluded, was edging away from the market towards intervention and planning not only on the part of the cartels but also of the state. This, optimistic socialists thought, made the task of revolution easier. Lenin's master work of 1917, *State and Revolution* was full of assumptions about the possibility of simply beheading capitalism by controlling the banks and using them for a controlled transition to socialism.[1]

However, optimism was not the only conclusion which could be drawn from Hilferding. The first generation of Soviet leaders were beginning to cut their political teeth in an international atmosphere of, from a

left-wing perspective, highly aggressive cutthroat capitalism of the turn of the century. The falling rate of profit, the left argued, was also being pumped up by the growing importance of exporting capital, exploiting cheap sources of raw materials and labour and setting up captive markets, a process otherwise known as the New Imperialism. European and US imperialists carved up vast areas of the globe which were either integrated directly (notably India) or indirectly (China, much of Latin America) into the economies of the metropolitan powers. One-sided wars, massacre, droughts, epidemics and famines marked their 'progress'. The theme of the 'civilizing mission' or 'the white man's burden' or even 'manifest destiny' drew a cloak of hypocrisy over the grabbing. The powers themselves teetered on the brink of major conflict with each other. The emergence right in the middle of Europe of a powerful, dissatisfied Germany, itself seeking imperial expansion, had de-stabilized the balance of power. Mutual hatred of French for Germans, Germans for British, British for just about everyone set the tone of gutter-press discourse. Capitalism, the left argued, had hit a particularly vicious and destructive level. Ever-more-powerful armaments, greater aggression and an ubiquitous racism were the key features of the new capitalism, features which, later on, blurred the distinction in Soviet eyes between the hypocrisy of liberal capitalism and the vicious peculiarities of fascism and, especially, Nazism.

But where did Russia stand in this new analysis? Of all the major European powers it was the one which least fitted the Marxist prescription for revolution. Capitalism barely had a foothold in Russia's cities let alone its vast countryside. So, in Marxist terms, what was Russia? No universally accepted answer appeared at the time or later. It had aspects of being an Empire in its vast domination of non-Russian lands and people, but in its financial dependence on Britain, France and Germany it resembled a colony. It had pools of advanced capitalist production including one of the world's largest factories – the Putilov works in St Petersburg – but also medieval remnants of communal land ownership, strip cultivation and periodic re-distribution. Culturally it was split in many ways but the elite in particular could not decide whether Russia should follow a 'Western' path of industry and democracy or its own 'slavophile' path of eschewing modern 'progress' in favour of moral superiority, traditional autocracy, orthodox Christianity and relative material impoverishment. Soviet historians finally gave up simple definitions and instead began to describe late-Tsarist Russia, rather evocatively and accurately, as 'multi-structured'. For Lenin and his generation, however, less academic and

more practical definitions were needed. After all, they had to justify supporting Marxist revolution in an environment to which it appeared to be totally unsuited.

The magical formula to square this circle, adopted widely on the Russian left, was internationalism. This meant that the Russian revolution was inseparable from the revolution in the 'advanced' countries. For Lenin it went even further. Russia might even spark off that international revolution because, in a phrase of the time, the chain of capitalism would break at its weakest link. Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution incorporated a similar motif. Russia might enjoy certain 'advantages of backwardness' making revolution a possibility. But whatever the nuances, the point remained the same. If revolution were to break out in Russia, it had to spread or die. The early Soviet leaders, including Stalin, not only believed this was so, they believed it was law-governed and inevitable that it would spread. For them, the mission of the Russian revolution was to act as catalyst for the world revolution. It was to be an event of universal significance.

Aged between 44 (Lenin) and 35 (Stalin) in 1914, the generation of future Soviet leaders had reached intellectual maturity under the influence of these forces and had used them to construct a robust set of mental maps in which they all had unshakeable confidence. As events unfolded they were plotted onto these maps which became the embodiment of certain shared assumptions and expectations according to which they interpreted the world. From their Russian experience they had derived a hatred of autocracy, a deep conviction that liberalism was a hypocritical and diversionary illusion, that law was no more than a political instrument of the rulers (a view also sanctioned by Marxism), that conspiracy and underground activity was sometimes the only way even though democracy, however defined, was preferable. Ironically, there was even a streak of Russocentricity in finding a crucial role for Russia in the world revolution. The reality of stark class polarization in Russia strengthened and shaped their absorption of the fundamental Marxist idea of class struggle which spoke directly to their observations and experience. Added to this, ideas from outside Russia, notably those of Hilferding, emphasized the viciousness of capitalism and the racist militarism of the new imperialism discreetly hidden by veils of liberal hypocrisy. Their theory valued internationalism over nationalism and last but not least promised near-inevitable victory through raised expectations of the unsustainability of capitalism with its destiny of self-generating collapse.

These features, though the individual components attracted different emphasis at different times, provided what was widely accepted in the party leadership as an incomparable analytical tool. It gave certainty to their own analyses and meant those of their opponents were incorrigibly flawed. The Bolshevik outlook was truth itself, therefore all other outlooks were, de facto, false. This was an incredibly potent set of convictions giving them massive self-confidence, even a sense of near-infallibility, with the added bonus of an inbuilt contempt for those who did not share them. The Bolsheviks were a secular Marxist variant of fundamentalism. War, revolution and civil war deepened their convictions.

Learning from events: the lessons of war and revolution 1914–1921

1914 was a year of tragedy but hardly surprise for socialists. For them there were two interlinked main events, the eventual outbreak of war in August and the simultaneous collapse of the Second Socialist International. Although the outbreak of war had dire consequences, socialists had been predicting imperialist armageddon and trying to prevent it for two decades. When it finally happened perhaps the deeper shock was the powerlessness of the left to do anything about it. Much-vaunted class solidarity blew away almost instantly. Deeply warlike sentiments penetrated the working class of all the combatants much more deeply than anti-war propaganda. It was hardly surprising that the European left split under the pressure. Initially there were 'defensists' (supporters of their national war effort for various reasons) and internationalists (who opposed the war and argued the workers of every country had no interest in it and were simply sucked in as jingoist cannon fodder). Later the split crystallized further separating Bernsteinian reformists, who hijacked the name Social Democrats, and revolutionaries many of whom later became communists. The Russian left had foreshadowed the split, having been divided, increasingly bitterly, since 1903. 1914 completed the breach beyond repair. In the eyes of the internationalists the war had torn the radical mask from the pseudo-socialist right and revealed them to be cowards and traitors. This view remained entrenched in the outlook of this generation of Bolshevik leaders.

Ideologically, Lenin was ready for war. His personal and somewhat idiosyncratic reaction was that it was a step towards revolution. It would educate the masses in the folly of following leaders in conflicts over profits in which they had no stake. The socialist slogan, Lenin proclaimed as

early as September 1914, was to ‘turn the imperialist war into a Europe-wide civil war’.[2] In other words, a war of competing capitalisms should become a class war against capitalism itself since that was the real root of the evil.

Although imperialist war had been expected, its precise nature had not been fully grasped. Even the worst predictions of the kind of slaughter it would entail paled by comparison with the barbaric reality. Emotionally and culturally, no one was prepared for the harsh savagery of a war which led untold millions to their deaths for no visible gain. The actual conduct of the war strengthened one key aspect of the Bolshevik mental map but, astonishingly, failed to modify it in what might be considered an obvious underestimation. The area that was strengthened was the incipient hatred of liberalism. Liberals had, as we have seen, appeared, at best, as hand-wringing hypocrites in the Bolshevik outlook. What better example could confirm this? Talk of democracy, constitutions and the rule of law were mocked by the bloodthirsty, acquisitive savagery revealed by the war. Behind the ideology of liberalism, Bolsheviks and others argued, lay naked, aggressive class interest. The contemptuous dismissal of ‘bourgeois democracy’ became a communist cliché, but did have real roots. Bourgeois professions of universal values and rule of law were fatally limited by attachment to class interests tied to property. Given a choice between their property and their values the majority of the bourgeoisie, it seemed, would always defend their property at no matter what cost to the war’s millions of victims. Hilferding had already revealed the inner beast. The war was a bloody confirmation of that Bolshevik axiom. Throughout the Lenin and Stalin era criticism of Soviet atrocities was seen from Moscow merely as crocodile tears from an enemy guilty of far worse and for baser motives.

However, one area in which the Bolshevik outlook, perhaps surprisingly, failed to modify itself was that of nationalism. Surely the obvious conclusion from the war was that, far from being a fragile veil thrown over the workers by the massive efforts of the ruling class, nationalism had much deeper and unanalysed levels than the Bolsheviks were aware of. But far from warning the Bolsheviks of the power of their ideological arch-rival, arguably their ultimate nemesis in the 1980s, once again the Bolshevik leaders saw the phenomenon as confirmation of their views not as a major challenge to them. The success of nationalism was attributed, quite rightly to some extent, to the powerful ideological, political and cultural hegemony exercised by capitalism. The Bolsheviks saw little reason to change the fundamentals of their view. They continued to believe, and when the revolution broke out they made it a

centrepiece of their tactics, that, once it was presented systematically, class interest would seep into the working class and nationalism and chauvinism would seem threadbare by comparison. Later they devoted greater attention to nationalism and developed some relatively successful strategies for dealing with it but the basic assumption, that it would fade away in the face of class ideology, remained as entrenched as ever.[3] Nothing persuaded the Bolsheviks that, while it might be superficially correct in the sense that capitalism did manipulate nationalism in that way, they needed a much deeper understanding of why nationalism lent itself so successfully to this type of manipulation.

The next objective on their map, after war, was revolution. Here, too, they believed they knew what to expect. In the Bolshevik view, pioneered by Lenin and passed on to his associates, the task of the revolutionary was to promote rising class consciousness and prevent it from being polluted by reformists. As the exploited class became aware of its position, so, the Bolsheviks believed, its members would turn to revolution. Reformists, now also defensists in the war, were the great danger because they would try to convince the workers they could continue to achieve their objectives in a piecemeal way and that no overall revolution was necessary or feasible. Where such a message coming directly from the capitalists would lack credibility, if it came from those who considered themselves to be friends of the workers it would sow great confusion and dilute the revolutionary message. Thus, social democrats were, in the eyes of Lenin and his allies, a more dangerous enemy than the capitalists themselves.

While most historians would argue that the emergence of the Bolsheviks as the Soviet government was, to a greater or lesser degree, dependent on happenstance, for the Bolsheviks themselves it was no such thing. Their pre-eminence, and their claim to govern, arose from the working out of the great forces of history, correctly understood only by themselves. They had come to power because the revolutionary tide had swept them there, not because the reaction to Kornilov's revolt, the enfeeblement of liberals and the self-compromising policies of the Mensheviks had created a contingent swing to Bolshevism and radicalism based on disillusion with other parties and fear of counter-revolution.

Looking back, it could be argued that they hijacked a popular revolution of peasants and workers quite distinct from the type of revolution the Bolsheviks themselves were preaching. However, no such doubts assailed them and they set about implementing their own agenda and not responding directly to the demands of the popular revolution. Their mental map created a complex relationship between themselves and the revolution they supposedly headed. As leaders, they believed they

had better knowledge of what was good for the masses than the masses themselves. The map told them world revolution was the next objective. Very few of their putative constituents had any idea of this dimension of revolution. They wanted land, work, decent wages and a forum for free expression. An active minority went along with the Bolsheviks but the contradiction persisted, arguably until the collapse of the Soviet system in 1991. Be that as it may, Lenin and the leadership had no qualms. Their revolutionary map had guided them. They had reached their goal, so the map must have been correct.

Dealing with capitalists: the legacy of intervention and the myth of 1919

The illusion of possessing a universally valid revolutionary blueprint was not the only way the first Marxist state faced the outside world. Their training and experience also led them to believe that they knew what to expect from capitalism – notably ruthless opposition and a desire to squash the alternative way of life at birth. In this they were partly correct but partly mistaken. The instinct of capitalist politicians was certainly, as one of the most formidable, Winston Churchill, put it, 'to strangle Bolshevism in its cradle'. At Versailles, émigré politicians lobbied for just such a policy to be implemented. In a sense the cold war began there. Miliukov wrote a book warning of *Bolshevism: an International Danger*.[4] Contras, in the form of White leaders and armies, were nurtured and supplied. However, no country after the devastation of war had the will and ability to fulfil shared ambitions to crush Bolshevism. Indeed, saner politicians than Churchill, his Prime Minister Lloyd George for one, realized that the political consequences of intervention could be damaging, not least because many Western troops came back from interventionist expeditions with a heightened respect for the Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks, Lenin in particular, saw such developments as purely law-governed and expected. Basing their outlook on class not nation, it was no surprise that external responses were based on what Moscow interpreted as class interests. Determined opposition from foreign elites and support from the world's masses reinforced their assumptions.

But that was not even the half of it. The survival of the Bolsheviks and their successful resistance to intervention had long-lasting consequences. At the worst point in the civil war Soviet Russia comprised only around 10% of the territory of the Russian Empire. No less than 23 bodies claimed to be governments of all or part of the disputed lands. At various points armies from Germany, Austria-Hungary, Britain,

France, Turkey, Japan and the United States had marched on formerly Russian soil. In 1920, a French-backed invasion by Poland was eventually repulsed. In addition, major internal rebellions were suppressed, notably in western Siberia, Tambov and Kronstadt which, the Bolsheviks claimed, had been manipulated by foreign enemies. Taken together, success against such apparently overwhelming odds created a legend of Bolshevik invincibility among party militants. The miracle of 1919, when the Bolsheviks began a rapid rollback of their internal and external enemies, was elevated to a myth culminating much later on, in a film called *Unforgettable 1919* which became Stalin's favourite. These immense, dramatic events had several major consequences. First, they provided a model of revolutionary energy which, later on, contrasted with the slower pace of transformation under the New Economic Policy from 1921 to 1928. Second, it gave a crude self-confidence to the militants who had driven out this horde of counter-revolutionary demons. Third, it left a legacy of linking internal dissent with manipulation by external enemies that underlay the purges and lasted until the final years of the Soviet system.

Dealing with capitalists: exploiting contradictions

Through the 1920s Soviet foreign policy assumed underlying hostility from outside but very quickly, such are the advantages of the dialectic, was able to detect ways in which capitalism's 'contradictions' could be exploited. Siding with the colonies was one strand. The road to revolution, it was proclaimed, lay through Afghanistan, India and China. While the instinct for confrontation remained deep, for both the Soviets and the bourgeois powers, it was not enough. By 1921 stability was replacing instability within most European states and in their relations with each other. Both sides remained fully committed to subverting the other, Soviet intentions being institutionalized in the Comintern. However, reality dictated that, for the time being, some form of co-existence had to be established.

Under these conditions, a developing tactic was to use conventional diplomacy to exploit the contradictions between and within the great powers themselves. Initially, of course, this took several forms. One was trade treaties. Left communists complained at the abandonment of revolutionary war, but Lenin was prepared to do deals with capitalists. His reasoning was that the contradiction between the desire to suppress Bolshevism and the need to restore their markets and industry left capitalists

vulnerable to helping out the Soviet state. Lenin graphically described his policy as one of supporting capitalists as a rope supports a hanged man.

Other exploitable openings were those between the capitalist powers themselves. Germany had become a marginalized state at Versailles and beyond. It was excluded from the Anglo-French hegemony and was, indeed, still seen, especially by France which had suffered so much at German hands, as a pariah and enemy which should be milked for reparations and kept down militarily. It was a major surprise for the outside world when Germany and Soviet Russia signed a more or less conventional form of treaty at Rapallo in 1922. Trade and military clauses brought investment and some know-how into Russia and enabled Germany to sidestep some of the Versailles treaty provisions about its armed forces.

As the 1920s unfolded, especially once Lenin was virtually sidelined from 1922 before his death in January 1924, an even tougher, harsher kind of militant became the bedrock of the party. Schooled in war, revolution and civil war; intoxicated with victory; averse to being hamstrung by theoretical 'impossibilities'; crudely self-educated; hostile to compromise with specialists in key institutions and to careerists in the party, a hardcore of activists began to emerge. In many ways, Stalin was imprinted with similar characteristics. Stalin was a much more powerful intellect than most of these new party members but he shared their ruthlessness and, especially, their deep hostility to capitalism and a deep antipathy to what they perceived as sickening liberal hypocrisy. By and large, this arose from a very different experience from the intellectuals. While the latter had been arguing in libraries and lecture rooms in Zurich, Paris, London, Berlin and elsewhere, these new militants had been fighting the day-to-day battle against one of the crudest forms of capitalism in Europe. Stalin, though he was never actually a worker, had been a labour militant in the oilfields of Baku around the turn of the century. Here, and across most of Russia's factories and mines, a viciously exploitative regime prevailed. Employment was precarious, accidents frequent, security non-existent. Living conditions were often indescribable. Drunkenness and ethnic and regional violence dominated the lives of many unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The result was the development within the party of a 'hard knocks' school whose experience made them totally impervious to liberal values. The siren song of bourgeois democracy was drowned out by direct experience. Pretty pictures of democratic government and human rights were exposed as insubstantial veils concealing vast inequalities of property and economic power which made liberal values as a whole impossible to achieve.

However, one other important school represented among the leaders of Soviet foreign policy should also be pointed out. From the early years, Lenin had realized the importance of having people to deal with the bourgeois governments who were comfortable in their presence and schooled in their ways. In this respect, certain improbable Bolsheviks, such as Georgii Chicherin and later Maxim Litvinov, were crucial. Their experience was almost the opposite of the hard knocks school. Chicherin came from an aristocratic family and was no stranger to the top hat and tails his post as Foreign Minister frequently required him to wear and in which he was frequently photographed at international conferences. Litvinov had spent considerable time in emigration, especially in Britain and was married to a middle-class English woman who, after his death in 1951, returned to live out her days on the English south coast. Moderate and equally 'civilized' party members, who had been removed from influential positions, like Anatoly Lunacharsky and Bukharin, were drafted into becoming the more 'acceptable' face of the party to the outside world when circumstances required. However, none of these figureheads exerted much real power which was drifting into the hands of Stalin and his immediate circle.

Stalin's outlook and the great powers

The public face of Soviet diplomacy in the interwar period has been the object of many studies.[5] However, in addition to the conventional face of diplomacy, in recent years, important new sources have come to light, many of them still to be studied in depth, which confirm and illuminate the mentality of the Soviet leadership and Stalin in particular. Such sources include Stalin's appointment books and a better knowledge of his annual schedule. The contents of his extensive library (the fact that he had one and was a voracious reader being in itself news to many) is now better known and studies into the annotations he made in his books has begun.[6] Many private documents which circulated among the elite are now public knowledge.[7] Perhaps the most revealing of all have been letters between Stalin and his closest associates. Here, for the first time, we have some snatches of the authentic voice in which the leadership communicated with one another.

Traditional views often assumed that public discourse of revolutionary ambition, enemies within and so on, was window dressing to conceal real, cynical, pragmatic, paranoid objectives. In fact, the new documents reveal a closer relationship between public and private discourse than seemed likely to many earlier scholars, particularly those of the

Cold War era. For them malevolence and territorial grabbing were the chief motives of Soviet policy. While Soviet policy, like that of many countries, was not free of base motives, criminal actions, pragmatic compromises and cynical manoeuvres, the underlying matrix of Soviet thought was still within the revolutionary objectives and illusions of the Lenin period. Stalin's USSR seems to have believed it was a beacon of hope to the world's workers, as indeed it was for a substantial minority.

Some of these considerations impinge crucially on their approach to foreign policy. Unfortunately, relatively few of the new sources are directed specifically to foreign policy issues but some of Stalin's letters to his associates, which first became public in the 1990s, give us a much better insight. They do show, however episodically, a consistent set of values in facing the outside world. First, Stalin had an extraordinarily detailed knowledge of the situations with which he dealt. His voracious reading meant that he had what he considered a sound basis for policy decisions. However, he appears to have read this dogmatically, fitting it into his own world view, so that it often tended simply to confirm his principles as much as illuminate events in the wider world. Second, left-wing critics notwithstanding, Stalin never wavered in seeing the Soviet Union as the leading force bringing revolution to the world and, ultimately, overthrowing capitalism. He also assumed that capitalists would use every trick in the book to undermine the USSR. Third, the tone of his private voice is not defensive, paranoid or fearful; it is massively confident, the fruit of knowing, as outlined above, that history and justice (as he understood it) were on his side, that the exploiting, land-grabbing, warmongering capitalists were ultimately doomed. In this sense, as in his internal policies, Stalin was reverting to a civil war model, based on the myth of 1919, comprising rapid social transformation and successful facing down of capitalist powers. The crucial principle of playing on capitalist 'contradictions' and setting one predatory power against another was correspondingly weakened.

A number of illustrative examples will support this view of the mentality of Stalin and his associates.[8] In the late 1920s Lenin's successors had two main issues to deal with, the crumbling Chinese revolution and the troubled relationship with the leading imperialist and capitalist power, Great Britain. Both were at crisis point in 1927 and contributed to the 'war scare' experienced in Moscow that year. In a key letter of 9 July 1927 (which Stalin curiously dated 1926) there is a very detailed analysis of why, in Stalin's view, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

Central Committee failed to promote revolution.[9] It includes a revealing definition of what they should have done:

> The CCP *was unable to use* the rich period of the bloc with the Kuomintang in order to conduct energetic work in *openly* organizing the revolution, the proletariat, the peasantry, the revolutionary military units, the revolutionizing of the army, the work of *setting the soldiers against* the generals.[10]

First of all it obviously shows Stalin's revolutionary credentials and in no way reflects a cautious 'socialism in one country' outlook. Interestingly, the pattern of revolution is an exact replica of 1917. In a way, it was more realistic than Lenin's assumptions since it stresses the importance of the military over the masses, a conclusion Lenin could never quite face. Later, in autumn 1929, Stalin proposed setting up several armed brigades of Chinese and inserting them into Manchuria to stir up the revolution.[11] He was also pleased that Litvinov had roundly 'rebuffed America and England and France rather harshly for their attempt to intervene. We couldn't have done otherwise. Let them know what the Bolsheviks are like!'[12]

If Stalin was uncompromising in his analysis of the Chinese crisis, his approach to the other major issue of the period, relations with Great Britain, shows an even greater tone of crude self-confidence. In one letter, the proposal of the Foreign Minister, Litvinov, that there should be a compromise with proposals put forward by his opposite number Arthur Henderson over restoring diplomatic relations with the British, is vehemently rejected by Stalin who wanted to play hard ball. On 21 August 1929 he wrote that: 'Litvinov is wrong. . . . To accept [Henderson's proposals] would mean losing our diplomatic gains, arming our enemies, and driving ourselves into a dead end.'[13] Stalin was even more ebullient on 29 August. Not only was the negotiation a diplomatic issue, it was also a revolutionary opportunity:

> Our position is entirely correct. . . . The point is not only to achieve recognition without getting lost along the way. The point is that our position, based on the *exposure* of the 'Labour government', is an appeal to the best elements of the working class of the whole world; our position unleashes the *proletariat's* revolutionary criticism of the 'Labour government' and helps the cause of the revolutionary education of *workers* of all nations (England above all). It helps the

> Communists of the world educate the workers in the *spirit of antireformism*. It's a crime not to use a 'God-given' occasion for this purpose; Litvinov does not see and is not interested in it.[14]

Even more extraordinary was his letter to Molotov of 9 September. In it he argues 'No haste should be displayed on the British question. Now Henderson needs a restoration of relations more than we do.'[15] He continues: 'It's not Henderson who is dangerous, since we have pushed him to the wall, but Litvinov who believes Wise and the other bastards more than the logic of things.'[16] In particular, Litvinov fails to 'Remember we are waging a struggle (negotiation with enemies is also struggle), not with England alone but with the whole capitalist world, since the Macdonald government is the *vanguard* of the *capitalist* governments in the work of "humiliating" and "bridling" the Soviet government.'[17] 'The Macdonald government', Stalin went on, '*wants to show* the whole capitalist world that it can take more from us (with the help of *gentle* methods) than Mussolini, Poincaré and Baldwin, that it can be a greater Shylock than the capitalist Shylock himself.... We really would be worthless if we couldn't manage to reply to these arrogant bastards briefly and to the point: "*You won't get a fucking thing from us*".'[18]

These crude but confident words indicate a great deal about Stalin – the certainty of the ideology; the importance of revolution and class struggle; the hostility to reformists; and the belief that excessive compromise was not necessary. Britain was the enemy-in-chief and Stalin showed no fear. As late as January 1933 he was able to write to Molotov to congratulate him on a strident speech on foreign policy given on the 23rd. 'Today I read the section on international affairs. It came out well. The confident, contemptuous tone with respect to the "great" powers, the belief in our own strength, the delicate but plain spitting into the pot of the swaggering "great powers" – very good. Let them eat it.'[19]

But these words also illustrate a key mistake of the period. There is nothing about pre-1933 Nazism in these letters, which tells its own story. Hostility to, in Stalin's terms, 'left-bourgeois' governments blinded him to the possible tactic of allying with them to prevent the rise of the extreme right in Germany. This is all the more surprising, given that, from its earliest manifestations in Italy in the early 1920s fascism had attracted considerable attention in Moscow. While they differed in many respects, Soviet interpretations of fascism shared numerous characteristics. First it was seen as a law-governed evolution of the dying capitalist system along the lines sketched out by Hilferding. It was an aggressive, predatory, racist and imperialist form of capitalism, its final

inhuman and, hopefully, self-destructive form preceding its collapse. The fact that it was seen to be dying did not mean, however, that it was deemed to be less dangerous. Rather it was seen as a wounded animal driven by pain to a last, violent, rage-driven defence of itself. Beyond that, the rising power of revolution, as it appeared from Moscow, was a key component of the scenario. It was communism which was inflicting the wound. Wherever the threat from the left was strongest – Italy 1919–1920, Germany 1930–1933, Spain 1935–1936 – so capitalism with its hypocritical but relatively human face, liberalism, transformed itself into the beast of fascism. The lowest human characteristics of racism and aggression were ruthlessly exploited to defend the property of the rich. The Great Powers of Britain, the United States and, to a lesser degree France, so the argument continued, supported and sympathized with this turn of events. Their policies might include hypocritical denunciation of fascist excesses and there were mass protests by their citizens against fascism and Nazism but the governments did not even break off relations. Germany was expelled from the League of Nations but no serious consequences followed. Britain tried to woo Mussolini's Italy right up to 1938 and even beyond. Seen from Moscow such attitudes confirmed their suspicions but the tragic consequences of these assumptions during the rise of Hitler are well known. Non-communist socialists were denounced with the venom Lenin reserved for Mensheviks. In the well-known phrase they were described as 'social fascists'. By 1933–1934 the disastrous consequences of this policy internationally were obvious.

Once Hitler was in power Stalin saw the need to try to form an alliance or at least to prevent the formation of an all-embracing anti-Soviet alliance including Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Japan. Class struggle was put to one side. United fronts, or the even closer-knit popular fronts, were the order of the day. The notion of inevitable confrontation with capitalism was replaced by the notion of collective security. It was a reversion from the pure 1919 model back to part of the 'NEP model' of class alliance and exploiting the 'contradictions' between the capitalists. Since Nazism and fascism were going beyond the bounds set for them by the Great Powers – that is as an emergency battering-ram against the left – they were becoming a growing threat to France and the British Empire as well as to the Soviet Union. On this issue the interests of Western Europe and the Soviet Union began to meet. From 1933 the United States was also improving its relations with the USSR as a bulwark against Japanese militarism.

However, underlying this new relationship with Britain, France and the United States lay a stratum of deep distrust and knowledge that

this was a short to medium-term, contingent deformation of their 'real' long-term hostility. If necessary they had a common interest in fighting Nazism and its allies. However, it was a relationship fraught with difficulties. First, the Soviet Union needed to evade the trap of doing capitalism's fighting for it. Allied to this was the constant fear of 'betrayal' by the capitalists who wanted to turn Hitler eastwards and the Japanese northwards away from their own areas of key interest. Munich, of course, heightened such fears. Until 1944 the Soviet Union did face the German armies almost alone. They were, however, more successful in fighting off the Japanese threat. Skirmishes in Mongolia made the Japanese realize that the cost of advance in that region was not worth it and they turned to the more enticing goal of the oil of the Philippines. Even during the war mutual distrust underlay the Grand Alliance. The Phoney War, the delay on the Second Front, the peripheral efforts of the Western allies in North Africa and Italy, the exclusion of the USSR from agreed participation in deciding the fate of liberated territories such as Norway and Italy, all added to Moscow's unease. In many ways it fed what is often, perhaps rightly, seen as Stalin's and the regime's 'paranoia'. But there was plenty of evidence to show that the West was out to weaken the USSR as much as it could. Soviet scepticism was as justified as that of the West which was perfectly aware that the ultimate goal of communism was world revolution. This latter is normally thought of as realistic thinking, not paranoia. Stalin did not think that differently. The point is, however, that long-term objectives can give way to shorter-term shifts and alliances of greater or lesser duration and long-term goals can be pursued in an infinite variety of ways so, of itself, such deep hostility could be open to manipulation and mediation within the framework of Realpolitik.

Conclusion

Though tantalizingly little of the new material impinges directly on foreign policy it does illuminate the mentality of the Soviet leadership. It also ties in with classic sources relating to the later years such as accounts of contacts with Stalin during the war and the indispensable memoirs of Milovan Djilas.[20] Late and post-Soviet memoirs of other leading figures, notably Molotov,[21] Khrushchev[22] and Gromyko,[23] more or less back up the main lines of interpretation depicted above. Secondary accounts which have had the benefit of extensive access to still closed sources, notably Volkogonov's works, also support it.[24]

The new material indicates that Stalin's self-confidence was not a result of the war but had been a major element in his outlook from much earlier. Stalin, and Bolshevism in general, were the product of a deep-rooted, partly-indigenous, revolutionary tradition. Among its major characteristics were internationalism, which emphasized the role of classes rather than nation states, the latter being an object of contempt while they were in the pocket of the bourgeoisie. It also meant that Russia's revolution could not survive alone and that had massive implications. Illiberalism brought a contempt for 'bourgeois' parliamentary democracy as a hypocritical system hopelessly compromised through its ruthless pursuit of material interests by means of imperialism, racism and militarism. Class theory and the imperative of class struggle meant confrontation with bourgeois states was the norm, though it could be mollified by transient alliances under certain conditions. But perhaps most of all there was a robust, underlying fundamentalist certainty of truth and the inevitability of success, bolstered in practice by the myth of 1919. History eventually showed that this was an illusion but it had a powerful influence on the twentieth century.

Notes

1. For a fuller account see Christopher Read, *Lenin: A Revolutionary Life* (Abingdon and New York, 2005), 116–26 and 166–72.
2. V.I. Lenin, 'War and Russian Social Democracy', *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1974), 21: 33.
3. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, 2001); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and The Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, 2005). Under Stalin, ethnographers had to report an ever-decreasing number of nationalities in the USSR to show that the theories were working.
4. Paul Miliukov, *Bolshevism, An International Danger: Its Doctrine and Its Practice through War and Revolution* (London, 1920).
5. Notable contributions include Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe 1933–39* (London, 1984); Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939–1953* (New Haven, 2006); Teddy J. Uldricks, *Diplomacy and Ideology: The Origins of Soviet Foreign Relations, 1917–1930* (London, 1979); Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, *Russia and the World since 1917* (London, 1998); Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War: Russo-German Relations and the Road to War 1933–1941* (London, 1995); and Richard H. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations 1917–21*, 3 Vols (Princeton and London, 1961, 1968, 1972).
6. Erik van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism* (London, 2002).
7. The most notable series of documents has been published under the collective title *Annals of Communism* in Russian and English editions. English editions

of volumes especially relevant to the present study include Ivo Banac, ed., *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov, 1933–1949* (New Haven, 2003); R.W. Davies, ed., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931–36* (New Haven, 2003); Ronald Radosh, ed., *Spain Betrayed: The Soviet Union in the Spanish Civil War* (New Haven, 2001); Alexander Dallin, ed., *Dimitrov and Stalin, 1934–1943: Letters from the Soviet Archives* (New Haven, 2000); Lars T. Lih, Oleg V. Naumov and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, eds, *Stalin's letters to Molotov, 1925–1936* (New Haven, 1995).

8. For another view see Lih, *Stalin's letters to Molotov,* 27–36.
9. Ibid., 139–42.
10. Ibid., 141.
11. Ibid., 182.
12. Ibid., 183.
13. Ibid., 167.
14. Ibid., 174.
15. Ibid., 177.
16. Ibid., 177–8.
17. Ibid., 178.
18. Ibid., 178 (translation slightly modified).
19. Ibid., 232.
20. Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (London, 1962).
21. Feliks Ivanovich Chuev, *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics: Conversations with Felix Chuev*, edited with an introduction and notes by Albert Resis (Chicago, 1993).
22. Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, Vols 1 and 2 (London, 1971 and 1974).
23. Andrei Gromyko, *Memories* (London, 1989).
24. Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (Rocklin, 1992); *Trotsky: The Eternal Revolutionary* (London, 1997); *Lenin: A New Biography* (New York, 1994).

4

One Mind at Locarno? Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann

Jonathan Wright and Julian Wright

The two statesmen who dominated the international stage in the Locarno era from 1925 to 1929 were Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann, the foreign ministers of France and Germany, on whom the hopes of liberals for the future of peace in Europe rested. They were both skilled public performers who understood the importance of cultivating international opinion. When Stresemann died in October 1929 the German writer, Count Kessler, who happened to be in Paris noted, 'It is almost as if an outstanding French statesman had died, the grief is so general and sincere.'[1] Yet doubts soon surfaced. The publication in 1932 of a letter from Stresemann to the German Crown Prince from September 1925 suggested that he might have been using the appearance of reconciliation with France, by accepting international guarantees of the Rhineland frontier in the Locarno pact and joining the League of Nations, simply as a façade to enable Germany to rebuild its strength and achieve step-by-step revision of the Versailles Treaty with the ultimate goal of restoring Germany as the dominant power. More recently historians have pointed out that Briand's policy was also qualified by calculations of French national interests and not so different from that of his great contemporary, Raymond Poincaré, who had been seen as an uncompromising French nationalist, responsible, for instance, for the occupation of the Ruhr by French and Belgian troops in 1923.[2] It was always simplistic to think of two outstanding politicians like Briand and Stresemann as utopian idealists. Had they been so naïve they would never have risen to the top of their political worlds. That leaves open, however, the question of whether their co-operation was genuine, for hard-headed realists may also co-operate depending on how they see their national interests and how much freedom for political manoeuvre they enjoy.

Their geopolitical maps were very similar. They both understood the tension between their two countries: German resentment at the territorial losses and sanctions clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, French fear of a resurgent Germany with the economic and demographic capacity to outclass France. They both looked to Britain and the United States for support in furthering their aims. They both recognized the potential of Soviet power but treated its ideology with suspicion. Stresemann started from a position of hostility to the new states of Eastern Europe, particularly Poland where he considered the frontier to be the worst mistake of the Versailles Treaty, separating East Prussia from the rest of the Reich with the corridor to the sea at Danzig. French statesmen naturally saw the matter differently – Poland and Czechoslovakia were the best counterweights to Germany available after the collapse of Russia. But both over time modified their positions on Poland, Stresemann towards acceptance of the need for détente if frontier revision were ever to occur and Briand towards acceptance of the possibility of future revision. Both also showed awareness of the potential of European economic integration particularly to meet the challenge of American competition.

Despite these similarities in their outlooks, they started with different objectives. French security demanded that the peace settlement be upheld unless a viable alternative could be found. German policy was directed to revising the settlement to restore Germany to equal status as a great power. This chapter explores the ways in which they understood politics and international relations and the possibilities and limits of their mutual understanding. It is therefore focused on how two democratic statesmen with contrasting interests saw their roles, their mental maps as politicians, given the geopolitical realities with which they were confronted.

Aristide Briand had a unique capacity, in France and in Europe as a whole, to surround himself with an aura of hope and expectancy. That the French political class recognized this goes some way to explaining his constant presence at the highest level of French politics. Even men who had fallen out with him realized that they needed him, as did Alexandre Millerand when bringing Briand back as Président du Conseil (prime minister) in 1921. Moreover, his legendary, almost mythic status in the late 1920s as the 'apostle' or 'pilgrim of peace', which led to his virtual canonization among some parts of French public opinion, had deep roots.[3] As early as the crisis over the Separation of Church and State in 1905, Briand had realized how well the political world would respond well to a new force within politics, that of a man with a gift for peace-making. This became his chosen role within the troubled political

world of Third Republic France, and the even more troubled world of interwar Europe.

That Briand pursued his role as peace-maker over a period of more than a quarter of a century (between 1905 and his death in office, after seven years as foreign minister, in 1932) ought to make Briand one of the best-known characters of modern French history. Briand was indeed, in the first years after his death, at the centre of public attention – and he is once more, in our own day. The great biography of him by Georges Suarez was published mainly during the late 1930s; and in 2005, Gérard Unger made a fine contribution to the well-known Fayard series of political biographies with his *Aristide Briand: le ferme conciliateur*.[4] Yet between these two projects, there have been only a few studies of partial merit: a doctoral dissertation; a fictional autobiography; some slightly unbalanced books praising his role as 'Father of Europe'. Briand, in other words, has had a difficult after-life in the later twentieth century. In offering suggestions for how to understand his mental map, then, we will have at the back of our minds a sense that the oversimple characterization of Briand as 'apostle of peace' is not in fact the best way of understanding him, and that, as both Unger and Jacques Bariéty have demonstrated, a fully nuanced image of Briand must be far more complex.

Some useful starting points for understanding Briand's mental map at the time of Locarno may be found in a comparison between his own political position and that of Stresemann. Briand was far more experienced than his famous German interlocutor. The standard characterizations of Briand's great oratorical abilities, which were so familiar to readers of pro-League newspapers such as Louise Weiss' *L'Europe Nouvelle* (with which Briand was on very close terms), were, by the late 1920s, old hat to the home audience in France.[5] The seductive qualities of his voice, and his ability to woo the Chamber of Deputies, were features of Briand's political presence that were widely acknowledged even before his first government in 1909–1910. Moreover, as his supporters frequently pointed out, Briand was much the more experienced political player: 'the old fox', as Stresemann would describe him.[6] If Briand's nationalist critics would have some grounds for taxing him with having sold out French interests at Thoiry, it was almost always the case that Stresemann's critics were louder and more likely to be heard: and this was not just because there were more of them in German political circles. Since his very first days as a deputy, in 1902, Briand had acquired notoriety for being the past master of back-room political negotiation, and had complete control over the crucial political milieu of the corridors in the French parliament building, the Palais-Bourbon. No serious

commentators could really support those on the far right in France who wanted to argue that Briand, this feline politician with a quarter century of politicking behind him, was not in control of the shape of diplomatic negotiations with Germany. Briand's close collaborator at Geneva, Joseph Paul-Boncour, later remarked that to see Briand operate in negotiations was a lesson in how to keep everything essential for which one had fought by conceding only on secondary points.[7]

Moreover, Briand had a further advantage in having been at the head of government for 18 vital months during the First World War, and thus having been at the centre of a complex web of allied diplomacy. This may of course be balanced by the fact that he was neither party to the Versailles discussions, nor the European arguments that surrounded Poincaré's occupation of the Ruhr. Thus he had a certain amount to re-learn when returning to the centre of affairs in late 1924. Nevertheless, Briand had experience in dealing with complicated political partnerships with uncertain allies. We have, in the shape of unauthorized cabinet notes made by Etienne Clémentel, minister of commerce and industry in successive wartime governments, a remarkable insight into the effort spent by the cabinet on such discussions: almost two-thirds of their time was spent on Greek affairs in the second half of 1916.[8] The war had also taught Briand the role of personal contacts in diplomacy. He was well aware of the surprising power of an approach which undercut bureaucratic procedures, and how Gordian knots could be sliced through by using personal charisma, applied in full force in ante-rooms or corridors, away from the discussion chamber.[9]

Briand's famous remark to Luther, at the opening of the Locarno discussions, takes on a more interesting light in this connection. In telling the German chancellor to stop his recitation of Germany's grievances 'because you are going to make us all cry', he was in fact doing what he always did best: using irony and humour to shift, suddenly and dramatically, the whole basis of discussions into a different realm.[10] The very act of inducing this shift gave Briand the upper hand: in 1925, to Luther, it was humour that produced the result; in 1915, to Kitchener, it had been an unkind questioning of British military honour. In these, and numerous other instances, Briand seized control and his sense of timing and choice of the right rhetorical mode rarely let him down.

A further comparison with Stresemann takes this reflection into a more complex field. Neither were simple party men – although Briand in the 1920s was more independent of party concerns than Stresemann. Indeed by the time of Locarno, Briand had no formal connections with any political party. This allowed him greater freedom in devising policy; but

less sureness in its implementation. His old socialist contacts had largely been broken. Briand had to juggle the quest for the right policy decision with a most complicated balancing of the ever-shifting political forces of the Third Republic's Chamber of Deputies (and, to a slightly lesser extent, the Senate). Many of his key decisions in terms of the evolution of a policy of peace and European construction have to be seen in terms of the need to attract a reasonably coherent body of political opinion in support of his political programme.

Briand's first experience as the head of government, in 1909–1910, provided the template for this delicate relationship between policy choices and political alliances.[11] Without a strong base of support in the radical-socialist party, Briand, as an independent socialist, tried to build a coalition between modern-thinking radicals, other independent socialists, and groups in the centre and centre right. Such a balance was new and controversial: the right/left cleavage in French politics had been well marked out over the issue of the lay Republic and its battles with clericalism, and Briand questioned its validity. So to succeed, Briand chose policies of state-reform (such as reform of the electoral system) and combined them with proposals for social reform, under a general heading of 'appeasement'. In a sense, the political choices dictated the policy decisions.

The effort to maintain the unity of his coalition required enormous oratorical resources. He had to refashion the language of political argument in the pre-war period, using 'appeasement' as an umbrella term for an approach to Republican reform that he described as more forward-looking than that of the Radical Party, which was obsessed with anti-clericalism. The fact that Briand belonged to no party meant that he had to pay even more attention to the relationship between his shifting alliances and the events that confronted him, as minister of the interior before 1914, or as foreign minister in the 1920s. Without stable support, his political existence depended, more than almost any other politician, on his ability to control the political agenda: and his two chosen modes were the private conversation and the set-piece political speech.

The domestic balancing act was crucial throughout Briand's career. At no time was this more true, however, than in 1926. At the start of the year, Briand, running his eighth cabinet, was attempting to build on the advances made at Locarno. As the spring progressed, and the difficulties in the way of Germany joining the League of Nations were overcome, he was able to develop his connections with Stresemann through the intermediary of his own 'private' emissary, Oswald Hesnard. These contacts, typically (for Briand) circumventing the official channels of the

Quai d'Orsay (though the staff there were not totally out of the loop), laid out a range of proposals for a dramatic development in the relationship between Germany and France, which, if we follow Stresemann's account, led to real hope of significant progress.[12]

The difficult thing to understand is why Briand played such a positive role during the spring of 1926, in laying the ground for a potentially wide-ranging settlement, only to dash Stresemann's hopes later in the year, in effect repudiating his own role in the conversations. As ever, the political situation at home was crucial. In the spring, Briand was head of a left-wing government that broadly reflected the left-leaning elections of 1924. In spite of some historians' belief that Briand was really more of a rightward-leaning politician in this period, his eighth and ninth ministries, between November 1925 and June 1926, were in the tradition of the 'Cartel des Gauches'; if his tenth, which lasted a month to July 1926, was more centrist, this was because of the financial crisis. At first, with the Locarno-induced euphoria still in the air, Briand was able to advance new lines of discussion with Germany, in the quest for a peace that could perhaps be achieved more completely if the left of the chamber held the upper hand (the socialist party in particular applauded all Briand's most dovelike moves).

As Bariéty and John Keiger have shown, however, the financial crisis changed the balance. Briand's short-lived tenth cabinet of June–July 1926 addressed the crisis through his finance minister, Joseph Caillaux, who put forward various plans for reorganizing France's debts to her allies.[13] The understanding was that, if the left-wing government was to survive, it might have to resort to sharp political measures to get such proposals through. In the spring, Briand counted on the peace-loving optimism of his political backers to offer them a global settlement of France's problems as a sweetener for the tough measures the government needed to take in order to restore financial stability. But, by September, when Briand and Stresemann met in Geneva, the Cartel des Gauches was finished. The new Président du Conseil, Raymond Poincaré, began to deal with the problem of the franc at once: his reputation among small, conservative investors was so high that the level of the currency was affected almost by his very presence.[14] So the impetus for an ambitious policy of rapprochement with Germany had disappeared; Briand was no longer working with a left-wing parliamentary base. Moreover, Poincaré was highly sceptical about the need to make extra concessions to Germany. In this he bolstered the opinion of Briand's senior staff at the Quai d'Orsay.[15] Instead of a broadly sympathetic base of support in the chamber from a pacifist-inclined left, Briand was now faced

with a conservative head of government who reminded him in a succession of private notes that he had little cause to make promises of early evacuation of the Rhineland.

Poincaré, by developing financial stability, had taken away another factor in the pressure for rapprochement, namely the possibility that peace with Germany would help the franc. Both he and the Quai d'Orsay were probably more anxious than Briand about the possible consequences of the other aspect of his plan – the restructuring of France's debt on the basis of a mobilization of Germany's reparations payments (i.e. raising the capital value of Germany's debt from American investors to allow early repayment to France). Briand would, however, have understood the longer-term concerns of business, that such a proposal would assist German industrial recovery, weakening French industry relatively speaking, for the sake of currency stability. While he had opposed a French 'supremacist' policy such as that pursued by Poincaré in 1923, Briand had no intention of deliberately weakening France's economic situation in Europe. Moreover, this consummate parliamentarian must have been uneasy about the notion which Caillaux had seemed so committed to in the summer, that of using plenary powers to force through a general diplomatic and financial settlement. He preferred to resign as Président du Conseil rather than pursue this risky policy further.[16]

What remained for Thoiry, as with so much of Briand's great diplomatic manoeuvres in the late 1920s, was the more ephemeral aspect of these conversations. The air of cloak and dagger that surrounded the diplomats' departure from Geneva, with the press theatrically thrown off the scent, and then the Frenchness of the menu and the quantity of wine consumed: these details have been often cited by historians as reasons either to add colour to what was a meeting of great minds, or as reasons to dismiss the meeting as a lot of hot air on the part of Briand. But should our judgement be coloured in such a shallow way?

It is necessary to consider more fully the role Briand created for himself at the League of Nations meetings in Geneva. Briand perceived that there was a moral aspect to the growth of European negotiations which, if it was mastered by France, would not only help the development of peace, but would, critically, enable France to rediscover some of its lost glory. In this respect, Briand drew on an old feature of French Republican tradition. Raymond Escholier, in his collection of Briand's 'souvenirs parlés' (spoken memories) dwelt frequently on this side of Briand's political thinking. He was, according to Escholier, a rough-and-ready student of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, solid enough in his reading of him to be able to talk in general terms about France's 'shining presence in the world'.[17] To

many of Briand's supporters, this tradition stretched back into the nineteenth century, to the Republicanism of Lamartine and Hugo in 1848, and the belief that true French republicanism contained a worldwide promise of peace.[18]

This tradition was at the very heart of Briand's belief system; but, as part of his rhetorical armoury, it was also of enormous value in his daily political calculations. It gave him a useful line when defending his League policy in Paris. Here, he would always draw resounding applause for his evocation of a France whose patriotism was of a generous, democratic nature, aiding the preparation of a peaceful future for Europe. In the debate on the Locarno treaties that he led in parliament, in February 1926, he touched on this theme several times. In one crucial passage, he even laid out the actual logic of his behaviour in negotiations with Germany and other countries: he described his reception from the assembly of the League, showing how successfully he had drawn his audience back to a France that 'appeared once more as the great, liberal and generous nation. Yes, at that moment, France took back all its moral authority.'[19]

So Geneva, to Briand, was the principal locus of a restored moral status for France. This brings us closest to understanding the nature of Briand's dedication to peace and his own role in it as defined by service to his country. It should hardly need repeating that, throughout the euphoria of Locarno, the transient hopes of Thoiry or the Kellogg–Briand pact to outlaw war, French troops remained on German soil, and that it was Briand who kept them there, while he kept the hot air balloon of European peace afloat. By engaging in a great personal mission for peace, he effectively gave France the moral clout which would satisfy the rest of Europe that her promotion of her own interests through the occupation and through driving a reasonably hard bargain over reparations was indeed justified. This is what had, critically, led to the most important breakthrough of all: the success of Locarno in bringing onside, not just Germany, but Britain.[20]

The lack of any British guarantee of French security was the single greatest problem of the Versailles Treaty as far as Briand was concerned. Germany's frontiers, to east or west, and German war guilt were all things that could be discussed, whether or not revision would be accepted in the future. And as he at least was well aware, Germany would naturally grow in strength in the 1930s as, under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, the occupation of the Rhineland came to an end and the Saar was returned. But none of these discussions could proceed safely without British support for France. With a British guarantee, discussions

with Germany would remain discussions, for it would be impossible for Germany to begin a war to reclaim Alsace-Lorraine or to throw off the military occupation. So Briand's preponderant aim throughout the 1920s was to remain as close to Britain as possible. His failure to make headway with Lloyd George in 1921–1922 was at the root of his resignation at that point; and his relationship with Austen Chamberlain was one of the things that kept him in office for that long period in the late 1920s. True, Britain may not have been interested in guarantees of the eastern frontiers of Germany; but Briand himself was never completely enamoured of his Polish alliance.[21]

For Briand, Britain represented security. It was the key to the first two elements of the famous trilogy: arbitration, security, disarmament. And Geneva, trembling with the sound of Briand's voice on the grand occasions when the public galleries were full of the great and good of Europe, was the vital calling-card for a diplomat who wanted to restore British confidence in France's peace-loving character. The connection between Britain and Geneva in Briand's mind is perfectly articulated by revisiting the time when the partnership failed: at the Hague Conference in 1929 to decide on a final reparations settlement. Briand was undermined from two sides simultaneously. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Snowden, demanded an upward revision of the British share of reparations, and the Foreign Secretary, Henderson, declared that Britain would, if necessary, unilaterally withdraw its troops from the Rhineland. Briand reacted by developing his plan for European Union: in other words, by going once more to the altar of French moral authority and desperately fanning the flame. Such is the fascination with the idea of Europe as developed by Briand in the late 1920s that the immediate context of the late summer of 1929 is sometimes neglected. It was on 10 August, as Unger reminds us, that Snowden launched a personal attack on Henry Chéron, minister of finance in Briand's last cabinet. The European project was launched less than a month later, on 5 September.[22] The proximity of these crucial developments is not accidental: Briand needed Britain; part of his leverage was his moral authority as the great Genevan; so to Geneva he went, with ever grander suggestions and projects, to rebuild his moral authority in the eyes of the world and in the eyes of his most important ally.

It is extremely difficult to find the correct balance between realism and idealism in assessing the actions, statements and mental preconceptions of Aristide Briand. In the great set-piece speeches which Briand made the centre of his political activity we find a panoply of different rhetorical and ideological statements. His consideration for the problem of

sustaining a reasonably broad swathe of positive opinion in the Chamber was certainly vital. At the same time, in developing a moral aspect to the way he described his policy, Briand was drawing on a romantic Republicanism that was well established in the minds of many of his supporters in France. In a sense, he may have been trying to rekindle some of the feelings which his generation thought were common to their ancestors of a 100 years before: the 'coming alive' of European society during the Revolutionary years and the decades that followed; the optimism and confidence of nineteenth-century European liberalism; the feeling, as George Steiner once put it, that the world 'is going to shed its worn skin a fortnight hence'.[23] Certainly, Briand's most powerful statements, most famously his cry, when welcoming Germany to the League of Nations, 'Away, rifles, machine guns, cannons! Give way to conciliation, arbitration, peace!' were calculated to give his audience the feeling of belonging to a time when that revolutionary optimism was once more to be rekindled.[24] Where Versailles had left rancour and disillusionment, Briand understood the need to rebuild a system whose moral basis was the optimism which the French Revolution, in its brightest guise, could inspire in the whole of Europe. This was at the very heart of his personal outlook, in French domestic politics as well as in international diplomacy. As he sought to maintain his position in power, and as he calculated, trimming where necessary, to maintain French power in Europe, he did so conscious that he had the power to build a new optimism in European society and that peace, which he genuinely desired, depended as much on this moral crusade as it did on his fine judgements about the balance of power in Western Europe.

Gustav Stresemann, like Briand, was an original.[25] He came not from the traditional governing class but from lower middle class Berlin. Before the war he built a successful career as a lobbyist for the German export industries in competition with the dominant interests of heavy industry (coal, iron and steel) and agriculture. Based in Saxony where many of the exporters were concentrated, he also helped to turn the National Liberal party there from becoming a reactionary clique terrified by the advance of Social Democracy into a modern mass party which kept alive its liberal as well as its nationalist traditions. Unlike Briand, he was never completely detached from his base in the National Liberal Party and from November 1918 its successor, the German People's Party (DVP) which was largely his creation. But like Briand, he wanted to set the political agenda. Before the First World War his progressive politics brought him enemies on the right, including within his own party. During the war his extreme nationalist stand made him enemies on the left, while

at the same time his commitment to constitutional reform kept him suspect on the right. Not surprisingly with defeat and revolution in 1918, he found himself unwanted by both sides apparently a political bankrupt. With extraordinary determination he held on and by 1923, in a complete reversal of fortune, he became the unanimous choice of the democratic parties for the Chancellorship. The transformation of his career was made possible by his acceptance of the Republican constitution as the only alternative to civil war, and his belief in 'international understanding' as the only way in which Europe could recover from the war. When his government fell at the end of 1923, he remained as foreign minister in every succeeding administration until his death in October 1929. Despite repeated opposition from its right wing, he kept his party in government and it became a crucial element in every coalition until its final defection, two years after his death, in 1931.

Like Briand, Stresemann tried to make coalition politics the instrument for his own ideas though, like Briand, he was also limited by the need to construct majorities.[26] Given the multiple divisions of the German party system into different ideological and religious camps – Conservative, Liberal, Catholic and Socialist and with subdivisions of each to complicate the picture – Stresemann tried to shape a coherent political agenda around the primacy of foreign policy. This was a traditional tactic for German governments and also for the National Liberal Party which had enjoyed its heyday supporting Bismarck's wars of unification.[27] For Stresemann, subordinating all other issues to the revision of the Versailles Treaty was a way of calling on the idealism of his party – and of his coalition partners – to accept sacrifices in terms of their individual policy preferences and the inevitable electoral costs of necessary but unpopular measures. They must show, in his words, 'the courage to take responsibility' for the greater good of German recovery.[28] His aim was to restore Germany to the status of a great power and, in doing so, to make the Republic safe against its enemies on the extreme right and the extreme left. Foreign policy would help to consolidate German democracy. As part of that process he hoped that his party, the DVP, would become the natural choice for Protestant middle class voters, eclipsing the German Nationalists (DNVP) on the right.

Both Briand and Stresemann were trying to give domestic politics a new shape and both hoped to use foreign policy as their instrument. But inevitably they approached foreign policy from different angles. Both were committed to peace – Briand after the horrors of the First World War during which he had been prime minister for two of the worst years, 1915–1917; Stresemann as he became convinced that war 'would

mean that the old Europe, . . . would inevitably tear itself to pieces . . .'. and '[t]his destruction would be above all Germany's destruction'.[29] Both were therefore looking for negotiated solutions to Europe's problems. But both had interests they could not sacrifice and both had to contend with powerful opposition. Briand could not gamble with French security in a world in which Germany was potentially stronger and where a future German government might revert to the use of force. Stresemann could not accept a permanent status of inferiority upheld by the sanctions of the Versailles Treaty, most obviously allied occupation of the Rhineland. Briand was prepared for gradual dismantling of the sanctions, especially as that was necessary to maintain good relations with Britain and in any case foreseen by the Treaty, but he could not go faster than French public opinion would allow. Stresemann for his part believed that Germany had a right to equal status as a great power, and to maintain the policy of peaceful revision he had to be able to demonstrate success. Tension was therefore unavoidable.[30]

How far, despite the tension, were Briand and Stresemann able to act co-operatively? To do so it was necessary for them to recognize their differences and political difficulties and work to find solutions from which both would benefit. That did not mean that either would have to abandon their national interests but rather that conflicts would have to be managed in the greater interest of peace. How far was there a meeting of minds between them as Briand's biographer, Suarez, suggested? Or was it only, as another French journalist – who acted as an intermediary – wrote after the Second World War, a relationship in which each tried to get the better of the other 'poorly camouflaged by effusive sentimentality'?[31]

Over the four years, 1925–1929, during which they overlapped in government, their relations were certainly at times competitive and subject to strain. Stresemann's indiscretion about the hopes raised by Briand at Thoiry of rapid evacuation of the Rhineland and return of the Saar embarrassed Briand. Briand's subsequent attempt to saddle Stresemann with the initiative led Stresemann to complain of Briand's 'amnesia' and eventually to confront him directly on the matter.[32] Both competed for American favour over the Kellogg–Briand pact without consulting the other.[33] Stresemann was offended by Briand's evasions at the Hague Conference in 1929 over French withdrawal from the Rhineland.[34] Yet, both also showed understanding for the other's difficulties. At Locarno Briand drew a parallel between their situations, which Stresemann described as 'very imaginative and witty' to his party's national executive.[35] There were people in Germany, Briand said, who imagined that in some mystical way the whole situation would one day be changed in Germany's

favour and therefore it should make no concessions in the meantime, but equally there were those, like Poincaré, in France who fantasized that it would have been possible to push through a policy of French control of the left bank of the Rhine while keeping British protection against Germany. Stresemann for a time hesitated to press the demand for Rhineland evacuation for fear that it would weaken Briand's position and he defended Briand in Germany saying he believed in his 'honest will to reach an understanding'.[36] He also tried to find areas where France and Germany could co-operate 'on a common basis of parity', suggesting to Leopold Hoesch, the German ambassador in Paris in November 1926 that these might include financial and economic matters both in bilateral relations between the two countries and in relations of both with the Soviet Union.[37] Writing to a party colleague only weeks before his death, he pointed out that Briand had been forced to resign by pressure of public opinion in 1922 because of his willingness to make concessions and that the reaction against Thoiry had also been caused by 'premature hymns of jubilation in Germany' – though he kept silent on his own part in prompting that reaction.[38] Briand, for his part, did eventually agree at the Hague Conference to withdraw French troops from the Rhineland in June 1930, five years ahead of the date set by the Versailles Treaty.

This degree of mutual consideration was not simply a result of the respect each felt for the other, each an outstanding politician and in some sense an outsider in his own political system. It was also a political necessity. As each became committed to and identified with the Locarno policy, their success became interdependent. If the opposition to the policy succeeded in either country, it would be impossible for the other to continue with it. The remark Briand is reported as making on hearing of Stresemann's death, 'Order a coffin for two. We have two deaths to lament', shows the way in which their careers had become linked in the public mind.[39]

There were other important inducements to co-operation which it is easy to forget as the Locarno détente ended in failure. An important motive for Briand, as we have seen, was to keep British support as an ultimate ally should Germany change course and he also tried through the Kellogg–Briand pact to achieve a special relationship with the United States. Stresemann too needed British support for the converse reason, to put pressure on France to evacuate the Rhineland. Germany had also needed the support of the City of London and the British Treasury to return to the gold standard after the hyperinflation of 1923 (and to defeat French plans for a separate Rhineland bank) and subsequently

British and, more importantly, American investors to provide funds for the Dawes plan which enabled Germany to pay reparations. France too needed American investment. Franco-German hopes in the United States and Britain were sometimes disappointed – neither Washington nor London favoured the Thoiry scheme. Later hopes that the United States could be persuaded to a new financial settlement under which war debts to the United States would be reduced, in turn allowing a reduction of reparations and the evacuation of French troops from the Rhineland (which France was maintaining as a guarantee of German payment) were also disappointed. American administrations were not inclined to waive war debts at the cost of the American taxpayer. But in the early stages of the Locarno détente, both Britain and the United States exercised a crucial influence in favour of Franco-German co-operation. That was most evident in the active participation of British governments with Austen Chamberlain, as Foreign Secretary from 1924 to 1929, playing a leading role. But the United States was also important in the background through its financial influence, for instance making the Dawes loan dependent on French evacuation of the Ruhr and using loans as an inducement to France and Germany to reach agreement at Locarno on the Rhineland frontier. Stresemann and Briand were both the instruments and the beneficiaries of these Anglo-American policies to restore security to Europe.[40]

There were other shared national interests which drew Stresemann and Briand together. After difficult negotiations a comprehensive trade treaty was signed between France and Germany in August 1927. Both also saw the opportunities of European economic integration. Stresemann drew the parallel with the way in which Germany had once been divided into different states with their own tariff barriers. In France, the complex calculations around the time of Thoiry show the importance of the perceived economic imbalances between the two countries as a factor influencing French diplomacy; Briand certainly saw economic integration as a remedy to the fear of falling behind Germany as its industry grew rapidly in the 1920s. Both were also aware of the advantage that integration would bring in helping to resist American competition, though Stresemann was careful to downplay that aspect for fear of upsetting American investors. Briand also hoped that by launching the idea of European political union he could secure German acceptance of its frontiers with Poland and Czechoslovakia by putting them into a new and larger framework. That, however, was more than the German governments of the time would accept and ensured the plan's rejection after Stresemann's death.[41]

Both belonged more broadly to the world of liberal, democratic states. Briand and Chamberlain were anxious to see Germany join the League of Nations because it would weaken Germany's links with the Soviet Union, symbolized by the Rapallo treaty of 1922. When Briand was slow to reduce the number of occupation troops in the Rhineland which had been promised at Locarno, Chamberlain reminded him that 'we are battling with Soviet Russia for the soul of Germany'.[42] In fact, Stresemann was able to maintain the link to the Soviet Union which he wanted in order to keep pressure on Poland for frontier revision in the future and to enable him to rebut nationalist critics of his policy. But he knew that revision of the Versailles Treaty depended on the Western powers and relations with the West were his clear priority. He also shared his Locarno partners' suspicion of Soviet ideology and its inherent expansionism. In the letter to the Crown Prince defending Locarno and discussing his aims for the revision of Versailles, he warned against 'the utopia of flirting with Bolshevism'.[43] For Stresemann too it was only by a policy of peaceful revision that the German Republic could be maintained. A resort to force even if Germany had possessed the military means would, in his view, automatically have polarized politics and risked a new civil war as in 1918–1919.

The values which they shared extended therefore naturally to peace as the best safeguard of the future of European democracy. Briand was able to call on the revolutionary tradition to give this a French theme. Stresemann had in that respect a more difficult task. The symbolic figure for Germans of successful foreign policy was Bismarck. Stresemann was quick to try to prevent the Bismarck myth becoming the monopoly of the opposition. Bismarck, he pointed out in a broadcast on the Locarno treaty, had wanted to preserve peace in Europe. Further, as someone who had understood power politics, he had also acknowledged the importance of what he called: 'the imponderables of politics', in other words the moral significance of an agreement like the Locarno pact.[44] By that Stresemann meant the importance of winning international support. Here he was able to play on a common feeling, which he shared, that Germany had been fatally weakened in the First World War by losing the propaganda war. A successful foreign policy in a democratic age required a good reputation. For peaceful revision of the Versailles Treaty, and there was in his view no alternative method of revision, Germany would have to acquire trust in its commitment to peace. Locarno and entry into the League would help to secure that 'imponderable'.

Neither Briand nor Stresemann was successful in overcoming the tensions that inevitably remained between a status quo and a revisionist

power. Some historians argue that the Locarno détente had already reached its limit before the depression undermined support for it in Germany.[45] That loss of support also helped to undermine the German Republic where political divisions had for a time been bridged by the policy of peaceful revision. So long as Briand and Stresemann were there, however, the will to find imaginative solutions for what Stresemann called shortly before his death 'an ambitious policy of understanding' remained.[46] That was a result of a realistic assessment by each of them that their interests and values would best be served by co-operation. After Stresemann's death in October, there was no German partner for Briand of comparable stature. Neither of course could foresee the full horrors that would follow if they failed. Stresemann did warn of the dangers that threatened both German democracy and peace from the alliance of the new DNVP leader, Alfred Hugenberg, with Hitler.[47] That alliance strengthened in the short term the opposition in France to making further concessions. Hitler was paradoxically more successful than Stresemann had been in persuading the democracies to satisfy Germany's right to equality. But, as they discovered, with Hitler in power it was too late to save the peace. German revisionism was now in the hands of someone whose mental map had no room for a mutual approach to common problems.

Notes

1. Charles Kessler, ed., *The Diaries of a Cosmopolitan: Count Harry Kessler 1918–1937* (Engl. edn, London, 1971), 368.
2. See John Keiger's chapter in this volume and ibid., 'Poincaré, Briand and Locarno: Continuity in French Diplomacy in the 1920s' in Gaynor Johnson, ed., *Locarno Revisited: European Diplomacy 1920–1929* (London, 2004), 95–107.
3. Jacques Bariéty rightly points to the host of letters which were received at the Quai d'Orsay in 1932, mourning his death: he underscored this in closing a conference of eminent international historians in Paris, October 2005: 'Aristide Briand, la Société des Nations et l'Europe, 1919–32.' See also Bariéty's article 'Aristide Briand: les raisons d'un oubli', in Antoine Fleury, ed., *Le plan Briand d'union fédérale européenne* (Berlin, 1988), 1–13.
4. Georges Suarez, *Aristide Briand: sa vie, son oeuvre, avec son journal et de nombreux documents inédits* (Paris, 1938–1952); Gérard Unger, *Aristide Briand: le ferme conciliateur* (Paris, 2005). The sixth and final volume of Georges Suarez's biography of Briand was published in 1952, the author having been executed for collaboration in 1945. The work is a most detailed 'life and times' by a sympathetic journalist, and among its many merits is the lengthy citation of speeches by Briand and documents about him, making it an excellent compendium of primary material. The final volume, however, covers the vital period from 1923 to 1932 in a mere 378 pages, that is in far less detail than

earlier volumes: clearly the onset of war and the size of the project had taken its toll. Unger rightly remarks that Suarez is inclined to err on the side of the hagiographical, and, moreover, is often over-harsh on other characters such as Poincaré.

5. Louise Weiss' sharply written memoirs give some outlines of the connection between Briand and her journal: but there is still speculation that their relationship was of a more intimate kind. See *Mémoires d'une Européenne*, Vol. 2 (1919–1934) (Paris, 1969), 217–21.
6. Cited by Gérard Unger, in *Aristide Briand*, 521.
7. Joseph Paul-Boncour, *Entre deux guerres: souvenirs sur la Troisième République*, 3 Vols (Paris, 1945), Vol. ii, 165.
8. Guy Rousseau, 'Le conseil des ministres en 1916, d'après les notes d'Etienne Clémentel', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 14 (July, 1993), 154.
9. Or outside in the rain: the melodramatic discussions with Asquith, Balfour and Kitchener of November 1915 are recounted in Unger, *Aristide Briand*, 310–11.
10. Stresemann appreciated Briand's impish sense of humour. In this incident when Luther turned angrily on Briand and Briand put on a comic, terrified expression, Stresemann burst out laughing and in turn attracted Luther's displeasure. See the memoirs of the chief German translator, Paul Schmidt, *Statist auf diplomatischer Bühne 1923–45* (Bonn, 1949), 80.
11. For a fuller discussion of the political ideas at stake during Briand's first ministry, see Julian Wright, 'Social reform, state reform and Aristide Briand's moment of hope in France, 1909–10', *French Historical Studies* (Winter, 2005), 31–67. A fascinating dissection of Briand's political rhetoric is advanced by Christophe Bellon in 'Aristide Briand et la naissance d'un centrisme politique, 1905–1914', mémoire pour le DEA, Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Paris, 2000), esp. 40–5.
12. New light on these contacts was shed only in the late twentieth century, and formed the basis for an important contribution by Jacques Bariéty: see Jacques Bariéty, 'Finances et relations internationales: à propos du ''plan de Thoiry'' (Septembre 1926)', *Relations Internationales* 21 (Spring, 1980), 51–70. Here, we have evidence finally advanced for the seeming discrepancy between Stresemann's account of the meeting and that offered in Hesnard's papers. Briand basically got Hesnard to edit his account, playing down the positive role played by Briand in stimulating hopes for a wide-ranging settlement.
13. Suarez, *Aristide Briand*, Vol. vi, 185.
14. John Keiger shows admirably the extraordinary effect of the change of government: *Raymond Poincaré* (Cambridge, 1997), 321–2.
15. Bariéty, 'Finances et relations internationales', 65–6.
16. Bariéty suggests something similar was at work in the mind of Briand when he resigned after the conference of Cannes, in early 1922. While it is beyond question that Millerand's actions as President of the Republic, in convoking the council without its nominal president, would have been intolerable, Bariéty points out that Lloyd George had so many larger issues on the agenda at Cannes that Briand had simply not been able to push his own policy further, and that his resignation was as much a private admission of defeat in his contact with the equally wily Welsh premier of Britain. Jacques Bariéty,

'Le projet de pacte franco-britannique, 1920–22', *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains 193* (September 1999), 100.
17. Raymond Escholier, *Souvenirs parlés de Briand* (Paris, 1932), 161.
18. Ibid., 9.
19. Suarez, *Aristide Briand*, Vol. vi, 166. The great majority of this important speech is reprinted here.
20. Paul-Boncour, *Entre deux guerres*, Vol. ii, 162: 'Locarno, I repeat, was the free consecration, the free acceptance, that it was not only up to us to uphold the most solid gain of the Treaty of Versailles; it was the military guarantee of England, so justly and so tortuously sought by our negotiators at Versailles; it was the constitution, at least between the Allies, of this common armed force, necessary to maintain a European order.'
21. Briand's emissary at Geneva, Joseph Paul-Boncour, was a strong supporter of this alliance, and visited the Polish army as well as making tours to other Eastern European countries. Paul-Boncour, *Entre deux guerres*, Vol. ii, 169–70. For Briand's position, see Georges-Henri Soutou, 'L'Alliance franco-polonaise (1925–1933) ou comment s'en débarrasser?', *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 95 (1981), 294–348.
22. Unger, *Aristide Briand*, 555, 557.
23. George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle*: *Some Notes towards the Redefinition of Culture* (New Haven, 1971), 14.
24. Suarez, citing this speech (*Aristide Briand*, Vol. vi, 197), was uncertain of the merit of Briand's rhapsodic tone. We are now better placed to give the League of Nations and the hopes it inspired a fairer assessment.
25. Jonathan Wright, *Gustav Stresemann*. *Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (Oxford, 2002).
26. As the liberal journalist, Theodor Wolff, pointed out in an article on Stresmann's death. 'Erinnerung'; Bernd Sösemann, ed., *Theodor Wolff* (Düsseldorf, 1993), 263.
27. See Brendan Simms, 'The Return of the Primacy of Foreign Policy', *German History* 21 (2003), 275–91.
28. Reichstag speech, 6 October 1923; Wright, *Stresemann*, 225–6.
29. Bariéty, 'Briand: les raisons d'un oubli', 5–6; Stresemann's introduction to *Zehn Jahre Deutsche Geschichte* 1918–1928 (Berlin, 1928), viii.
30. See the public exchange between them in speeches to the Reichstag and the French Senate in January–February 1928; Wright, *Stresemann*, 412.
31. Suarez, *Briand*, Vol. 6, 121; Jules Sauerwein, 30 *ans á la une* (Paris, 1962), 183.
32. Wright, *Stresemann*, 377–9, 404, 412–13.
33. Ibid., 415–16.
34. Ibid., 480.
35. Speech to the national executive of the DVP, 22 November 1925; Eberhard Kolb and Ludwig Richter, eds, *Nationalliberalismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf, 1999), 599–600.
36. Wright, *Stresemann*, 396; Speech to the DVP party conference, 2 October 1926; *Nationalliberale Correspondenz*, Sonderausgabe.
37. Stresemann to Hoesch, 3 November 1926; quoted in Wright, *Stresemann*, 381–2.
38. Stresemann to Spitzfadem, 14 September 1929; Henry Bernhard, ed., *Gustav Stresemann*. *Vermächtnis*, Vol. 3 (Berlin, 1933), 566–7.

39. François Seydoux, *Beiderseits des Rheins. Erinnerungen eines französischen Diplomaten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975), 38.
40. Patrick O. Cohrs, *The Unfinished Peace after World War I. America, Britain and the Stabilisation of Europe* 1919–1932 (Cambridge, 2006).
41. See the contributions by Peter Krüger and Martin Vogt in Fleury, ed., *Le Plan Briand*, 289–329.
42. Wright, *Stresemann*, 396–7.
43. Ibid., 326–7.
44. Broadcast, 3 November 1925; Rochus von Rheinbaben, ed., *Stresemann. Reden und Schriften*, Vol. 2 (Dresden, 1926), 215. See also Robert Gerwarth, *The Bismarck Myth. Weimar Germany and the Legacy of the Iron Chancellor* (Oxford, 2005), 95–103.
45. Franz Knipping, *Deutschland, Frankreich und das Ende der Locarno-Ära* (Munich, 1987).
46. Stresemann to Löbe, 19 September 1929; Bernhard, ed., *Vermächtnis*, Vol. 3, 568.
47. Wright, *Stresemann*, 476–8.

5
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Clive Foss

Turkey's interwar leader completely transformed his country, with enduring results. Maps, real and imagined, were essential to his thinking. An army commander with a purely military education, he studied topography and applied his knowledge in the field. At the same time, his extensive reading gave him a broader mentality that encompassed lessons from the West and led to drastic reforms at home. In his last years, he produced a fantastic map of the world that gave the Turks primacy in everything. The pages that follow will focus on the development of his mental maps, show how he applied them and illustrate their final product.

Forming a map

Mustafa Kemal's first view of the world came from his education, which started in an unusual way.[1] Most Turkish children attended schools that stressed religion and spent much time memorizing the Koran in a language they didn't understand. Mustafa's mother was an enthusiast for such a traditional education, but his father sent him instead to a private school run by a certain Shemsi Efendi, who used more modern, secular methods and taught pupils how to read a map.[2] Nevertheless, since the state supervised education at all levels, Mustafa would have had lessons in Arabic and Islam, laying the foundation for his later superb command of the intricate Ottoman language, where Arabic and Persian played a major role, and for his understanding of the state religion. At the age of ten, Mustafa determined to enter the military preparatory school, partly at least because he fancied the neat military dress and disliked the prevailing 'oriental' clothes. He enrolled in the school in Salonica in 1891.[3]

These preparatory schools, part of a system for creating a professional officer corps, were a product of the mid-nineteenth century reforming movement, the Tanzimat, whose leaders sought to bring the country up to modern European standards in every way. They offered the best education in the Empire, emphasizing Turkish (with Arabic and Persian), and including history and geography as well as practical subjects like mathematics, bookkeeping, engineering and drawing; French was introduced in the final year. The reactionary regime of Abdul Hamid (1876–1908), however, added courses on religion and restricted the study of history. Anything about revolutions or revolts was suppressed in favour of Ottoman successes and the glory of the Sultan. Language teaching left the students unprepared to make any practical use of their Arabic or Persian. The only hope for an enterprising student lay in a few enlightened teachers who could breathe some life into their subjects.[4]

Mustafa completed the four-year course with distinction, excelling in mathematics, and making his first acquaintance with French, a subject that was to have deep influence on him. It was here that he acquired the nickname Kemal, either because of his perfection in mathematics or in honour of the famed writer Namık Kemal.[5]

In 1895, Mustafa Kemal moved on to the military boarding school in Monastir (now Bitola in Macedonia), one of the major Ottoman army bases in the Balkans. Here, he followed a curriculum that included religion, history, geography and literature, with increasing lessons in mathematics and practical subjects and a declining emphasis on Turkish in favour of French, the second language of the educated officer class. He was so intrigued by literature that he even flirted with the idea of becoming a poet (his writing teacher dissuaded him), maintained his distinction in mathematics and graduated second in his class of 54. He was most inspired by his teachers of History and French, which both became subjects of lifelong interest. Since he was a slow learner of languages, though, he attended a French Catholic school in Salonica in the summers to develop his skills.[6]

In March 1899, Mustafa Kemal entered the War College in the vast cosmopolitan capital, Istanbul. Close at hand were the cafés, bars and brothels of the Levantine quarter, but he hardly had time to frequent them since, lacking money or powerful connections, he couldn't take the risk of doing poorly. He studied hard. The 2000 cadets lived without distinctions of class or origin, but under strict discipline and with firm religious obligations. They were required to pray five times a day, and constantly wish long life to the Sultan. They could only leave the school in groups. Punishments for bad behaviour reflected the cadets' favourite

goals: being arrested drunk in a night club meant 20 blows with a cane; being found sitting there with a Christian woman could bring two weeks in the brig. Kemal behaved, studying so hard that he graduated eighth out of 455 in February 1902 and became one of the very few chosen for advanced studies in the War Academy.[7]

In his first year of College, Kemal followed a technical program that stressed natural science and engineering, with an important component of topography. Because of a shortage of materials, the students were trained to draw maps themselves. Kemal was to have a close involvement with maps all his life. In the second year, instruction in religion and civil law were added, while most of the third dealt with practical subjects like bridges, fortification and artillery. French was a constant subject of study. Soon after entering the school, Kemal received a ribbon to wear on his uniform to mark his accomplishments in French.[8]

Kemal's horizons started to broaden. He often spent weekends in the house of his friend Ali Fuat, who came from a prosperous military family. There, he was exposed to the major political questions of the day. He came to realize that he was living under a corrupt regime that allowed no freedom. Like many of the cadets, he started to read literature that the government forbad as subversive: he became acquainted with the French Revolution, studied its Declaration of the Rights of Man and was especially moved by the revolutionary writer of the Tanzimat, Namık Kemal (1840–1888), the apostle of freedom and of the notion of a fatherland, where loyalty would be to the nation rather than to the Sultan or Islam.[9] He advocated a parliamentary system where all would be equal. His forbidden works naturally attracted a following among students. Mustafa Kemal was so struck that he immediately committed Namık Kemal's poem *Fatherland* to memory, and started to delve deeper into his ideas.[10]

Mustafa Kemal excelled in the War Academy, the highest level of military education, designed to produce modern officers of a European standard.[11] It offered technical subjects like strategy, weaponry or reconnaissance and included the history of war and comparative study of famous battles; French was taught at every level. The program, however, suffered from instructors who lacked practical experience or adequate command of their subjects, and from political considerations. Since the regime of Abdul Hamid would not allow its officers to be trained with weapons or participate in manoeuvres, instruction remained highly theoretical and often boring. It had important gaps: the students could learn about the battles of Napoleon or Frederick the Great, but nothing about recent Ottoman military history, with its many defeats. Nor did

they study the works of the great military theorists. Memoirs of Kemal's contemporaries attest to widespread dissatisfaction.[12]

Another source of discontent was the regime's emphasis on religion. According to a classmate, Kemal was suspicious of Pan-Islamism: 'These Arabs are going to play a game with us. The Caliphate and institutions like it are absolutely worthless . . . The nationalism spreading from Europe and the Balkans is reaching Syria through the French schools. They are going to place a bomb under the foundation of the Ottoman empire.'[13] Kemal's mental map of the Near East was already beginning to take shape.

Nevertheless, some instructors were successful, especially a few who explicated the merits of the German army, using maps and drawing on practical experience.[14] Notable among them was Lt.-Col. Nuri Bey who taught tactics. He attracted Kemal's attention when he discussed guerrilla warfare, using the imaginary example of a rebel force advancing on Istanbul. He based his lecture on a map and was fortunate to be able to use the first detailed plan of the capital region, recently produced by a skilled German adviser.

Gen. Colmar von der Goltz had been seconded to the Ottoman Empire in 1885 as part of the Turkish rapprochement with Germany.[15] Although his efforts to improve the army were frustrated, he made significant changes to military education. He found a curriculum devoid of practical knowledge and more suitable for training engineers. He replaced useless or outmoded courses with the military subjects that Kemal studied, and wrote most of the textbooks himself. He was especially concerned with the defence of Istanbul and the Straits, for which he deemed an accurate map a basic necessity, but the Sultan was afraid of maps since they might make it easier for an enemy to attack.[16] Von der Goltz therefore worked on his own; his map was printed in 1896, in time for Kemal's generation, who were fortunate to be studying after von der Goltz's reforms.

The bored students often turned their attention to other activities. Drinking and whoring were easy in the nearby Levantine quarter, and Kemal did his part, but he also broadened his view of the world. He frequented bars and cafés run by Europeans, where he encountered the latest news and currents of international political thought. His friendship with a French lady who ran a boarding house enabled him to perfect his French and read the latest magazines. Like many of his colleagues, he became increasingly disenchanted with the Ottoman government and turned to subversive activities, producing a handwritten newspaper that criticized its policies. Although the director of the academy caught the cadets red-handed, he overlooked the offence and Mustafa Kemal

continued his political activities until January 1905, when he graduated fifth in his class.

During the time that Mustafa Kemal was growing and studying, the Ottoman Empire was passing through a series of crises that altered the mental maps of the ruling establishment. Traditionally, the Empire was an Islamic state ruled by an all-powerful Sultan. The Muslims – Turks, Kurds and Arabs – were united in their faith and allegiance to the Sultan, while non-Muslim minorities ran their own internal affairs. Long since, however, corruption and technological stagnation had profoundly weakened the Empire. The reformers of the Tanzimat sought ways to adopt European technology and ideas and at the same time knit together their highly diverse population. They espoused Ottomanism, a vision of a state where all, Muslims and infidels alike, were to be equal under the law in a common Ottoman homeland. Their mental map embraced European and Asian Turkey. Except for a westernized elite that drew its inspiration from the Enlightenment, however, Ottomanism never took root, and by Abdul Hamid's time had succumbed to realities: the Muslims had little enthusiasm for granting equality to Christians and others, who were more attracted by nationalism and independence than by Ottoman unity.

As Ottomanism failed, the rulers turned to Islam as a means of holding the empire together. The devout Abdul Hamid patronized an official mental map of Pan-Islamism.[17] In his time, the Empire was the major surviving Islamic state, potential centre of a world that saw itself under increasing threats, notably in the 1880s when the French occupied Tunisia and the British Egypt. By proclaiming the unity of Muslims everywhere, and by reviving his traditional role as caliph, Abdul Hamid could hope to strengthen internal unity, raise the prestige of the Empire and potentially subvert the colonial empires that ruled Muslims. He wrote that, 'it was Islam that kept the different groups of the Empire like the members of one family. Therefore the stress should not be on Ottomanism but on Islam.'[18]

Since the Sultan saw the Empire as centre of a vast Islamic world, he sent out religious teachers far and wide, from North Africa to China. At home, he patronized traditional religious leaders – sheiks, dervishes and brotherhoods. Although often seen as an obscuritanist reactionary, Abdul Hamid encouraged a modern education that would help the Empire catch up with the West, but since that brought the danger of insidious foreign ideas, he was especially concerned to increase the amount of religious instruction. Mustafa Kemal's education, which took place entirely under the reign of Abdul Hamid, felt the effects. He grew

up exposed constantly to an Islamic mental map that he associated with backwardness, corruption and oppression. It never guided him, but gave him an understanding of religion and a determination to reduce its role.

Real and mental maps

His subversive activities earned Mustafa Kemal the undesirable posting of Damascus, where he served on campaigns against the local Druze tribes. Appalled by the corruption and incompetence of administration and army, he joined a small revolutionary group called Fatherland and Freedom (evoking Namık Kemal) which he attempted to spread throughout Syria. He stayed there for two years, gaining experience of the empire's Arab provinces and beginning to form ideas of Turkish nationalism, though still feeling that the Arab provinces belonged within the Empire.

In October 1907, Kemal was transferred to Salonica, now in the heartland of revolutionary activity, dominated by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the so-called Young Turks, who believed modernization could only come through a revolution led by the army. Kemal joined them early in 1908 but never rose to their inner circle. It was during this time that he may have taken his first step toward developing a world map. According to his colleague Ali Fuat, Mustafa Kemal proposed that the Empire should give up most of its territories in the Balkans, keep the coastal islands of the Aegean and abandon the Arab regions, except northern Syria and northern Iraq. This is so uncannily close to what actually happened that it may be questionable, for Ali Fuad only recounted it some 60 years later.[19] If Kemal did make these remarks, he might have been reflecting the views of von der Goltz, who believed that the Empire was too big and would be better off without its European provinces.[20] In any case, Mustafa Kemal, like many young officers, was fond of fantasizing about the future.

The future arrived suddenly in July 1908, when the armies of European Turkey revolted, forcing Abdul Hamid to restore the constitution. After a counter-coup by the Sultan, they seized full power under the leadership of the CUP. Although the CUP never hesitated to exploit Islam, it abandoned Pan-Islamism for Pan-Turkism. This mental map looked back to a glorious Turkish past and envisioned a great union of all Turkic peoples, most of them then ruled by Russia.[21] Pan-Turkism sent out agents wherever there was a Turkic population, especially to the Caucasus and Central Asia. It was to play a sinister role during World War I, when armies were unrealistically directed toward the Caucasus, rather than being sent where they were most needed for defence. The regime's

deportation and slaughter of the Armenian population can be seen as another product of this ideology, an effort to remove an ethnic barrier between the Turks and their Azerbaijani cousins.

Soon after the 1908 revolution, Mustafa Kemal was sent to Libya, where he spoke of the common brotherhood of Turks and Arabs under one Sultan-Caliph and one religious law. Unless these were opportunistic remarks for local consumption, it would appear that his views had not yet veered to the secularism and Turkish nationalism attributed to him by Ali Fuat.[22] He returned to Libya in 1911, to fight the Italian occupation. The Turks managed to keep control of the interior, but suffered from the shifting loyalty of the tribes, guided more by self-interest than love of the Sultan.

The Libyan campaign was the beginning of disaster for the Empire, which was at war almost continuously until 1923. Mustafa Kemal returned to Istanbul too late to fight in the first Balkan War which lost the Empire most of its European possessions, including Kemal's Salonica, in the autumn of 1912. In November, he was posted to the Straits, and then in July 1913 participated in the second Balkan war against the Bulgarians. On his return to Istanbul, he made the acquaintance of Corinne, a lady of Italian origin, widow of a Turkish officer and a figure in society. Mustafa Kemal frequently visited her, establishing a close liaison with an independent European woman with whom he could communicate in French.

In October 1913, he was sent as military attaché to Sofia, where he would spend 14 months, the longest time he ever spent in a western country.[23] Sofia was a modern European city with a society totally different from any that Kemal knew. He mingled with the highest strata of the society and flirted with its ladies. He was impressed by a country where women were educated and mixed freely with the men, where the local Turks were more enterprising and prosperous than at home and where a parliamentary regime actually functioned. He wrote back his impressions of hotels, soirées and night clubs in French to Corinne. The experience confirmed his views of the value, even superiority, of Western civilization.[24]

The disasters of the Balkan wars pushed the Empire into such close ties with Germany that it entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers. Enver, leader of the CUP, had a vision of Muslims everywhere rising against their Western oppressors, a fantasy shared by the Kaiser. Mustafa Kemal, though, had serious doubts about Germany's ability to prevail. In the opening months of the war, he analyzed the dangers the Central Powers faced, having to fight on two fronts, displaying a mental

map that encompassed the whole of Europe, viewing it with a realism that became characteristic.[25]

In January 1915 Kemal returned from Sofia, just after Enver, inspired by Pan-Turanian dreams of reaching the Turks of Azerbaijan, had led an army to overwhelming defeat on the Russian front. Kemal was posted to the Dardanelles, where his rapid analysis of the situation on the ground, combined with his experience of the region, enabled him to make a crucial contribution to the greatest Turkish victory of the war, defeating the attempt of a massive allied force to break through to Istanbul.

Early in 1916, Kemal was posted to eastern Anatolia to meet a Russian offensive that he effectively stopped. During these campaigns, he found time to read novels in French and Turkish translations of French philosophical works.[26] Even in the most difficult circumstances, his admiration for French culture never flagged. He also dreamed of a future where women, no longer veiled, would be educated and integrated into social and public life.

In July 1917, Mustafa Kemal was sent to defend Syria and Iraq against the British. His commanding officer was one of Germany's most famous generals, von Falkenhayn, whose reputation did not spare him from Kemal's outspoken criticism. The detailed report he wrote to Enver on 20 September 1917 reveals the first comprehensive world view by an officer who had fought on three continents and had no illusions about the Empire's prospects.[27] Mustafa Kemal began his assessment with an analysis of the internal conditions that would make for success or failure. He saw only a hostile, distressed and greatly reduced population. He predicted that if the war continued (and he saw no end in sight), the great edifice of the sultanate, rotten to the core, would collapse. After discussing the weakness of the Turkish forces, he analyzed the situation on every front: in the West, the allies could strike a fatal blow at the capital and the empire's richest territories; in the Caucasus, where the situation was stable, he anticipated a renewal of Russian attacks; in Iraq, it was impossible to prevent further English advance, while in the Sinai and Arabia, the British had not yet achieved their goals, which would include a Christian Palestine and depriving the empire of its religious bases. The enemy, reaching Baghdad with ships and trains, could not be stopped by ferryboats and camels, he wrote. In all this, he was implying that the Empire should retain control of its Arab provinces, especially Syria and Palestine.

The report reveals highly developed ideas of nationalism, suspicion of foreign powers and a strong faith in the Turks, if only they were well governed. Kemal's mental map was imbued with pessimism at a time

when many believed Germany was winning the war. His realism brought no favourable response from the Germanophile Enver. In October, he resigned his command and returned to Istanbul.

By this time Turkey had signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk that ended Russia's participation in the war. It provided that the three provinces Turkey had ceded to Russia in 1878 would determine their own future by a plebiscite. Fearing an Armenian advance, the Turkish army occupied them, removing any doubt about their future.

In May, medical problems took Mustafa Kemal for treatment to Vienna, then Carlsbad where he used the time to perfect his French and German. On his return, the Sultan gave him his last wartime appointment, as commander of the troops in Syria. He arrived in August 1918 to find an outnumbered, demoralized army, its resources drained by a new Pan-Turanian campaign in the Caucasus. Inexorably pushed back by the British, Kemal was holding a line north of Aleppo when the armistice was signed on 30 October. At the end of the war, he commanded a front that stretched through Syria and Iraq, including the major oil-producing centre of Mosul. Never obliged to surrender, he had managed to preserve the Turkish homeland from attack.

The victorious allies imposed harsh terms. Turkish forces in Arabia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq were to surrender to the nearest allied commander and, furthermore, were to withdraw from Cilicia, north of Syria. Ottoman forces in the Caucasus were to return within the pre-1914 boundaries. The Allies reserved the right to intervene in the six 'Armenian' provinces of eastern Turkey and occupy (unspecified) important strategic points in case their security were threatened. The Turks were to demobilize and surrender their fleet and most of their weapons. The country was left with nothing but the Turkish homeland.[28]

Mustafa Kemal immediately objected. He pointed out that there was no such province as Cilicia, and that the allies would extend their occupation far into Anatolia. He was adamant that the armistice line, running north of Aleppo, should be held, despite British demands for use of the port of Alexandretta. For him, the limit of national territory was set by the line of Turkish bayonets, beyond which the British had not passed. He had no intention of trying to maintain control of Syria with its Arab population that had frequently manifested its hostility during the recent campaign. But there was nothing he could do. The government, following the dictates of the British, dissolved Kemal's army and recalled him to Istanbul.[29]

The allies immediately began violating the Armistice. On 8 November, the British occupied Mosul, and by the end of the year the French

were in control of Cilicia and Upper Mesopotamia. In January 1919, Turkish forces withdrew from the three provinces of the Caucasus. Everywhere, Turkish generals, including Kemal, did all they could to preserve their weapons and encourage local resistance, but Turkish territory were shrinking rapidly.

Kemal, who believed that the Turkish homeland had to be protected at all costs, spent the winter of 1918–1919 in Istanbul. Eventually, the government appointed him inspector of all the Turkish forces in eastern Anatolia, with considerable authority over the civil administration. His ostensible task was to supervise demobilization and to quell disturbances, but his real instructions were just the opposite – to organize resistance. Enthusiasm for resistance received a powerful impetus when a Greek army occupied Smyrna, centre of the richest part of Asia Minor, on 15 May. Four days later, Mustafa Kemal landed in the Black Sea port of Samsun.

As an increasingly vocal opponent of the Allies, Kemal soon broke with the Sultan's government and resigned his military command. Now the civilian leader of a political movement, he called a meeting in Erzurum in July. It produced what has been called Turkey's declaration of independence:

> We insist that, within the boundaries specified in the Armistice signed by the Allied powers on 30 October 1918, as in all parts of the country, those areas in Eastern Anatolia in which Muslims live and where Muslim culture and economic dominance has existed must remain within our borders; there can be no dividing off; our national unity, historic rights and traditions and religion must continue.

Kemal never abandoned this vision of Turkey. The declaration also embodied a principle new to the Ottoman state: '. . . it is central that the government remain subject to the national will since no government can survive that is not based on the national will.'[30] This idea of a 'national will,' derived from the French Revolution, remained a constant influence on Kemal's thought.[31]

This realistic map was radically different from that of the Sultan's government whose prime minister proposed that the Empire retain parts of Bulgaria and the Aegean islands, together with northern Syria and Mesopotamia, and give the Arab autonomy. He got nowhere, for the Allies were not minded to allow the Turks even to rule all of Asia Minor.[32]

In February 1920, the nationalists proclaimed the National Pact, which again asserted the integrity of Turkey within the armistice lines. Areas

outside that line, inhabited by an Arab majority, were free to determine their own future, while the status of the three Caucasus provinces and western Thrace should be settled by plebiscites. Istanbul and the Straits were to be protected.[33]

A month later, the Allies occupied Istanbul; Ottoman independence was at an end. Mustafa Kemal responded by summoning a Grand National Assembly – a concept and name derived from the French Revolution. It opened on 23 April with religious ceremonies and protestations of loyalty to the Sultan/Caliph who, officially, was considered to be a prisoner of the allies. Kemal, who knew his history, announced that he did not want Turkey to follow the fate of Egypt and India.[34]

The allies now dictated their map: it postulated an independent Arabia; British and French mandates over Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia; an Italian sphere of influence on Turkey's Mediterranean coast; and an independent Armenia in eastern Turkey adjoining an independent Kurdistan, which Mosul could join. The Greeks were to have Thrace and the best part of Western Asia Minor. The Ottomans would be left only with Istanbul and central and northern Anatolia. This was a map no Turk could accept, but the Sultan's government had no choice but to sign the Treaty of Sevres on 10 August.

Mustafa Kemal had published his mental map, but was in no position to enforce it. Armenia and Georgia had taken over the three northeastern provinces; the French occupied the southwest; the Italians were on the south coast; and most dangerous of all the Greek army was advancing toward the Anatolian plateau. The nationalists needed help anywhere they could get it. In this, Kemal revealed a practical attitude free of ideology or grudges from the past.

He turned to a fellow outcast nation, Russia. Negotiations, beginning on July 1920, were difficult since the Soviets wanted Turkey to stay within its 1914 boundaries. The situation was complicated by the arrival of Enver Pasha in Moscow; Kemal swiftly disavowed him and his Pan-Turanian pretensions, and, announcing that Turkey and Russia had a common interest in opposing Western imperialism, created a Turkish Communist Party which his highest civil and military associates joined.[35] The Turks then attacked Armenia which capitulated on 2 December, signing the first treaty the nationalists made with a foreign power. Four days later, the Red army took the rest of Armenia, giving Turkey and Russia a common frontier. In February 1921, the Soviets conquered Georgia, and in October, the treaty of Kars recognized the eastern frontier that has been maintained ever since. Kemal had achieved his first goal of regaining the three northeastern provinces.

Russian weapons and gold flowed to the nationalists, who could start building an army to fight the Greeks.

While Kemal was dealing with the east, Greek forces had moved within striking range of Ankara. In August 1921, Mustafa Kemal was granted supreme military command, which he justified by holding the Greeks back in a long and bitterly fought battle. He then turned to the French, who in October agreed to evacuate Cilicia and Upper Mesopotamia. By the summer of 1922, he was free to move against the Greeks whom he crushed on 30 August. Ten days later, Turkish forces reached Smyrna and the Aegean. In October, Kemal faced down the war-weary British and regained eastern Thrace. The long wars finally ended in July 1923 with the treaty of Lausanne by which the Allies recognized a free and independent Turkey. Kemal's mental map had become reality, and he asked for no more. He had already rejected Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turanism.[36]

Mustafa Kemal's map for Turkey dealt not only with boundaries but with the future. That meant advance on all fronts toward a civilization that could only be Western. Since his plans involved drastic change, he embarked on two long speaking tours early in 1923.[37] Constant themes were the ongoing sessions at Lausanne and the importance of the new Constitution, the Assembly and the National Pact. He explained the General Will, showed how the system was consonant with the teachings of Islam and stressed the rule of the people.[38] He made it clear that Turkey had abandoned any delusion of ruling the world, and would focus on its own well-being.[39] Irredentism was out: there would be no attempt to attract the Turks of the Soviet Union.[40] Turkey would not be tied to East or West, but maintain good relations with its neighbours. He wanted friendship with Russia, but would allow no interference in Turkey's internal affairs. He realistically analyzed the situation in Europe and the Near East.[41]

The speeches often dwelled on the sultanate, which the Assembly had abolished in November 1922, and the caliphate that precariously succeeded it. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of history and Islam, Kemal showed that the sultans had brought the country to ruin.[42] He made it clear that he followed and understood Islam: this was not a communist regime that would abolish religion, but he attacked ignorant religious teachers and the backward educational system they represented.[43] He saw the caliphate as a useless and divisive institution, and showed how ridiculous it was for devastated depopulated Turkey to try to rule the Moslem world.[44] By stressing the need for modern education, the rights of women and acceptance of the practices of civilized nations, he hinted at the reforms to come.[45]

Most drastic among them were the proclamation of the Republic on 29 October 1923 and the abolition of the caliphate the following March.[46] In 1926, new European law codes ended religious influence in the legal system. Kemal's idea of a secular republic was reinforced by the introduction of Western dress and the Western calendar, and accompanied by speeches that focused on turning Turkey into a modern civilized state, free of superstition or useless accretions of the past.[47]

Turkey's physical map, though, still presented a problem. Shortly after the armistice, the British had occupied the oil-producing city of Mosul, centre of a region that Turkey could legitimately claim. But the oil was no more important than a related problem, the Kurdish question. In 1923, Kemal claimed that the British planned to establish a Kurdish state in Mosul, from which propaganda and subversion could reach Turkey's Kurds.[48] In 1924, after threats from both sides, the matter was referred to the League of Nations which assigned the city to Iraq, then under British mandate. In the 1926 treaty Turkey gave up claims to Mosul, but got security from Kurdish interference.

The National Pact made no mention of Kurds, but the treaty of Sevres had proposed creating a Kurdish state in eastern Turkey.[49] The Mosul question stirred up the Kurds, as did the secular policies of the new republic. In February 1925, a major revolt broke out that took massive force to suppress.[50] Its leaders were condemned for trying to establish a separate Kurdistan and to make trouble between brothers who belong to the same nation. The official map did not recognize any Kurdistan or that the Kurds were different from the Turks. The Kurdish revolt provoked a series of emergency measures that stifled opposition of all kinds. Kemal's Turkey was coming to resemble a one-party dictatorship.

Kemal's vision for Turkey involved drastic change, but his view of the world remained remarkably consistent. He followed his slogan of 1931: 'peace at home; peace in the world.' Kemal's policy eschewed foreign expansionism and pursued good relations with all countries, regardless of ideology or past problems. In 1934, Turkey sponsored the Balkan Pact, joining its traditional enemy, Greece, along with Yugoslavia and Romania in a peaceful alliance. Friendly relations were consistently maintained with the USSR, yet trade with Germany grew. Foreign potentates visited Turkey, notable among them Reza Shah of Iran, whose own reforms were often modelled on those of Atatürk, and King Edward VIII, whose sojourn in 1938 meant reconciliation between the former adversaries. Unusual among the statesmen of the interwar period, he had

no axes to grind and sought no revenge. His mental map embraced the world, and welcomed it. He was consistent to the end, maintaining peaceful, even friendly relations with the most diverse and mutually hostile countries.[51]

Only one spot on the real map remained to be clarified. At the Armistice, Kemal's forces were still in control of northwestern Syria, with the port of Alexandretta. Efforts to regain it from the French got nowhere until 1936, when France proposed to transfer the region, which had a large Turkish population, to an independent Syria. Turkish threats and propaganda finally impelled the French to give it a separate status in 1937 and the next year, after Atatürk ostentatiously made a trip close to the frontier though he was mortally ill, allowed an election that opted for Turkish rule. Atatürk achieved his aim though he did not live to see the transfer in June 1939; he died on 10 November 1938. He had achieved virtually everything he had been demanding for 20 years; his mental map had become reality.

The Ghazi's fantastic map

Atatürk invoked history to justify Turkish control of the province of Alexandretta. He claimed in 1938 that the Turk was the true owner of the land, following a view he had already expressed in 1923 about Cilicia, which had had a substantial Armenian population.[52] The Armenians, he maintained, had no claim to the land because it had been Turkish from time immemorial. Its original inhabitants were Turks and Turanians whose lands had been occupied by Persians, Greeks, Roman and Byzantines until the Seljuk Turks returned there from Central Asia.[53] In this he was expressing the germ of an idea that was to produce a unique world map.

According to Afet, a diligent student and adopted daughter of the Ghazi, she approached him in 1929 with a troubling question.[54] She had read in a French geography book that the Turks were a yellow race, regarded as second-class human beings. This provoked a strong reaction in Kemal, who had light hair and blue eyes. 'No, that can't be' he said, 'let's get busy about it.' He was going to refute any notion that the Turks were part of the yellow race, that they had no capacity for civilization, and particularly that anyone else might have a historical claim on the homeland of Asia Minor.

By now, Kemal was in such firm control that he could relax from the cares of state and devote his enormous energy to the new intellectual project. Always a voracious reader, he assembled a vast library and

ordered experts to study it. Many of the 4000 books it contained have Kemal's own underlinings and annotations, revealing his determination to investigate everything relevant to the history of the Turks, ranging from ancient Egypt through the Arabs and the Huns to contemporary Europe, with an important component of philology and ethnography.[55] He read fluently in French, enabling him to keep abreast of the latest scholarship, though works in English he usually had translated. Among them, Kemal's attention to the four absurd volumes of *The Lost Continent of Mu* suggest that his critical expertise lay elsewhere.[56]

Ministers, MPs, professors and teachers were all to read and report to him, in the shortest time possible. Wherever the Ghazi was – in Ankara or Istanbul or his favourite spa, on the boat or the train – he found time to work and to call meetings which might last well into the night. He held discussions over a dinner table full of books and papers in a room that started to look like a school.

Kemal personally directed the committee of teachers and political figures, whom he ordered to identify and study the great states that their ancestors had built, to rely on documents and not hesitate to admit ignorance. 'Writing history is as important as making history' became one of his favourite slogans. The final product was a four-volume work simply called *History*, issued in 1931.[57] Mustafa Kemal read and corrected the proofs; the texts became compulsory in the schools and canonical for more than a decade.

Kemal's aim was clear: a new nation needed a new history. Recent decades had constantly altered the Turks' view of the past, reflecting the world view of changing regimes. An emphasis on the Ottomans or Islam was now as inappropriate as the widespread idea that the Turkish state derived from a tribe of 400 tents. On the other hand, the association of Turkey with its ancient central Asian origins, as often expounded under the CUP, had some promise.[58]

The need for change was opportune, for the new Latin alphabet became compulsory in 1929. This meant that new books on every subject had to be produced quickly. *History* reflected the changes that were taking place in education (now run by a secular state) and in the whole concept of Turkey and the Turks. It responded to what Kemal felt were two great needs: to show that the Turks were and always had been a civilized nation, worthy of being considered equals by the West; and to prove that the Turks had priority in their Anatolian homeland, preempting the claims of Greeks, Armenians or anyone else.

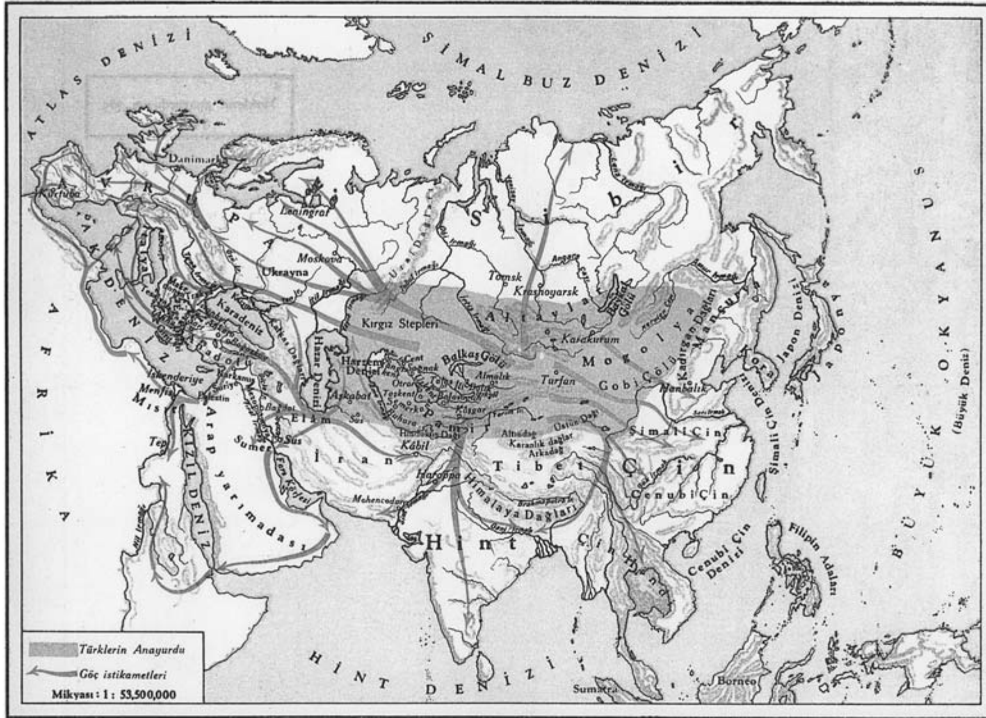
The first volume advanced the Turkish History Thesis: that all civilizations came from the Turks or were profoundly influenced by them;

Turks yielded to no others in antiquity or civilization, and in fact even preceded them. The Thesis was bold, ingenious and utterly fantastic. It was embodied in a map of Eurasia showing the civilization-bearing Turks radiating out in all directions from the centre of Asia. This map appeared everywhere.

According to *History*, the Turks of 10000 BC lived around a great sea in the middle of Asia, where they developed metalworking, domesticated animals and began settled agriculture. At the end of the Ice Age, however, the climate dried up and Turks emigrated in all directions. The first group settled in North China, where they brought the techniques of civilization by 7000 BC. Others moved to India to establish the civilization revealed by the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro (the Thesis made extensive use of archaeology). This might seem more than dubious, since the Chinese and Indians obviously weren't Turks. There was an easy explanation: the Turks were gradually absorbed into the local population – much as the ancestors of the Bulgars (who really were Turks) were swallowed up by the local Slavs.

Far more important for the future were developments in the Near East, where the migrating Sumerian Turks founded the first organized states and cities and developed the world's first writing system. From there, around 5000 BC, Turks entered their holy land of Anatolia and a millennium later had established the Turkish Hittite civilization; all this confirmed by excavations in Asia Minor. This was a crucial point, establishing Turkish priority in Asia Minor and implicitly denying claims by Greeks, Armenians or anyone else. Along with the Hittites came the Turkish Thracians who founded Troy, followed later by the Lydians of whom one branch moved to Italy where, as the Etruscans, they laid the foundations for Roman civilization. Likewise, *History* concluded that the earliest settlers in Egypt came from Central Asia, bringing agriculture and irrigation around 5000 BC.

The Greeks posed the biggest problem. No one could deny their importance in world history, or their key role in developing the Western civilization the Turks were so anxious to join; but there was no way to claim that Greeks were Turks. The solution was ingenious. The Bronze Age was not a problem: the Minoans of Crete who came from Anatolia, could be considered Turks. Their tribes had leaders called *ege* (hence the Aegean sea) or *aka*, a name taken by the Akalar (Achaeans) who produced the Mycenaean civilization. Many place names in Greece belong to a pre-Greek language. Some could be identified as Turkish on the basis of fanciful resemblance to words in a Turkic language; so the people of Euboea (Öbe) and Ionia (Iyon) could be claimed. The



Map 5.1 Atatürk's map (from *Tarih*, Vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1932), map 1).

Iyonlar were heirs of Crete and Mycenae, flourishing at a time (eighth to fifth century) when mainland Greece was poor and backward; their language was not Greek or Semitic but Central Asian Turkish. But *History* had to give up on the classical Greeks, by stating that no one knew when or how they arrived. They were different, in any case, from the Macedonians, a Turkish tribe who came down from the Danube region.

In spite of all this, *History* presented perfectly straightforward accounts of the Greeks and Romans. But the Turks did not disappear from the scene: the Scythians, Cimmerians and Celts came from Central Asia, bringing civilization to places like the Crimea and Denmark, rescuing Europeans from a cave existence and putting them on the road to scientific discoveries.

The Turkish History Thesis was part of the Ghazi's vast and largely successful effort to instil pride in the Turks by giving them an ancient and supremely respectable ancestry, to show the world they were not despicable nomads but the originators and heirs of the most ancient civilizations. The Thesis went hand in hand with Kemal's favourite but even more outlandish Sun Language Theory, that all languages were derived from Turkish.[59]

The History Thesis was consecrated as official doctrine in the first congress of the Turkish Historical Society held in 1932 under the direct patronage of the Ghazi, and attended by historians and teachers as well as foreign observers. Afet gave the keynote address, explaining the Thesis, constantly citing European writers in its support. In the published version, her speech was frequently interrupted by 'applause' or 'enthusiastic applause' in what has been described as a true Stalinist mode, for the Congress firmly discouraged deviant ideas. A second Congress, held in 1937, further codified the Thesis, even raising the possibility that the Prophet himself might have been a Turk. That marked the culmination of the Thesis; though it generated less enthusiasm after Atatürk's death, it continued to form the basis for history teaching in Turkey for another decade. A whole generation of future leaders was brought up on this peculiar world map.

The Turkish History Thesis is long gone, but some traces remain: two of the biggest state banks, founded in Atatürk's time, are still called the Sumerian and Hittite. Istanbul has a Hittite (Etiler) suburb, Ankara a Scythian (Iskit) boulevard. Hittite and Sumerian surnames are still in use. The Attila Line (reflecting the Turkish Huns) rather tactlessly marked the armistice after the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus in 1974.

On a more positive note, when Atatürk advocated a Balkan entente in the 1930s, he could maintain that all the neighbouring states should act like brothers since they had a common Central Asian ancestry.[60] Likewise, he could evoke the (imaginary) relationship of Turks and Iranians in the midst of tense negotiations about frontier violations.[61] Unlike other contemporary theories of national origins, there was nothing racist about the Thesis, which never maintained that other peoples were inferior to the Turks. It also had a practical application. When Atatürk was claiming the region of Alexandretta, he gave it the pseudo-Hittite name Hatay, since it had 'originally' been settled by the Hittites.[62] By then, the region had received a 'history' that went back to the arrival of the Turks from Central Asia in 4000 BC.[63]

However ridiculous the Ghazi's final world map may appear, it contributed to his people's self-confidence and justified Turkey's claim to all the territory he had so ardently defended. He had been brought up with maps since the age of ten and put them to good use in the field and at the negotiating table throughout his career. He followed his mental map of a united and independent Turkey without deviation for 20 years. Unlike the fantastic or aggressive maps of many of his contemporaries, Atatürk's was realistic and still endures.

Notes

1. For the career and life of Atatürk, I have drawn heavily on the comprehensive and thoroughly documented *Atatürk* by Andrew Mango (London, 1991; henceforth 'Mango'). Note that his original name was Mustafa; Kemal was added when he was in primary school, and Atatürk only in 1934, after which he signed himself 'K. Atatürk.'
2. For this school, described as the most unusual in the Empire, see İlhan Başgöz and Howard E. Wilson, *Educational Problems in Turkey 1920–1940* (Bloomington IN, 1968), 194–7.
3. Atatürk's early education is poorly known: see Mango 33 with n. 35 and Faik Reşit Unat, 'Atatürk'ün Öğrenim Hayatı ve Yetiştiği Devrin Milli Eğitim Sistemi,' *Atatürk Konferansları* I (Ankara, 1964), 82f.
4. Preparatory schools: Unat, 73–75; Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid devri eğitim sistemi* (Ankara, 1988); Yusuf Çam, *Atatürk'ün Okuduğu Dönemde Askerî Okullar* (Ankara, 1991), 39–82.
5. On Namık Kemal, see below.
6. Military schools: Kodaman, 114–36; Çam, 83–124.
7. H. Gök, Mesut Uyar, 'Yeni bulunan belgeler ışığında Mustafa Kemal Atatürkün harp okulu ögrencilik dönemine katkı'... *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi* 13 no.78 (June 2000). I am very grateful to Dr. Uyar for sending copies of his articles and for his helpful criticisms.
8. Çam, 125–63; curriculum: 153–63.

9. See the memoirs of Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Sınıf arkadaşım Atatürk* (Istanbul, 1966), 1–69, especially 30–2.
10. Namık Kemal: Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, 1962), 283–336. See also Yahya Akyüz, 'Atatürk'te Namık Kemal'in Etkisi ve Abdülhamit Döneminde Yasak Kitaplara İlişkin İki Belge', *Belleten* 45 (1981), 501–9.
11. For Mustafa Kemal's time at the Academy, with its curriculum and deficiencies, see the important study of Hayrullah Gök and Mesut Uyar, 'Yeni bulunan iki belgenin ışığında Mustafa Kemal Atatürkün Harp Akademisi öğrencilik dönemi,' *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi* 12 no. 71 (October 1999), with further references.
12. Well expressed, for example by Kemal's fellow-student, Kazım Karabekir, in his *Hayatım* (Istanbul, 1995), 242f., 277.
13. Asım Gündüz, *Hatıralarım* (Istanbul, 1973), 20.
14. For the teachers, see Cebesoy, 39–43.
15. For von der Goltz's time in Turkey, see Friedrich, Freiherr von der Goltz, *Generalfeldmarschall Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz. Denkwürdigkeiten* (Berlin, 1929), 106–63 and Jehuda A. Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe* (Dusseldorf, 1976), 64–107.
16. Von der Goltz, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 146–8.
17. For what follows, see Jacob Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam* (Oxford, 1990), 9–72 and Azmi Özcan, *Pan-Islamism. Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain* (Leiden, 1997), 23–63.
18. Cited in Özcan, 47.
19. Cebesoy, 116; cf. the skeptical comments of Mango, 75.
20. Von der Goltz, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 132f.
21. See Jacob Landau, *Pan-Turkism* (London, 1995), 29–56; cf. Charles Warren Hostler, *The Turks of Central Asia* (Westport CT, 1993), 110–23. The terms Pan-Turkism and Pan-Turanism are often used interchangeably, though strictly speaking the latter should embrace more distantly related peoples like the Hungarians or Mongols.
22. Rachel Simon, 'Prelude to Reforms: Mustafa Kemal in Libya' in J. Landau, ed., *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder, 1984), 17–23.
23. He visited France briefly in 1910 to watch military manoeuvres; and Germany, on an official mission with the heir to the Ottoman throne in 1917; he spent two months convalescing in Austria in 1918.
24. For this interlude, see Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London, 1964), 71–80 with quotations from the letters; some of the anecdotes may be apocryphal: Mango, 129.
25. See the letter quoted in Mango, 136f.
26. See his diary: Şükrü Tezer, *Atatürk'ün Hatıra Defteri* (Ankara, 1999), 72, 75, 83f., and for Kemal's admiration of French culture, A. Ünsal, 'La bibliotheque politique française d'Atatürk' in P. Dumont and J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont, eds, *La turquie et la France a l'époque d'Atatürk* (Paris, 1981), 27–43.
27. Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, *Atatürk'ün Soylev ve Demeçleri* [hereafter *ASD*] (Ankara, 1989–1991), 4: 1–8.
28. Texts as proposed and as modified in Stanford Shaw, *From Empire to Republic* (Ankara, 2000), I: 81–93.

29. See Jean Deny, 'Souvenirs du Gâzi Moustafa Kemâl Pacha,' *Revue des études islamiques* (1927), 167–202, especially 174 (national frontier) and 190–202 (Alexandretta).
30. Translated in Shaw 692f. Original text with modern Turkish version in Chief of the General Staff, *Atatürkçülük, Atatürkün görüş ve direktifleri* (Ankara, 1984), 468–73.
31. See Ünsal, 33, 37 and the essay of Sina Akşin, 'La revolution française et les nationalistes turques' in Ünsal, 45–55.
32. Mango, 242.
33. Translated in Kinross, 571f. and Shaw II: 803f.; text in *Atatürkçülük*, 480–3.
34. Mango, 278.
35. This artificial party, created for the moment, was never recognized by the Third International, while the real communist leaders mysteriously drowned on their return to Turkey.
36. In his speech to the Grand National Assembly on 1 December 1921: *ASD*, I: 214–16.
37. Texts in *ASD*, II: 54–169 and Arı İnan, *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün 1923 Eskişehir-İzmit Konuşmaları* [hereafter *Eskisehir*] (Ankara, 1982). These speeches are not available in translation. Many of the points Kemal made here reappear in the context of the War of Liberation and of Turkey's history from 1919 to 1927 in the six-day speech he gave in 1927: *A Speech Delivered by Ghazi Mustafa Kemal* (Leipzig, 1929), especially 209, 378, 569, 643, 682, 723.
38. *Eskişehir*, 29, 31, 97 (here he even calls the state a people's or Soviet government).
39. Ibid., 29, 108, 107.
40. Ibid., 48f. Of course, he could not maintain friendship with the Soviets and claim their Turks at the same time. See in general Mehmet Saray, *Atatürk ve Türk Dünyası* (Ankara, 1995).
41. Ibid., 46–9.
42. Ibid., 103–16.
43. Ibid., 67; *ASD*, II: 98ff.; *Eskişehir*, 72.
44. *Eskişehir*, 63–5, 102–8.
45. Ibid., 115; *ASD*, II: 89ff., 151–7; *ASD*, II: 70f.
46. The kind of religious schools Kemal had avoided attending were abolished at the same time.
47. See the references in Mango, 410–12, 435, 463.
48. *Eskişehir*, 45.
49. In the declarations of Erzurum and Sivas, as well as the National Pact, Kurds were subsumed under 'Ottoman Muslims'. Turkey did not recognize a separate Kurdish nationality.
50. Mango, 421–9.
51. He laid out his positive vision of foreign relations in his reports to the opening sessions of Parliament, notably on 1 November 1937 (*ASD*, I: 421–3) and 1 November 1938, when he was terminally ill (*ASD*, I: 430–2). For a useful survey of Turkey's foreign relations at the end of the Atatürk period, see August von Kral, *Kamâl Atatürk's Land* (Vienna, 1938), 233–80.
52. *ASD*, I: 410.
53. *ASD*, 2: 130.

54. For what follows see Afet Inan, 'Atatürk'ün Türk tarih tezi' in Afet Inan and Enver Ziya Karal, *Atatürk Hakkında Konferanslar* (Istanbul, 1946), 55–65 or her slightly different version, 'Atatürk ve tarih tezi', *Belleten* 3 (1939), 243–6. Cf. C. Foss, 'When Turks Civilised the World', *History Today* 55 (August 2005), 10–15.
55. See the 24 volumes of *Atatürkün Okuduğu Kitaplar*, Recep Cengiz, ed. (Ankara, 2001).
56. Ibid., X: 263–315, with extensive annotations.
57. [Committee for the Study of Turkish History], *Tarih* (Ankara, 1932). Key passages from the introduction were translated by Major F. Rynd, 'Turkish Racial Theories,' *JRCAS* 21 (1934), 476–87. For the work and its significance, see Büsra Ersanlı, *İktıdar ve Tarih* (Istanbul, 2003).
58. For the origins, antecedents and afterlife of the Thesis, see Etienne Copeaux, *Espaces et temps de la nation turque* (Paris, 1997), 33–74 and Mustafa Çıkar, *Von der osmanischen dynastie zur türkischen Nation: Politische Gemeinschaften in osmanisch-türkischen Schulbüchern der Jahre 1878–1939* (Darmstadt, 2001).
59. This is treated elegantly by Geoffrey Lewis in *The Turkish Language Reform* (Oxford, 1999), 57–74 and in detail by Jens Peter Laut, *Das Türkische Als Ursprache?* (Wiesbaden, 2000).
60. See Afet Inan, 64f. and İsmail Arar, 'Atatürk'ün günümüz olaylarina da ışık tutan bazı konuşmaları,' *Belleten* 45 (1981), 10–14, where Atatürk describes himself as a blood-brother of the Bulgarians.
61. See Arar, 17.
62. For the origins of the name, either from the Hittites or their 'ancestors' the Hata Turks, see G. Jäschke, 'Alexandrette und Hatay,' *Die Welt des Islams* 22 (1940), 149–54.
63. See the four volumes of *Hatay* by A. Faik Türkmen (Istanbul, 1937), dedicated to Atatürk; the history is in Vol. II: 316–63.

6

Maps, Minds, and Visions

Chiang Kaishek, Mao Zedong and China's Place in the World

Rana Mitter

In the twenty-first century it is commonplace for leaders to fly all around the globe at a breathtaking pace. It is easy to forget that just a few decades ago, it was much more unusual for national leaders to be well-travelled. Nonetheless, even by those standards, China's two paramount leaders for much of the twentieth century, Chiang Kaishek and Mao Zedong, were not great international travellers. Famously, Mao only ever left China twice, both times on visits to the USSR to visit Stalin. Chiang travelled more – military and political training in Japan and Russia in his youth, Cairo for the Allied Summit of 1943 and India, where his pro-independence comments in 1942 caused ructions with the British – but he spoke no English, and his view of the world remained an essentially cautious one. Both men, of course, became much more familiar with the geography of China, whether on tours of inspection as rulers of the country, or else when forced to flee, as Mao did in the Long March of 1935–1936, and Chiang during the retreat to the interior in the face of the Japanese invasion in 1937.

Yet even so, a powerful way to analyse the different mindsets of these two figures is through geography. For the twentieth century was the time when ideas of space and geography were expanded for many Chinese to a level beyond anything that their predecessors could have imagined. This chapter will argue that the opening of horizons allowed China's two most important twentieth-century leaders to entertain visions of China's place in the world that could not have been thought of a century before; yet that at the same time, the violent circumstances in which China's geography changed meant that its leaders were unable to fulfil the promise of those wider visions.

Mental maps of the premodern world

In the decades before Mao and Chiang were born, the mental map that educated Chinese possessed, locating themselves in relation to the rest of the world, changed rapidly. In fact, the mental map of the elites of late imperial China was not the inward-looking, xenophobic know-nothingism found in the caricature spread by Western invaders who sought a moral justification for 'opening up' China. The term *Zhongguo* or 'middle kingdom' which has been used by armchair sinologists for years as an example of Chinese arrogance (as if the West did not also place itself central in its own mental maps) is, in fact, a nineteenth century construction.[1] Previous to that, the 'Chinese' would have identified themselves as 'people of the Ming' or 'Qing' or whichever ruling dynasty was in power.

Nonetheless, it is also reasonable to say that the geographical horizons of China's leaders of the late imperial era were limited. Foreign visitors from the region, such as Korean traders, were common enough, and even Westerners (such as Jesuits) turned up at court. Chinese elites were certainly aware of the outside world. But for the most part, they did not visit it. The Qing became one of the world's great land empires by expanding on its northern and Western borders, but its rulers did not travel overseas, and ordinary Chinese were essentially confined to the territory of the empire.

This changed significantly during the nineteenth century. It has become commonplace, and rightly so, for scholars in recent years to question the dominance of what Paul Cohen has termed the 'impact-response' model of Western effect on an essentially inert China. China did not change simply because of the impact of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century: social crisis, rebellions in western China, and insufficient tax revenues were all factors that would have caused the Qing dynasty trouble without the intervention of the West. Yet it does remain the case that, in terms of reshaping Chinese conceptions of spatiality, the arrival of Western imperialism in China was a major change.

Mao versus Chiang

This reshaped mental map was crucial to the leadership of the two figures who dominated the history of twentieth-century China from the 1920s until the 1970s, and whose legacy lives on today. Chiang Kaishek (1887–1975) was born in Zhejiang province, and before he was 20, had travelled to Japan for military training, feeling that in the China of that era,

Map 6.1 China in the 1930s.

military power was the force that would supersede the now obsolete traditional path of Confucian learning which had allowed access to the bureaucracy. His Japanese stay also allowed him to become immersed in revolutionary politics. During the turbulent 'warlord' era of the 1920s, Chiang rose higher in the ranks of Sun Yatsen's Nationalist (Guomindang or Kuomintang) party, at that time based far away from power in Guangdong province. The party, however, was transformed by two events: the arrival of Soviet assistance and an alliance with the fledgling Chinese Communist Party. During that period of Soviet influence, Chiang visited Moscow: but the lessons he learned there turned him against Communism, rather than towards it. Sun died in 1925, just as the Nationalists

and Communists were about to launch their Northern Expedition to reunite China. The Expedition, which lasted from 1926 to 1928, did see the two parties reunite large parts of China, albeit uneasily, but a vicious power struggle for the succession to Sun meant that Chiang eventually attained the leadership only after brutally severing his alliance with the Communists and outmanoeuvring his rivals for leadership. Despite its bloody beginnings, however, the years 1928–1937 (the 'Nanjing decade' when China was ruled by a Nationalist government with its capital at Nanjing) were a period of both failure and promise. The period's failures have lasted better in popular memory, fuelling a teleology of eventual Communist victory: official corruption, lack of progress on China's agrarian crisis and an unwillingness to tolerate any pluralism in politics. The era's successes have been less remarked, such as the significant modernization of China's infrastructure, international negotiations that saw China regain tariff autonomy and a genuine transnational sympathy for the Nationalist project as one that was at heart progressive and modernizing. All this development was, however, swiftly destroyed with the outbreak of total war with Japan in 1937. Chiang's government had to withdraw to the interior, relocating the capital in the southwestern city of Chongqing (Chungking). The war battered away at the regime's capacity to govern, and although Japan was defeated in 1945, the Nationalist government never really recovered, and by 1949, had been defeated by Mao's Communists in the Civil War. Chiang's government fled to Taiwan, and he continued to rule his now fictive 'Republic of China' until his death. His regime there was brutal and dependent on American aid. Yet it also succeeded in dealing with some of the crises that had overwhelmed the Nationalists on the mainland. Taiwan became a successful export-oriented economy, a relatively equal society without much extreme poverty and, under Chiang Ching-kuo, Chiang's son and successor, one of Asia's most lively liberal democracies.[2]

Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was born of a peasant family in Hunan province, where he, like Chiang, became interested in revolutionary politics from an early age. Unlike Chiang, his politics led him towards Marxism and he was a founder member of the tiny Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921. Until the mid-1930s, Mao was a prominent, but not dominant member of the Party. He was caught up in its unsuccessful strategy to foment revolution in the cities, and was then central to the experiments in governance that marked the rural period of communist rule in Jiangxi province during 1931–1935. Increasing pressure from Chiang's regime, however, forced the CCP on the famous Long March of 1935–1936, and for the next decade, the most prominent Communist

base area had its capital at Yan'an, in Shaanxi province, during which time Mao emerged as paramount leader within the Party. The wartime period gave Mao's Communists a chance further to refine governance, particularly as the Nationalist government found itself more and more under siege and unable to cope with the demands on it. After victory in the Civil War in 1949, Mao continued to take the dominant role in leadership, culminating in the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976, and during his period in power, China took over from the USSR in the eyes of many (not least Mao himself) as the foremost revolutionary state in the international order.[3]

Chiang and Mao were deadly rivals, but also children of the transitional world that knew few certainties about the shape of modern China. Is there, however, a basic difference in the way that the two men constructed their maps of the world, and China's place in that world? Fundamentally, one is drawn back to the idea that Chiang saw the wider world as threatening, whereas Mao saw it as an opportunity.

To understand this, one must differentiate what was similar as well as what was different about the two leaders. For decades, the bitter enmity between Mao and Chiang, and the Cold War divide that made capitalism and communism warring opposites, meant that Chiang's vision of the Nationalist party and Mao's vision of the Chinese Communist Party seemed to be polar opposites. In recent years, the fading of these divisions has enabled one to see China's twentieth-century battle between the Nationalists and Communists not simply as a clash of opposites, but rather as an argument between two sides which agreed on many fundamental issues, but whose divisions ultimately proved insuperable.[4] Chiang and Mao were both nationalists. They believed that the modern model of the nation-state in the international community was the only way in which China could survive; neither advocated a return to the classic empire of the past, now smashed beyond repair. As a corollary of that nationalism, both counted the ending of unfair foreign influence in China as a major goal. At the same time, they were both advocates of modernization: an industrialized future that would make China economically powerful, rather than being a purely agrarian economy.

There were, of course, significant ideological differences between them. Most notably, Mao and his party advocated class struggle as the means by which China would be transformed. While Chiang and the Nationalists were revolutionaries too, they did not seek a class-based confrontation as the basis for that revolution.[5] But beyond this ideological difference, the leaders of the two revolutions (the Nationalist

revolution of 1927–1928 and the Communist revolution of 1949) had a fundamental difference of vision that stemmed from a variant understanding of the world and China's role in it. The emotional contours of their mental maps were quite different.

Both Chiang and Mao were shaped throughout their lives by the reality that China now lived in a wider world which it could not control. Premodern China had made some steps towards what would now seem to be international norms. China's first international treaty, in the sense that the modern world would interpret the term, was the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, which secured China's border with Russia (a border which still essentially remains today). Yet it was generally true that the Qing and its predecessor dynasties did not have much interest in thinking of their empire as part of a wider system.

This luxury was not open to the generation that came of age at the same time as Chiang and Mao. In the last decades of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the impact of imperialism on Chinese statecraft and self-perception forced a new understanding of the world and international society upon China at all levels of society. Workers in Shanghai's factories, peasants whose handicraft businesses were put out of action by cheaper foreign imports, young poor women who were educated at missionary schools – all these were examples of how the West impacted China's grass roots. Yet it was at the elite level where the meaning of the wider world that China found itself in was explored in the greatest detail.

Republican visions of China

It has become a commonplace to assert that the Chinese generation that came of age at the turn of the last century found itself in the uneasy transition between Confucian tradition and modernity. What, in practice, did this mean for the mental maps of Chiang and Mao, the way in which they visualized their region, their country, and the world?

In the case of Mao, we have a relatively easy task in reassembling his mental map. Mao left behind copious documentation throughout his life, much of which is now available to scholars. In addition, the highly complex theoretical debates that underpinned the CCP's adaptation of Marxism left behind a wealth of evidence about the way that Mao's thinking changed. For Chiang, this is harder: he was never really a theoretician, and his invocation of the thought of Sun Yatsen was often rhetorical rather than the product of close grappling with political texts.

One way, however, to try to understand the way in which the non-Marxist Nationalists attempted to square the new map of the world with their cultural and political assumptions and understandings is to look in more detail at a figure who, during the early period of Chiang's government, put ideas about how China might reconfigure its mental map before a wide reading public. Zou Taofen (1895–1944) was one of the most prominent journalists and public intellectuals of the Republican era. By the 1930s, he was a Marxist, but in the late 1920s, his thought drew on a variety of sources, including the writings of Sun Yatsen, who he then regarded as the only truly important thinker that modern China had produced, the liberalism of John Dewey and, most crucially, ideas drawn from China's premodern Confucian–Mencian repertoire. He thought actively and explicitly about how the new world-system of nation-states could be made compatible with Confucian norms, and his understanding of the new geographical horizons shaped his view of how China must relate to the world:

> If we want to restore our nation's position, we must restore our innate morality, knowledge, and ability, at the same time as studying the specialized abilities of Europe and America . . . Some people have misunderstood, and considered that, whereas in the imperial era, there was loyalty [*zhong*: a traditional Confucian virtue], now in the republican era there is no loyalty. By why isn't loyalty to the country loyalty? If foreigners see that China cannot govern the country, then they will come and exercise joint control over it.[6]

Zou's point, a little obscured in translation, is that the inherent loyalty (*zhong*, a very longstanding Confucian virtue) which underpinned the old Chinese imperial system should be transferred to the *guo*, a term here used to refer to the modern state that was the Chinese Republic. While remapping China onto a new international system, Zou saw an ability to transfer a vision of the world from the old system.

Chiang's ideological vision also grappled with the need to impose the assumptions of *tianxia*, the old empire that was not necessarily defined by territorial boundaries, to a world full of modern empires. From 1934, Chiang spearheaded the New Life Movement, an ideological mobilization that explicitly sought to counter the threat from the Communists. It also used Confucian terms (virtue, righteousness and so forth), and was consequently caricatured as a return to a 'reactionary' past. This misunderstands the reality that the New Life Movement was trying to establish a modernized ideological strand that would draw on the past, but seek

to use it to carry out tasks that were the prerogative of the modern state: at its heart, the creation of a mass nationalist citizen consciousness.

One key influence on Chiang's internationalism, though not one usually cited in those terms, was his wife, Soong Meiling (1897–2003). Educated at Wellesley and fluent in English, Meiling was often regarded a something of a Lady Macbeth, and popular histories have continued to portray her in that role. However, her importance as a window to the wider world for Chiang should not be forgotten. During the hardest days of wartime, it was Meiling, not Chiang, who went to the United States to address Congress, and who influenced Henry Luce to use *Time* magazine to boost Chiang's cause. Through Meiling, Chiang's always difficult relationship with the United States was filtered.

Mao never left China during the Republican period, unlike contemporaries such as Deng Xiaoping and Hu Shi. Yet the world opened up to him too. His earliest writings show that in his teens, he was studying English although he never mastered it.[7] Aged 25, Mao made marginal notes on his copy of Friedrich Paulsen's *A System of Ethics*.[8] His move to Beijing, where he became a library assistant at Peking University, helped him to crystallize his already strong knowledge of foreign political writings, as well as introducing him to Marxism.

For Mao's rise to mature political consciousness in the 1910s and 1920s coincided with the May Fourth (New Culture) Movement, the century's most important era of Chinese freethinking and political possibility, one of whose products was the new Chinese Communist Party which emerged from the study societies and discussion groups of Beijing and Shanghai. The story of Mao's rise to power and the early days of the CCP have been told numerous times elsewhere.[9] What is important is to note that the Republic, for all its instability, had allowed China to expose its young men and women to a vision of the world that went far beyond China's borders, even for those who remained within them.

The wartime world

The event that shattered the Republic beyond repair was not the Communist challenge as such; rather, it was the war with Japan, particularly in its phase of total war from 1937 to 1945. For Chiang Kaishek, the war was to be his regime's undoing, destroyed by an alliance which he had sought to save himself. For years, the wartime efforts of the Nationalist government were interpreted as a study in failure: a corrupt, incompetent government which left the hard fighting to the Communists and became parasitically dependent on American aid to keep itself

propped up.[10] Recent scholarship, not least within China, has taken serious issue with this view. While not covering over the real deficiencies of Chiang's regime, the Nationalist regime's wartime record has been reassessed more sympathetically, with creditable military performances, attempts to institute welfare policies and agricultural reforms all given a revisionist hearing.[11]

In this context, Chiang emerges not as the buffoonish 'Peanut' of General 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell's imagination, but rather as a nationalist leader making a choice between bad and worse. His mental map was powerfully shaped by the reality of the war effort he saw around him: one where China was in peril. As he saw it, from 1937 to late 1941, China had fought alone (albeit that a limited amount of Soviet and US assistance had trickled through). Now, following Pearl Harbor, China was at last considered one of the Allies in the World War, but it became swiftly clear that it was an ally given assistance in the most grudging terms, with resources such as Lend-Lease going in much greater proportions to Britain, its empire, and the USSR than to China.

Chiang's true feelings and record were masked by a series of essentially public relations ploys on both sides, exemplified by Madame Chiang's visits to the United States to boost wartime support for China, and Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby's searing indictment of Chiang in their 1946 book *Thunder Out of China*. The wartime experience as a whole therefore led to an understandably jaundiced view on Chiang's part concerning China's place in the wider world. Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, China had been under attack. From the Opium Wars to the Nationalist revolution of the 1920s, the overwhelming power of the foreigners had been one of the central problems in controlling China. In the Nanjing decade, Chiang's regime had made various efforts to recalibrate that balance, with notable successes, such as the reacquisition of tariff autonomy. Yet another Asian power, Japan, soon made a mockery of that feeling of security which Chiang had hoped would come from the establishment of China as a recognized power in the family of nations, with the League of Nations proving a particularly hollow reed over the occupation of Manchuria in 1931. Japan's increasing aggression had led to the isolation of China under conditions of total war. Even after Pearl Harbor, Allied assistance was half-hearted, with the United States concerned to keep combat troops out of China, and the British more concerned with protecting India. Furthermore, these were the same countries that continued to maintain extraterritorial rights on China's territory, and had not yet renounced the gains of the previous century's imperialism (in 1943, both Japan and the Allies would in fact

end the unequal treaties, a relatively low-cost gesture of their sincerity towards China). Although technically an Ally, Chiang had little reason to believe that the world was a friendlier place towards China than it had been a few decades earlier.

In this context, Chiang had published in his name an extraordinary personal manifesto. Unlike Mao, Chiang did not produce lengthy theoretical works, and even this one was not his personal composition: it was generally considered to have been ghostwritten by the right-wing Nationalist thinker Tao Xisheng. Yet it was authorized by Chiang and published under his name. *China's Destiny* [Zhongguo zhi mingyun] was an exposition of the nature of China's modern crisis, and the reasons for the country's continuing vulnerability. Among the most important targets was the self-proclaimed birthplace of Chinese modernity, the May Fourth Movement, the lens through which Mao had regarded the world. The book declared

> After the May 4th [1919] Movement, the ideas of Liberalism [Democracy] and Communism spread throughout the country. But those that advocated these ideas had no real knowledge of the enduring qualities of Chinese culture; they were simply looking for something new. Moreover, they merely endeavoured to copy the superficial aspects of Western civilization without attempting to adopt its basic principles for the benefit of the Chinese economy and the people's livelihood. As a result, the educated classes and scholars generally lost their self-respect and self-confidence. Wherever the influence of these ideas prevailed, the people regarded everything foreign as right and everything Chinese as wrong.[12]

The book also placed the fate of China at the forefront of the task of regional liberation:

> China's independence and freedom are the forerunners of the liberty and equality of other Asiatic nations. That is, only when China obtains her independence and freedom can Asia be stabilized and advance into the realm of liberty and equality.[13]

The most notable feature of *China's Destiny*, however, is that it is an essentially defensive text. It is the work of a leader who regards the outside world as hostile, and regards supposed allies with little more enthusiasm than all-out enemies.

One would imagine that Mao's wartime writings might be justified in sharing this defensive view of the world. They were written, after all, at Yan'an, where the CCP was even more isolated than the Nationalist regime, with seemingly little prospect of success. And indeed, the long-term War of Resistance is one of Mao's constant themes. The Rectification Movements from 1941 onwards saw Mao's revolution at its most inward-looking, unforgiving, violent and agrarian, rather than industrializing and internationalist, in its orientation.

Yet it is clear that Mao also regarded the war as part of wider set of processes within global politics:

> The present military situation is that the Soviet Army is attacking Berlin, and the allied forces of Britain, the United States, and France are attacking the Hitlerite remnants in coordination with this offensive . . . After Hitler is wiped out, the defeat of the Japanese aggressors will not be far distant. . . . The world will unquestionably take the road of progress and not the road of reaction . . . The Soviet people have built up great strength and become the main force in the defeat of fascism. It is their efforts, plus those of the people in the other anti-fascist allied countries, which are making the destruction of fascism possible.[14]

The war, in this interpretation, was part of a global, not merely Chinese, opportunity for revolution. Mao looked at the map of China and its place in the world, and interpreted it very differently from Chiang. At the same time, however, that same map of China had changed dramatically for both leaders during the 1930s. After all, Mao was a son of Hunan, Chiang of Jiangsu. Their political lives had, previous to the war, been shaped by a China defined by its cultural heartland. The new capital at Nanjing, the May Fourth movement with its intellectual heart in Beijing, the Shanghai modernity, and even rural exile in Jiangxi for the CCP: all these were part of the territories that had been relatively central to Chinese cultural and political geography. The short years 1935 to 1938 would engender a profound change in that political geography, however. The Long March forced Mao and the Party to the northwest of China, an isolated and rural spot. Within two years, the Japanese invasion would do the same to the Nationalists, with the forced relocation of the government to the interior between autumn 1937 and spring 1938, first to Wuhan (Hankow), then to Chongqing (Chungking). The Japanese occupied the cultural and political heartland

of China. Its greatest cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing, remained in their hands, and both Chiang and Mao's home provinces eventually fell to them as well. This meant that the anti-Japanese resistance found itself having to project an idea of 'China' in their minds and those of their people while dealing with the physical reality that they were not only in control of a small proportion of the country itself, but also that that it was a part of the country that was alien to them.

In Chongqing, a wartime propaganda discourse was established in which the city was portrayed as a microcosm of the nation in exile.[15] Yet this could not hide the underlying reality that easterners, forcibly relocated to the 'great interior' [*da houfang*] regarded Chongqing as the back of beyond, a dirty, backward city. Nor was Sichuan province, in which the city was located, much more central to eastern concerns. Sichuan has for centuries been part of Chinese territory, and its rich agriculture had made it a breadbasket province. Yet its western extremes were really parts of Tibet, ethnically, culturally, and climatically different. During the Nanjing decade, the west of China had been alien territory for Chiang, with Sichuan and neighbouring Yunnan province both controlled by uneasy allies at best.[16] To the north was Xinjiang, the central Asian portion of China which was again, less than secure territory. For Chiang, this was essentially government in exile, a reality covered over by a discourse that sought to reassure the huge refugee population that the nation still endured, but did so several hundred miles west of where it had been located before.

The Communists too had had to become used to alien territory. They had got to know China's far western reaches earlier than Chiang, having followed the tortuous path of the Long March through Tibet and Shaanxi. The Party's move from urban to rural revolution was in large part shaped by necessity: by the early 1930s, the party had been effectively eliminated from China's major cities (though an underground presence continued to operate). The rural peasantry was, in practice, the constituency with which the Party had to deal. Yet Mao's own rise to prominence as part of the change in revolutionary tactics was also a product of his own rural upbringing, a vision of China which was rooted in the reality of agricultural practice. Nonetheless the harsh lands of Jiangxi and then northwestern China were very different from the breadbasket lands of Hunan which he had known as a child; the very savagery of class war in the former locations may, at least in part, relate to the genuinely different climate and soil fertility with which Mao was faced.

The Cold War world

Even the Cold War did not much increase Mao's desire to travel abroad, yet this should not obscure the way in which Mao's mental map, which took in the wider world from his very earliest days, now used the opportunity of power to expand his horizons, drawing on the expectations raised by his wartime experience, using his success in revolution to put forward a vision that was truly global.

Mao may only have left China twice in his life, but he was also supported in this vision of China's place in a new, potentially revolutionary world, by the number of visitors who came to him. Particularly as the USSR became wary of exporting revolution as it sought to preserve its Cold War gains, China appealed to many emergent Third World nations as a symbol of Third World independence. High-level leaders from Asia and Africa, where the anti-colonial struggle continued through the 1950s and 1960s, came in droves to Beijing. The ultimate victory in Mao's desire to remake world order in his image, however, was the visit of President Richard Nixon in 1972. For Mao, the significance of the fact that the President had come to him, rather than vice versa, was clear.

Yet it was also clear that Mao's vision of the world was rooted in part in attitudes older than the new vision of revolutionary Third World anti-colonialism. A revealing conversation between Mao and Vietnamese leaders in 1972 shows Mao saying to Nguyen Thi Binh first of all that 'We belong to the same family. The North, the South, [of Vietnam], Indochina and Korea, we belong to the same family and support one another', a statement that has shades of Zou Taofen's attempts in the 1920s to forge a modern yet Confucian model of the international system. Yet the familial metaphor took a more patronizing turn when Mao asked that a Vietnamese name be 'translated' into Chinese, that is, read as if the Chinese version were more 'correct' than the Vietnamese, an unsubtle reference to the traditional role of China as the regional hegemon, or 'elder brother' in the Confucian order.[17] This vision of China's role in the region, and in global politics more widely, never left Mao, and reflects that way in which the chauvinism of an earlier era jostled uncomfortably in his mind with a world order which was ostensibly non-hierarchical and underpinned by revolutionary anti-imperialism.

For Chiang, one might argue, the entire Cold War period was a variation of his experience in Chongqing. At that time, the temporary capital had become a microcosm of the whole nation; now, following the victory by the CCP on the mainland, Chiang created an increasingly fantastic construct by which the island of Taiwan *was* the Republic of China,

temporarily and inexplicably exiled to the island, but still operating. In this, of course, he was indulged by the United States and its allies such as Japan, as well as world bodies such as the United Nations, which continued to recognize Chiang's regime as the legitimate ruler of China until 1971. Chiang never abandoned the pretence that he was ruler of all China, and this conviction shaped his actions on Taiwan with often tragic consequences.

For Chiang was always a nationalist, and his vision of that nation-state was a centralized and homogenized one where Chinese culture and identity were essentially subsumed into one grand vision. In Taiwan, however, he came up against forces that simply did not fit into this vision. The people of the island had not been part of a unified China since 1895 (when the island was handed over to Japan as part of the settlement of the first Sino-Japanese War), and the Nationalists arrived on the island in a manner that made them seem as much colonial occupiers as the Japanese whom they had replaced. On 28 February 1947, mass protests by the island's indigenous elite would break out, and were put down with great brutality by troops sent from the mainland. Until democratization in the 1990s, this event, the '2-28 massacre', would sit below the surface of Taiwan's past. The 1960s also saw attempts to assimilate the island's small Polynesian aboriginal community into the dominant Han Chinese culture. All of these could be put down to the pressures of the Cold War, in which the United States supported many other dictatorships on the grounds that they were opposed to communism. However, the echoes of *China's Destiny* can also be seen in Chiang's vision of Cold War Taiwan:

> Formosa [i.e. Taiwan] and the Pescadores were originally opened up by the Hans. They stand firmly in the southeast and have long been the bulwarks of China . . . All in all, China's history during the past five thousand years is the record of the common destiny of all these clans. This common record constitutes the history of how all these various clans were blended into the Chinese nation.[18]

Chiang had always seen China as a united whole with little room for the reality of regional, ethnic, and historical difference which makes China even today a subcontinent rather than simply a country. This vision also, to be fair, stimulated his administration to learn from some of the mistakes he had made on the mainland. Recognizing that unjust land distribution had stimulated revolution, the Nationalists on Taiwan instituted a thorough-going, though non-class-based, land reform policy,

as well as extensive welfare provision, which, combined with an export-oriented economic policy, meant that by the time of Chiang's death, Taiwan, unlike many other US satellite dictatorships, was a prosperous and relatively equal society. The origins of the economic miracle have been found in many places: a closed economy with an export-oriented policy, and the protection of the United States during the Cold War among them. But the role of Chiang, still very much in control up to his death in 1975, in trying to create a China that would be united, and mapping that vision onto Taiwan, should not just be understood as a new story (making the best of unexpected island exile), but the continuation of a revolutionary mission that had sought a particular mental map of China since the 1920s – a China united and at peace – and would not let it go even in the vastly different world of the 1970s.

Maps, minds, and visions

Chiang and Mao were both aided and hindered in their grand visions of what the map of China might look like by the reality of constantly changing political geography on the ground. Between their births, just four years apart, and their deaths, a mere year apart, Qing China had lost Outer Mongolia (after 1911), been split between warlords, partially reunited (during the Nanjing decade), torn apart (during the war with Japan and the Civil War) and then reshaped into a reunited mainland and a rival state on Taiwan (a situation where the political reality seems to be increasingly at odds with the mental maps of today's CCP).

Why did the changing political geography help Chiang and Mao's visions? The onrush of imperialism and the system of nation-states forced them to think in ways that earlier generations of Chinese could not countenance. Neither man knew exactly what form a new China would take. All they knew was that it would not, and could not, look like the lost *tianxia* ('all under heaven') of the imperial era. Knowing that there was no going back forced them to think what might be forged by going forward.

At the same time, the circumstances of that changed political geography closed more mental frontiers than it opened. For China was opened up through violence and war: its rapid changes of shape (to demonstrate this, just seek out maps of 'China' from 1910, 1928, and 1940) terrified more than they inspired. Mao, assisted by the seeming certainties of Marx-Lenin-Mao Zedong Thought, did see the new map of China, and the global space in which it stood, as a source of possibilities for the future more than Chiang. But neither of them was willing to think of a

China that looked like a country that other, less famous thinkers of the era had put forward: in particular, a federal, decentralized nation that would still be Chinese, but not subject to the paranoid control-freakery of a central leader in Nanjing or Beijing. Ultimately, Chiang and Mao's mental maps were immeasurably widened by modernity; but the way that that modernity manifested itself closed them to new ways in which that map might be divided up.

Notes

1. On premodern ideas of China's place in the world, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Sextants of Beijing* (New York, 1999).
2. There is no English-language biography of Chiang's whole life. His record up to 1949 has recently been reassessed in a lively and thoughtful fashion in Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China He Lost* (London, 2003).
3. There are numerous biographies of Mao, though archival access does not yet permit a full account of his life. Perhaps the most judicious of the recent works in English is Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (London, 1999).
4. Terry Bodenhorn, *Defining Modernity: Guomindang Rhetorics of a New China, 1920–1970* (Ann Arbor, 2002).
5. For the complexities of class thought in the Nationalist revolution, see John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Class, and Culture in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford, 1998).
6. Zou Taofen, 'Zenyang huifu minzu diwei' [How to recover our nation's position] in *Shenghuo* 2: 33 (19 June 1927).
7. Mao Zedong, 'Letter to Xiao Zisheng (Winter 1915)', in Stuart Schram, ed., *Mao's Road to Power* (New York, 1992), 1: 85.
8. Mao Zedong, 'Marginal Notes to: Friedrich Paulsen, A System of Ethics', in Schram, ed., *Mao's Road*, 185.
9. For the origins of Chinese communism, see Arif Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism* (Oxford, 1989), and Hans van de Ven, *From Friend to Comrade: The Origins of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921–1927* (Berkeley, 1992). I have discussed extensively the importance of international thought in the minds of the generation of May Fourth thinkers in Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford, 2004), particularly Chs 3 and 4.
10. The work of Lloyd Eastman is the best example of this negative assessment of the Nationalist era; *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927–1937* (Cambridge. MA, 1974), and *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937–1949* (Stanford, 1984).
11. See, for instance, Hans van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925–1945* (London, 2003).
12. Chiang Kai-shek, *China's Destiny* (New York, 1947), 98.
13. *China's Destiny*, 236.
14. Mao Zedong, 'On Coalition Government', in *Mao Tse-tung – Selected Writings* (Calcutta, 1967), 241.

15. Lee McIsaac, 'The City as Nation: Creating a Wartime Capital in Chongqing', in Joseph W. Esherick, ed., *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950* (Honolulu, 2000).
16. Hsiao-ting Lin, *Tibet and Nationalist China's Frontier: Intrigues and Ethnopolitics, 1928–49* (Vancouver, 2006).
17. Odd Arne Westad *et al.*, ed., *77 Conversations between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964–1977*, Cold War International History Working Paper 22 (Washington DC, 1998), 185, 186.
18. *China's Destiny*, 39.

7
Hamaguchi Osachi (1870–1931)*

Eri Hotta

On the morning of 14 November 1930, at Tokyo Station, a young ultra-nationalist named Sagōya Tomeo shot Hamaguchi Osachi in the stomach as Japan's premier walked down the platform to board a train intended to take him to military inspection duties in the mid-western prefecture of Okayama. Prime Minister Hamaguchi narrowly survived this attempt on his life, at least for the time being. Though physically enfeebled and finding it extremely difficult even to stand up, he commuted from his hospital bed to a series of gruelling sessions in the Diet, Japan's parliament. With dogged perseverance, he tried to make sure that all of the bills his party *Rikken Minseitō* (Constitutional Democratic Party or more commonly, Minseitō) had initiated would pass. He recognized that many of the policies and institutions he stood for – including reduction of naval armament, strict fiscal measures, equitable social policy, party politics, and the survival of his party itself – were at stake. Ultimately, in the face of mounting pressures from the military hardliners and the conservative opposition party *Rikken Seiyūkai* (Friends of Constitutional Government Party, a.k.a. Seiyūkai), Hamaguchi's resistance gave way and he resigned his post in April 1931. On 26 August, he died from complications of his unhealed wounds.

Hamaguchi's reluctant exit after 650 days in office had serious consequences for the subsequent history of Japan. It was indeed a critical juncture for the fragile liberalism of the depression-hit country. On the domestic front, the forceful rejection of his leadership heralded the end of Japan's fledgling, yet very real party politics. It also marked the beginning of the trends towards further radicalization of Japan's political landscape by terror tactics.

Moreover, the shooting of Hamaguchi had grave foreign policy ramifications. In spite of various internal and external constraints, his cabinet

had consistently promoted liberal internationalist values, advocating alignment with the post-war economic and political institutions established by the Paris peace settlement and the Washington Conference for the Pacific and Asian regions. In particular, his leadership was marked by two bold moves in those areas. The first was his decision, together with Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke, to take Japan back onto the gold standard. Coupled with the disastrous timing of that decision, which immediately followed the Great Depression, Hamaguchi's attempt at stabilizing the Japanese economy proved to be a failure. The second was the successful but hugely controversial ratification of the London Naval Treaty that limited Japanese construction of her naval fleet. This was done in outright defiance of the conservatives and military hardliners, and thus constituted the last remarkable instance before the war of civilian leaders challenging the opponents of parliamentary government. The military regarded his policy as an attempt to curb their influence. Japan's extreme far right too was furious, seeing the cabinet's internationalist leanings as a humiliating sign of concessions to the Anglo-American powers.

But despite the belligerent opposition he faced from his enemies, and despite the actual austerity of his fiscal measures, Hamaguchi remained enormously popular, and was always able to mobilize public opinion in his favour. He generated a great deal of public confidence precisely because he was able to explain his policies and principles in a straightforward manner (he was the first Japanese prime minister to make effective use of radio broadcasts). He was nicknamed affectionately 'Raion Saishō' [Lion Premier] for his dignified looks and imposing build long before the media-savvy Koizumi Junichirō, consciously styling his manner and language on his illustrious predecessor (in whose cabinet his own grandfather had served as communications minister) reclaimed the title for himself. Indeed, the shooting by the ultra-nationalist fanatic of Hamaguchi put a wilful and blatant end to Japan's courtship with liberalism, and set the stage for her later expansionist war.

The significance of Hamaguchi's politics and his demise was enormous for Japan's domestic and international behaviour of the next decade and a half. Yet curiously, studies of his life remain rather limited, not only in English but also in Japanese scholarship. This is partly because there is very little in the way of a tradition of critical political biographies in Japan, though hagiographies and popular novels are common. In turn, such a lack may be explained by the very absence of sufficiently attractive subjects. The prevalent and often correct notion is that Japanese politicians – even including the most seemingly independent-minded

and charismatic of prime ministers, of which Japan has had very few in any case – are mere cogs in a larger decision-making mechanism, and by and large unable to effect policy change in the country's highly bureaucratized, consensus-oriented government. Hamaguchi stands out as a rare exception. He implemented many of his policies – ultimately at the cost of his own life – within the legitimate confines of an emerging and transparent democratic forum. This is all the more reason to pay attention to Hamaguchi's leadership in some detail.

The present chapter seeks to evaluate the mental map of this notable, but little-studied figure, who led Japan's 27th cabinet. It is hoped that this exploration will help to illuminate what is too often understood in the broader context of interwar international history as Japan's abrupt militarist – some would call 'fascist' – turn in the 1930s. Indeed, the decade of volatile changes following Hamaguchi's fall makes more sense when observed in the light of the problems and challenges he faced during his tenure. His demise was followed by a physical expansion of Japan's geographical map, the extent and speed of which were probably beyond Hamaguchi's wildest imagination. It started with the Manchurian Incident of 1931, followed by the outbreak of de facto war with China in 1937, and finally, Japan's war with the West, that led to the country's occupation of much of Southeast Asia, an imperial expansion only finally reversed in August 1945. From the perspective of understanding those shifting national boundaries too, then, Hamaguchi's mental map offers a critical reference point for what came after his demise.

There are several different levels on which the composition of Hamaguchi's mental map may be understood. They range from his stoic and principled personality to his professional experience in government, and to his unwavering faith in the future of constitutional democracy and liberal internationalism. This chapter will explore the main features of his approach through the events that epitomized his leadership. It will begin with discussion of his most fundamental beliefs and worldviews, which were rooted in his background and upbringing, and were already amply reflected in his experiences prior to assuming the premiership. This will be followed by a further exploration of his beliefs, in the light of his major policies.

Borders of the map – fundamental beliefs

Hamaguchi Osachi was born in Kōchi, on 1 April 1870, as the third son of Minaguchi Tanehira, a forestry official, and his wife Shigeko. He stood out as an unusually bright and hard-working boy, even for someone

coming from a former samurai family that greatly valued education.[1] Like many other gifted boys of that period without claim to inheritance, he was eventually adopted by the prominent local Hamaguchi family in 1889. Impressed with his stellar academic performance, and without a male heir, the Hamaguchis supported his higher education. The adopted son would eventually marry their only daughter Natsuko and inherit the family estate.

In 1895, Hamaguchi graduated second in his class from the Law Faculty of Tokyo Imperial University and entered the Ministry of Finance. His career choice was a natural one for a highly driven and idealistic young man of his background. In general, the idea of dedicating one's resources and talents to the betterment of the modern Japanese state, which was trying desperately to catch up with the great powers, was at once reasonable and appealing. And there are certainly historical and social reasons for the prevalence of such a sense of duty to the state, including the Confucian code of ethics that emphasized individual duties over individual freedom, especially among the samurai class.

But the more compelling and specific explanation for his professional path probably lies in Hamaguchi's birthplace. Located on the southern coast of the Shikoku island of the Japanese islands chain, Kōchi, formerly known as the feudal domain of Tosa, was one of the four south-eastern provinces that produced swashbuckling heroes of the Meiji Restoration (1868). They called for an end to the relatively peaceful but isolationist rule of the Tokugawa Shōgunate that had lasted for more than 250 years, and they established Japan's modern state. Having been outside the central domains favoured by the Tokugawa rulers, those four provinces in the southeast of Japan produced many of the architects of the new state and the first often colourful officials and politicians.

Moreover, born in the third year of the reign of the Meiji Emperor, Hamaguchi was the first prime minister to have been born after the Restoration, placing him at the forefront of the new generation of young men (and women) unencumbered by feudal loyalties and nostalgia for the old order. Thus the timing as well as geography were formative influences on Hamaguchi's political consciousness. As he said, 'I came of age in the teen years of the Meiji era, when [the Tosa region's exploration of] political philosophy was at its height. Growing up amidst Tosa youths, I most naturally grew into the mould of a politician. The political seed was planted inside me.'[2]

Indeed, the period from the mid-1870s to the 1880s was the heyday of modern Japan's democratic movement originating in the disenfranchised Tosa samurai. The popular rights movement called the Freedom

and People's Rights Movement [*Jiyū Minken Undō*] propelled a national debate about the future of Japan's political system, especially as it concerned the constitution and the legislative assembly. It became an enormously successful socio-political movement that quickly spread to the deeper layers of society, across all classes. Inspired by the writings of Western liberal writers, such as Samuel Smiles (*Self-Help*), John Stuart Mill, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the *minken* activists spoke against the oligarchical nature of the provisional regime and urged the establishment of a popularly elected house of representatives, in addition to promoting general social welfare and the rights of individuals, including those of women and outcasts. Trying to temper this hugely influential, partly anti-elitist, and possibly subversive mass movement, the government resorted to a series of repressive measures, but with limited success. Recognizing the extent of the movement's success in mobilizing broad-based support, the government finally struck a compromise in 1881, and declared that a national assembly would be opened in ten years' time.

It was during the period leading up to the convocation of the first Diet that the pioneering generation of parliamentary leaders, such as Itagaki Taisuke, a Tosa native, and Ōkuma Shigenobu, later prime minister, founded their respective political parties. Eventually, the radicalization of some *minken* activists (especially certain elements of Itagaki's Liberty Party, who found a common cause with the impoverished peasant class) slowed down and fragmented the movement. But the popular trend towards a broadly liberal agenda continued until November 1890, when the first Diet was finally convened, providing an official forum for reform. The popularly elected House of Representatives with legislative and budgeting powers, together with the non-elective House of Peers, with only legislative power, now became Japan's bi-cameral parliament.

It was against this background of ideas and activism about Japan's future polity that Hamaguchi came of age and aspired to a career in government. And it was not long before this young official in the Ministry of Finance, with his immense drive, was discovered by influential politicians, including Gotō Shimpei, the first president of the South Manchurian Railroad, and Katō Takaaki, who would eventually appoint Hamaguchi as his finance minister in 1924.

Despite the rapid advancement of Hamaguchi's professional career, his initial experience in the Ministry was not without problems. He was often at loggerheads with his superiors, seeming stubborn and uncompromising. He detested the venality and corruption, which he came across in his everyday duties. His lifelong hatred of back-room dealings in politics and business, which usually took place – and still do – in

private rooms of fancy Japanese inns and restaurants, fit well with this trait. He was a highly principled and serious man. But the same character traits could also be seen as obstinacy and priggishness. He was in addition a man of few words, who did not converse or socialize easily, though he proved to be a very effective orator precisely because he took his words, however few, very seriously.[3]

Hamaguchi found himself marginalized for a good part of his early career, being sent to various remote corners of Japan to head local tax offices and kept away from the centre of decision making in Tokyo. But he was well liked by his supporters, such as Gotō and Katō, and his colleagues and old classmates. He was also considered to be an indispensable talent for the future of Japan's state-planning. As a result of determined lobbying by his supporters, he was eventually summoned back to Tokyo to assume a series of important positions within the ministry.

With that experience and influential supporters, he decided in 1914 to enter the mainstream of parliamentary politics. Again he demonstrated the strength of his conviction and principles. Believing in the popular basis of party politics, he did not seek a peerage as did most other leaders with extensive government service. He preferred to stand for election, and in the following year, in the 12th general election, he was elected to the House of Representatives for his native Tosa, where he was to be re-elected another six times.

In May 1915, after the first victory, he publicly stated his resolve: 'If we do not come up with policies that can be implemented tomorrow, we cannot expect any real political development. Now that I have become a representative, I shall dispense with all empty and impractical theories about politics and endeavour to present responsible political plans.'[4] The statement encapsulated his political philosophy, combining idealism with practical answers. And this philosophy remained remarkably unaltered through his political career. To the modern ear used to hearing empty political promises, his declaration may sound trite. But he appeared to take those words to heart and quickly emerged as one of the rising hopes for Japan's reformers. In less than a decade, in June 1924, he was appointed Finance Minister by Katō Takaaki. He then sat in the subsequent cabinet under the leadership of Wakatsuki Reijirō, first as Finance Minister, and later Home Affairs Minister, until April 1927.

Now with substantial experience acquired in a relatively short period, Hamaguchi became the first leader of the Minseitō, which resulted from a merger of two parties in June 1927. This gave the Minseitō a majority in the House of Representatives. Alarmed by this, the Seiyūkai cabinet led by the Army General Tanaka Giichi dissolved the House, calling for

a national election under the new universal manhood suffrage law in February 1928.[5] It was deemed to be Japan's first 'popular' or 'ordinary' election with all males over the age of 25 being given the franchise, and no property ownership requirements, which resulted in a quadrupling of the number of eligible voters.

Determined to regain the House majority, the Seiyūkai resorted to the common tactics of corruption and patronage. Hamaguchi criticized their unconstitutional behaviour openly. In a speech delivered at the Minseitō party convention on 22 November 1927, he declared, '. . . regardless of our differences in policy preferences, which to my mind is quite another matter, I had expected that the Seiyūkai cabinet would wholeheartedly strive for their convictions . . . and bring the authority of party politics into full play'.[6] Instead, he complained that the unprincipled Tanaka cabinet had 'betrayed the nation's hopes, and seriously stymied the development of constitutional politics'.[7] Thus, Hamaguchi warned that Japan now faced 'an extremely critical point of being tested whether we have the ability to carry on the institution of political parties'.[8]

Hamaguchi was far from a fluent speaker, but his earnestness more than compensated for this weakness.[9] Shortly before the poll, featuring a photograph of a defiant Hamaguchi, with the slogan 'Right Will Surely Prevail', his party published its unusually detailed policy outlines, declaring that it would break with the 'anachronistic practices that infiltrate the realms of legislature, executive, and local governance'.[10] This line of argument did indeed strike a chord, resulting in 217 seats for the Seiyūkai, 216 for the Minseitō, and 32 for independents and other minor parties. The close result seriously threatened the legitimacy of the Seiyūkai leadership and was seen by some as a virtual victory for the Minseitō and for what Hamaguchi saw as Japan's vital experiment with party politics. Tanaka's government, however, decided to crush the progressive and proletarian parties and launch an attack against liberals rather than reform itself as a more viable political rival.

Economic policy – fiscal retrenchment and the gold standard

Sixteen months after the election, on 2 July 1929, the already discredited Seiyūkai cabinet led by Tanaka, which had done much to weaken incipient faith in the power of the popular mandate, resigned. The resignation drama unfolded over Tanaka's inability to account for the assassination of the north-eastern Chinese warlord, Chang Tso-lin, by Japanese army officers. The incident provoked the fury of Emperor Hirohito and his

moderate advisers. The Tanaka cabinet's lack of response to this act of military insubordination revealed the internal divisions within the Army and the growing preference within radicalized sections of the Army for a hard-line policy in China. They felt the need to prepare Japan for what they saw as the future clash with either the Soviet Union or the United States.

On the day of Tanaka's resignation, Hamaguchi was named prime minister. Within five hours, he was back in the Imperial Palace to submit the list of names of his ministers. In another three hours, he returned to the Palace for the third and final time that day, with all his cabinet members present to receive ceremonial approval from the Emperor.[11] The media responded positively, as Hamaguchi 'surprised the nation by his decisiveness, reminding us of the brilliant way the British Labour PM MacDonald formed his cabinet'.[12] The record speed was due to the unprecedented step Hamaguchi had taken in opposition of forming a shadow cabinet, meticulously planning for his party's turn to take office and mapping out a progressive agenda that included reform of labour–employer/tenant–landlord relations, women's suffrage, and lowering of the voting age.[13]

Among the ministers named by him, two are especially worthy of note. They were to be his closest allies in the implementation of his distinctive policies. The first was the British-educated and US-trained Finance Minister Inoue Junnosuke, a former chairman of the Bank of Japan, who led the recovery efforts after the Great Kantō Earthquake (1923) that destroyed much of Tokyo. Suave and flamboyant, Inoue could not have been more different from Hamaguchi in personality. But the two became firmly united in their mission to steer Japan out of the depression. The second was Shidehara Kijūrō, a diplomat noted for his adherence to liberal internationalism. During his tenure as foreign Minister between 1924 and 1927, Japan's diplomacy became known as 'Shidehara *gaikō*'. It was characterized by its pursuit of friendly and equal relations with China, unlike the power-political, hard-nosed China policy of the subsequent Tanaka cabinet that attempted to 'correct' Shidehara's diplomacy. Now back in the post, Shidehara recommenced his trademark policy, the highlight of which would come with the recognition of the new Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek in 1930.

With the strong support of his team, Hamaguchi demonstrated his earlier determination to 'come up with policies that can be implemented tomorrow', so as to produce 'real political development'.[14] The first important policy was the economic reorganization of Japan, but even for someone with Hamaguchi's skill and experience, that was to be no mean

task. The collapse of the bubble economy following the boom years of the First World War had produced inflation. Exacerbating that situation was a series of natural disasters, such as the Great Kantō Earthquake and agricultural failures in the northeast. Together, they led to the depression of 1927, prior to the advent of the worldwide depression. The stalled economic recovery undermined the power base of capitalist-backed party politics, gradually allowing for the rise of conservatives and right-wing radicals, along with unimaginative bureaucratic officials devoted to narrow specialist interests. Hamaguchi understood the enormity of the task, and was said to have urged his finance minister to recognize that what they were about to undertake was a 'life-risking venture'.[15] His use of the word 'life-risking' proved apt. Inoue too was brutally murdered in February 1932, not long after Hamaguchi's death, by an ultra-nationalist gunman inspired by apocalyptic Nichiren Buddhism under the motto of 'One Believer, One Killing.'

In actual policy terms, Hamaguchi's economic reorganization meant Japan's prompt return to the gold standard and drastic fiscal tightening. Although most powers had gone back to the gold standard in the years after the First World War, Japan's timing was delayed by the collapse of the post-war boom. A good classical liberal on both domestic and international fronts, Hamaguchi thought it imperative that Japan rejoin the international club and regain her credit as a viable free-market economy. His fiscal policy included deflationary measures and retrenchment in administrative expenses. On these matters too, he wasted no time. Preaching fiscal responsibility, and thereby criticizing Seiyūkai economic policies for being expansionist and for allowing deficit spending, the cabinet cut back the 1929 budgets which were already in operation by more than 5 per cent.[16] In addition, the 1930 budget, which was to include no form of borrowing, was set at 10 per cent below the previous year's level.[17] Such fiscal retrenchment was strongly opposed by various ministries, but none more than the Navy and Army, whose budget allocations were severely affected. Recalling the power struggle over budget planning, Hamaguchi later noted the following: 'The Army wouldn't listen. The Navy wouldn't accept. The difficulty of drawing up the budget was unheard-of.'[18]

For the industrial sectors, Hamaguchi's programme of economic reorganization centred on re-channelling investment and avoiding overproduction. In labour terms, this meant lower wages, extended hours, and massive lay-offs. Recognizing the hardship that his measures would necessarily inflict on low-income groups, his cabinet in turn worked out progressive labour-union and farm tenancy bills that would enable

workers and tenant farmers to negotiate with their employers and landlords.[19]

In August 1929, Hamaguchi also took a direct step to ensure popular understanding of his austerity measures and Japan's prompt return to the international gold standard. Hoping to explain the long-term nature of his economic programmes, he addressed the nation in the first ever radio speech given by a Japanese premier. He argued that Japan must now decide whether to 'sit back and watch' or to 'mobilize in an effort to break out of the impending difficulty'.[20] He continued, 'The present recession is a recession that knows no low point', but 'in contrast, the programme of fiscal retrenchment, economizing, and a return to the gold standard would bring a recession that will have already hit the bottom'.[21] Moreover,

> Austerity measures are not our end goal by any means. These measures are intended to strengthen the financial foundation of the state, and to nurture the national economy, so as to prepare for later growth. To grow tomorrow, we retract today. We must have the courage to withstand the small pains that will accompany this retrenchment for a while. I hope that you will cooperate with the government, and join us in our effort to overcome this difficult situation.[22]

Hamaguchi followed up the speech with flyers summarizing his radio broadcast, which were distributed to 13 million households. Remarkably, his popularity was unaffected by the austerity of those measures. If anything, his policy, painstakingly explained as a necessary evil before better times to come, helped boost public confidence. He scored an enormous public relations success, as the executive office was flooded with messages of support. With this backing, the cabinet decided to take a leap towards the gold standard on 11 January 1930 despite the Wall Street crash of 24 October 1929. The cabinet even insisted on fixing the yen at the pre-world war level, overriding sensible criticism that an expensive yen would not be in the interests of Japan's export-dependent economy. For Hamaguchi, quick-fix answers for short-term economic gains were to be avoided. He was convinced that regaining respectability was ultimately the surest and most honourable way of rebuilding the Japanese economy. The gold standard was a matter of taking part in the liberal international order, not just an economic policy.

The timing of Japan's return to gold could not have been worse, however. Japan rejoined the international club just as everyone else was leaving. For a country that was so dependent on foreign trade to pay for

raw materials, the decline of world trade, especially the sharp decline in the US silk market, and the compartmentalization of the world into economic blocs were devastating. In that way Hamaguchi's policy can be validly criticized, even though very few at the time could have predicted the actual extent of the worldwide depression.

The opposition and the ultra-nationalists made the most of their opportunity. They argued that the return to gold was inherently misguided and designed to pander to the Anglo-American powers, who could not be relied upon in times of economic hardship. That distorts the picture. The policy failed because the preconditions for it to succeed were lacking, not because it was per se imprudent or not in Japan's national interest. Besides, the Hamaguchi cabinet was flexible in its response, floating over 34 million yen in emergency unemployment bonds and railway maintenance.[23] Furthermore recognizing the failure of the policy upon assuming office in December 1931, the Seiyūkai government led by Inukai Tsuyoshi quickly put an embargo on shipping gold, minimizing the damage and allowing Japan to bounce back from the adverse effects of the depression earlier than other countries. In other words, the damage was not irreversible. If anything, the true damage of the gold standard policy was the emotive advantage it provided to conservatives and ultra-nationalists in years to come. By pointing to its failure, they portrayed their opponents as knee-jerk and conciliatory appeasers of Western capitalists.

In any case, the country was at first behind Hamaguchi's policy. In February 1930, just over a month after the yen's return to gold, Hamaguchi's Minseitō won an overwhelming victory in the second 'ordinary' nation-wide elections for the House of Representatives (273 seats for the Minseitō and 174 seats for the Seiyūkai). With a renewed sense of purpose, and the reassurance of the popular mandate that Hamaguchi craved all his political life, he embarked on another monumental task, the ratification of the treaties on naval limitation at the London Conference.

The London Conference and limits of liberalism

The London Conference, held from 22 January to 22 April 1930, dealt with the rules of engagement, particularly for submarine warfare, and the number of naval vessels maintained by the United States, Britain, Japan, France, and Italy. Following the agreements reached at the Washington Conference (1921–1922), the naval limitation proposed at London extended to smaller ships. The major change from the Washington

Treaty was in the area of battleship tonnage. It was proposed, after a series of negotiations, that the powers move the ratio from 5:5:3 to approximately 10:10:7 between the United States, Britain, and Japan. It was by all accounts a diplomatic success for Japan's civilian delegates, headed by the former Prime Minister Wakatsuki Reijirō. They managed to persuade the Americans, who originally tried to cap Japan's allocation at the Washington level of six, a level that had been seen by many Japanese as a humiliating concession a decade earlier.

The Navy Ministry, along with some influential officers, favoured ratifying the treaty. But forever suspicious of Hamaguchi's liberal internationalism and his attempt to undermine the authority of the armed services, the Naval General Staff launched an all-out campaign against the cabinet. With the backing of the Privy Council, the General Staff pointed out that the proposed number was 0.025 per cent short of their original target.

At this point, a few words of clarification of the peculiar arrangement of the Japanese government itself are necessary, as it had a profound impact on the Navy's argument against ratification of the treaty. The Privy Council, established in 1888 and abolished in 1947, was a conservative organ intended to preserve the Meiji political system. Consisting of lifetime councillors appointed mostly from the House of Peers, the Council could exercise a power of veto to prevent the Emperor from signing a law or treaty. Though it later lost much of its influence with the rise of the military during Japan's war in Asia and the Pacific, in the 1920s, it still acted as a formidable bulwark against constitutional change, often challenging party cabinets by invoking imperial sovereignty.

As far as actual policymaking was concerned, the Meiji Constitution of 1889 stipulated that the Emperor had the formal right (though hardly exercised in practice) to formulate and implement foreign policy with the assistance of his advisers. But the affairs of the military were excluded from the Constitution's definition of foreign policy, leaving military advisers separate from the Emperor's civilian advisers. This arrangement, commonly called *tōsuiken no dokuritsu* [the autonomy of the Supreme Command], in effect permitted Japan's armed forces to assert their influence directly on the making of external policy. Already before the First World War, it can be said that Japan de facto had two governments, one military and the other civilian. The Navy and the Army, which before Hamaguchi's retrenchment measure enjoyed 30 per cent of the entire national budget allocations, were also sustained by the record of successful wars, making the task for civilian leaders like Hamaguchi to assert their policy doubly difficult.

Invoking the argument of the autonomy of the Supreme Command, the Privy Council challenged Hamaguchi arguing that he had no right to interfere with military affairs formulated to serve the best interest of the Empire. But the prime minister turned out to be even more determined, threatening for the first time in history the constitutional removal of the councillors. Whereas other civilian leaders suggested reaching a compromise with the Council, he would not concede, insisting that the true interests of Japan lay in the ratification of the treaty. Assured in the knowledge that the Supreme Commander himself backed his policy, he rejected the suggestion of compromise saying, 'It doesn't matter if the Privy Council opposes us. I intend to request an Imperial sanction [against the Council] and will take no steps towards reaching an understanding.'[24]

From the perspective of safeguarding the institution of parliamentary and party politics, the behaviour of the opposition had a devastating impact. The Inukai-led Seiyūkai immediately adopted the Navy hardliners' argument and attacked Hamaguchi for violating the autonomy of the Supreme Command, in effect legitimating the assertion that the Army and Navy should be allowed to follow their own policies regardless of the cabinet. This was one of the two political parties that should have been strengthening the basis of party politics and restraining the military. Instead, it undermined the very principles that supported party politics. For example, Hatoyama Ichirō, a post-war prime minister (1954–1956), who helped found Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, was then a Seiyūkai member, who delivered a jingoistic attack of this kind. He declared, 'I daresay the government's ignoring of the wishes of the General Staff, a direct organ associated with the Supreme Command, is indeed a great political adventure.'[25]

The acrimonious debate continued for the next few months. However, despite these serious setbacks, public opinion was again behind Hamaguchi. On 7 September, the metropolitan daily *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun* declared, 'The nation whole-heartedly welcomes the policy of arms reduction . . . In belittling that public opinion, the Privy Council is going against the tides of modern politics.'[26] Ultimately, on 19 September, the Privy Council gave in and recommended the 'unconditional ratification of the Treaty by the Emperor.'[27] On 27 October, the formal ratification was announced simultaneously on the radio by the premiers of Britain and Japan and the president of the United States. It was an unprecedented and hugely successful public relations stunt that displayed the spirit of international cooperation and good will. In his speech, Hamaguchi declared:

> At present, the world has passed the 'age of adventure', in which a power would not think twice about resorting to force to advance her national interest. But now, we have reached the 'age of stability'. We are to strive for co-existence and co-prosperity, based on mutual trust of nations.[28]

But how could a nation coexist and prosper with others when there was no unity and prosperity to be found at home? It was directly as a result of the ratification of the London Naval Treaty that the prime minister was gunned down. But defiant even in his half-unconscious state following the shooting, Hamaguchi said, that to die for one's cause was 'a man's cherished desire'.[29]

Conclusion

Relentlessly taking advantage of Hamaguchi's ill health, the Seiyūkai demanded that the premier attend the 59th Diet (24 December 1930–27 March 1931). The session turned out to be one of the most hostile in history, and marked the lowest point in Japan's parliamentary politics before the war. Prior to the shooting, Hamaguchi had looked forward to the 59th Diet, hoping to pass labour union and farm tenancy legislation, a tax reform bill with more equitable redistribution made possible by the savings resulting from the London Treaty, the lowering of the male voting age from 25 to 20, and the much-publicized bill to enfranchise adult women in local elections.[30] In the wake of Hamaguchi's ordeal, however, the Seiyūkai, in an effort to topple its rival increased the use of unparliamentary methods, disrupting the sessions and even resorting to physical assaults on the pro tem Prime Minister Shidehara.

The Minseitō itself began to disintegrate in the absence of Hamaguchi, who was recuperating in hospital. Career diplomat and non-party member Shidehara lacked the charisma and parliamentary skills that were an integral part of Hamaguchi's leadership. Determined not to give in, and determined to pass the cabinet's social reform bills, Hamaguchi drove himself against medical advice to attend the Diet sessions in March. Donning a pair of felt slippers made to look like regular shoes (as the pain of wearing leather shoes was too great), the emaciated premier would stand up and stumble towards the parliamentary podium to answer questions in a barely audible voice. The display of courage and conviction moved even members of the opposition, including the veteran Seiyūkai leader Inukai. But there were also persistent demands for his resignation, some openly telling him to disappear and die a quiet death. After attending

ten such sessions, his body finally gave in, and he resigned in April and died in August. The death of Hamaguchi together with the acrimonious 59th Diet marked the end of liberal reform, as the bills originated by the Hamaguchi cabinet were shelved and vetoed at various stages, by the Privy Council and conservative members of the House of Peers.

In the meantime, Japan witnessed a series of assassination plots that ended the lives of many liberal and moderate opponents of militarism. There is no doubt that these fanatical assassins influenced the climate of opinion. While Japan would not become a total military dictatorship or a fascist state, there were more and more reasons for civilian leaders to concede to bureaucratic and military pressures. In order to prevent another coup attempt, leaders of less courage and principle, more concerned with their own survival, including the Emperor, were prompted to confer authority on the armed forces which had bred the climate of terror in the first place, each time giving in further to military demands. Although enough to prevent a successful coup, this tactic in the end amounted to futile appeasement. And the first decisive turn towards this path was the Manchurian Incident that began in September 1931, in which the Japanese field army forcibly took over China's north-eastern provinces.

Unable to come up with a concerted response, the Wakatsuki cabinet, which assumed leadership after Hamaguchi's resignation, first pressed to contain the hostilities. The Army Minister Minami Jirō too agreed to this policy. But neither civil nor military instructions stopped the young officers. Those officers in the field, together with their supporters in Tokyo, invoked the autonomy of the Supreme Command once more to legitimize their actions. Rather than immediately condemning that argument, as Hamaguchi had only a year earlier, the Wakatsuki cabinet eventually approved the seizure of Jilin on 24 September. The pattern of field insubordination followed by reluctant government acceptance continued for a while until finally, in December 1931, the frustrated Wakatsuki cabinet resigned. This encouraged the Army's northern operation to push on with full force, and allowed the Seiyūkai to reclaim national leadership. The pretence of party politics continued until 15 May 1932, when the Seiyūkai leader Inukai who too tried initially to contain hostilities was assassinated by discontented naval officers. From then on, non-party cabinets became the norm.

In retrospect, a turning point had been reached in September 1931 when the Wakatsuki cabinet could have protested firmly before the Incident became a fait accompli. Moreover, the Emperor himself held the ultimate prerogative of putting a decisive end to the matter, as he had

in prompting the resignation of Tanaka Giichi's cabinet in July 1929. The Japanese Consul General in Mukden at the time of the Manchurian Incident, Hayashi Kyūjirō, reflected in his post-war memoirs that

> Had the government resigned within a few days of the Incident . . . had the government issued a statement of protest and treated the matter with the same spirit . . . all – including the dignity of the government, Japan's international position, her economy, and her party politics – could have been salvaged.[31]

Hayashi's assessment of the Wakatsuki cabinet is especially damning. He regarded the cabinet's 'indecisiveness for almost three months even though they knew very well that the situation [in Manchuria] was deteriorating minute by minute' as largely responsible for 'exacerbating the unprecedented national emergencies'.[32] They were 'unable to let go of power and they kept on engaging in petty internal power games'.[33]

It is of course impossible to know what Hamaguchi as premier would have done had he lived longer. It is also difficult to imagine how Wakatsuki's resignation alone could have resolved the crisis. But the clear and resilient boundaries of Hamaguchi's mental map demonstrated throughout his lifetime, and especially during his tenure as prime minister, when the pressures upon him were at their greatest, suggest that he would have taken decisive action to condemn the military insubordination. Hamaguchi's strength was his readiness, literally, to risk his life for what he believed to be a right goal. In that sense, Hamaguchi was much more of a samurai than those ultra-nationalists, who invoked pseudo-traditional arguments of Japanese martial sprit and terrorized Japan's politics in the 1930s. Those officers and radicals tended to come from the most impoverished rural parts of Japan that were hit hardest by agricultural failures and the depression. But contrary to their portrayal of Hamaguchi and his policies as a product of corrupt Western liberalism, Hamaguchi was the very embodiment of the principles and courage they themselves lacked.

Indeed, premiership was an office Hamaguchi accepted with a great deal of resolve and solemnity and with an awareness that the pursuit of his political principles might actually cost him his life. A devoted husband and father, he told his family: 'Insofar as I have accepted this great appointment, I have resolved to advance even in the face of death. If something were to happen to me, please, I beg of you to try to stay calm'.[34] Fully aware of the risks, Hamaguchi even minimized the number

of his personal guards to reduce internal expenses, in effect making it easy for his assassin to shoot him at close rage. The irony of his courage was that in his absence only someone else with equal courage and determination could have carried on the task. There were some, to be sure, but not enough.

This point leads us to consider some shortcomings of Hamaguchi's leadership. There is of course a valid argument to be made against his cabinet's decision to return Japan to the gold standard at an inopportune moment. But were there more fundamental failings in the way he carried out his policies? One conceivable argument against his leadership is that his unwillingness to compromise alienated his enemies more than was necessary. But that is a weak criticism, since the Wakatsuki cabinet opted for exactly that course in response to the Manchurian Incident, and with disastrous results.

What about Hamaguchi's character flaws? His rigid adherence to principle also led tragically to his insistence on appearing at the 59th Diet which, some believe, caused his untimely death. Such criticism, however, serves only to highlight the impossible challenges Hamaguchi faced as well as the extraordinary consistency with which he approached them. These set him apart from other leaders not only in the interwar period but in the entire modern history of Japan. He confronted the task of engaging in politics with opponents who were unwilling to abide by the same rules and who resorted even to murderous tactics when they could not have their way. That is why it is all the more remarkable that for however brief a period, Hamaguchi managed to forge a strong democratic consensus behind his domestic and international policies, making politics a matter of reason and will without compromising his fundamental beliefs. In the end, his leadership was marked by policies that accurately reflected his mental map, which was at once principled and uncompromising. His principle was what made him and what cost him his life. And with him went Japan's best chance of democratic liberalism for a long time.

Notes

* I would like to thank Christopher Szpilman and Ian Buruma for their invaluable comments on the earlier version of this chapter. The entire chapter follows the Japanese convention of placing the surname before the given name. Full names will be listed for the authors of all Japanese publications. (e.g.: Hamaguchi Osachi, rather than O. Hamaguchi or Hamaguchi O.) Their place of Publication is Tokyo. The translations of the primary sources are all mine, unless otherwise indicated.

1. On the day of Hamaguchi's appointment as prime minister, his eldest brother Yoshikiyo reminisced in an interview: 'Osachi was a serious boy to the bone . . . I must say he really liked to study, and was also very excellent at it.' *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, 3 July 1929, 5.
2. In the posthumously published book *Zuikanroku* [The Record of Passing Observations] (1931), a collection of essays written from the fall of 1929 to the summer of 1931 and edited by his youngest daughter Fujiko, Hamaguchi recorded a series of observations about his own character. His self-reflection was a fruit of his lifelong practice of daily meditations. Ikei Masaru, Hatano Marsaru and Kurosawa Fumitaka, eds, Hamaguchi Osachi, *Nikki/Zuikanroku* (1991), 467.
3. According to Hamaguchi, the isolated environment of his childhood was crucial to his character development. His eldest brother was 16 and the second elder brother 8 when Hamaguchi was born. As he had very few playmates in his neighbourhood, his companions were either 'books or the surrounding wilderness filled with mountains, forests, fields, and valleys. Because of this, I grew up to be a sturdy boy . . . and naturally grew to prefer to speak very little'. Hamaguchi, *Nikki/Zuikanroku*, 465.
4. Hatano Masaru, *Hamaguchi Osachi: Seitō Seiji no Shiken Jidai* (1993), 21.
5. The bill was passed by the Katō cabinet in 1924, before the Seiyūkai assumed leadership.
6. '*Rikken Minseitō Kansai Taikai Enzetsu Yōshi*', 22 November 1927, 4, in *Hamaguchi Osachi-Related Documents (6)*, The National Diet Library, Tokyo, Japan.
7. Ibid., 5.
8. Ibid., 4.
9. He admitted to being very aware of his character flaws even as a child. He pointed especially to two weaknesses, commonly regarded as fatal in a politician. They were his inability to socialize easily and his reticence. He considered his 'anti-social' nature inborn, and he failed to become a sociable person. In any case, he thought that 'a politician's substance is more important than his surface social ease'. His reticence, however, was overcome with a great deal of practice in public speaking. Hamaguchi, *Nikki/Zuikanroku*, 468–9.
10. *Tokyo Nichi-nichi Shimbun*, 17 February 1928, 9.
11. Based on Hamaguchi's journal entry, 2 July 1929, 191, in *Hamaguchi Osachi-Related Documents (2)*.
12. *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 2 July 1929, 2.
13. M.B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 511.
14. Hatano, *Hamaguchi*, 21.
15. Shiroyama Saburō, *Danshi no Honkai* (1980, and 2002), 14.
16. The 1929 budget was set at 1.77 billion yen, which was reduced, mid-term, by 90 million yen.
17. The 1930 budget was set at 1.608 billion yen.
18. Hamaguchi, *Nikki/Zuikanroku*, 540.
19. S. Garon, *The State and Labor in Modern Japan* (Berkley, 1987), 160–1.
20. Hamaguchi Osachi, '*Keizainankyoku no Dakai ni Tsuite*', from the radio broadcast speech, 28 August 1929, NHK Service Centre.
21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.
23. Garon, *State and Labor*, 179.
24. Ibid., 158.
25. 26 April 1930, *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 1.
26. 7 September 1929, *Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, 1.
27. Shiroyama, *Danshi no Honkai*, 246.
28. Hamaguchi, *Nikki/Zuikanroku*, 525.
29. Hamaguchi had used the same phrase, ‘a man’s cherished desire’ in expressing his determination to ratify the treaty, saying ‘Even if I were to be shot down, [such death would be] a man’s cherished desire.’ Hatano, *Hamaguchi*, 185.
30. Garon, *State and Labor*, 177–8.
31. Hayashi Kyūjirō, *Manshūjihen to Hōten Sōryoji* (1978), 145–6.
32. Ibid., 145.
33. Ibid.
34. Shiroyama, *Danshi no Honkai*, 18.

8
Edvard Beneš

Richard Crampton

Edvard Beneš dominated Czechoslovak foreign policy for 30 years. He established Czechoslovakia as a lynchpin of the Versailles system and won the respect of many European statesmen in the period after the First World War. He was less successful when forced to play David against the two Goliaths of the twentieth century, Hitler and Stalin.

During the First World War Beneš rose rapidly to prominence amongst those Czechs who were advocating the creation of a new Czechoslovak state. After the conflict he led the Czechoslovak delegation to the peace conference and soon became the new state's minister for foreign affairs. Upon the retirement of Thomas Masaryk as president of Czechoslovakia in 1935, Beneš became head of state but did not relinquish his direct control of Czechoslovak foreign policy. In the later 1930s, agitation by the German minority in Czechoslovakia received the backing of Nazi Germany which, with the indulgence of the Western powers, redefined Czechoslovakia's borders at Munich in September 1938 and then proceeded to subvert once more the state's internal stability before liquidating it in March 1939. Beneš took over the reins again with the establishment of the Czechoslovak government in exile first in Paris and then in London being elected President of the Czechoslovak National Committee in October 1939. In December 1943 he left the British capital for Moscow where he signed a Czechoslovak–Soviet treaty of friendship which determined much of Czechoslovakia's future political evolution. After the Second World War Beneš again found himself facing internal subversion backed by a powerful neighbour. This time the subversion came from the Czechoslovak communists and the neighbour was his newly found ally in the Soviet Union. Once again Beneš was isolated internationally and even if this time the state survived,

Czechoslovak democracy did not. Nor did Beneš. He resigned shortly after the communist takeover in February 1948 and died in September of that year.

These seminal events clearly forced Beneš to adjust his thinking and his mental map of Europe after Munich differed considerably from those he had drawn before September 1938. It is upon the pre-Munich map which this essay will concentrate.

* * * * * * *

Beneš's personality

Edvard Beneš was born in Kožlany, Bohemia, on 28 May 1884 into a family of relatively well-off peasants. His precocious intelligence easily secured him a place at a gymnasium in Prague. He soon became bored with much of the syllabus, but in 1904 he entered the Czech section of Charles University in Prague to read philosophy. In the following year, he left for the Sorbonne for 12 months before going to Dijon to study what had by now become his abiding passion, politics. He wrote a thesis on Austria-Hungary and the Czech nation.[1]

The First World War made Beneš a political activist. By 1915 he was back in Paris, this time not as a student but as a diplomat and a publicist of the Czechoslovak cause. He was already working with Masaryk and with the gifted Slovak soldier, Milan Štefánik. In 1917 he was made General Secretary of the Czechoslovak National Council, which at the end of the following year was to form the basis of the government of the new Czechoslovak state. Beneš was immediately made minister for foreign affairs. He was 34 years old.

During the war and the Paris peace negotiations Beneš's considerable political, diplomatic and organisational skills were amply proven. Sir Robert Vansittart described him as an 'old fox', but for Col. Sir Thomas Montgomery-Cuninghame, who was sent on a mission of inquiry to Vienna, Prague and Budapest at the end of 1918, this was an underestimate: Beneš, he said, was 'as clever as twenty foxes'.[2] During the Second World War Harold Nicolson described him as 'one of the best-informed people in Europe'.[3]

At times Beneš certainly showed great prescience and vision. In November 1938, when discussing Munich, he told Jindřich Fantl, a fellow exile:

> Our policy was correct, everybody will come to understand that. I can think of nothing that could have been changed; had we changed any

> of our key principles and directives, we would definitely have lost. They still perhaps think here (i.e. in the west) that Munich has saved the peace. But they will all understand soon that they are really at war. Munich made war inevitable. I don't know when it will break out, perhaps next year or perhaps in two or three years' time, but I myself think that it cannot be longer than a year. . . . Poland will be the first to be hit; Beck has helped and is helping Hitler against us, but he is in fact helping him against Poland and the others. France will suffer terribly for having betrayed us, wait for that, I am watching the internal decay of France . . . And Chamberlain will live to see the consequences of his appeasement . . . Hitler will attack them all, the West and Russia as well, and finally America will come in. . . . They did not want to understand, the war will force them to pursue the kind of policy we have been trying to follow for twenty years . . . The war will be followed by tremendous political and social changes, changes of the generations, in the economy . . . It will be the continuation, and in many cases the completion, of what had been started in the First World War. Great changes will also take place in our country, not only economic but also political, new people will come and new methods with them.[4]

As was proved in the negotiations in Paris during and after the First World War, Beneš had the great gift, for a diplomat, of being able to see into the minds of those with whom he was dealing. The journalist Henry Wickham Steed, a close personal friend, wrote that Beneš could 'put himself in the place of any foreign statesman with whom he might have to deal, and to think out his own problems in terms of that statesman's interest or prejudices. Thus he saved many a minister or politician in Allied countries from irksome mental effort.'[5] Lord Curzon made the same point a little less charitably: 'As to Dr Beneš he turns up where he likes, and we are always glad to see him because he saves one all the trouble in talking.'[6]

If generally respected Beneš was by no means universally liked. Lloyd George described the Czechoslovak foreign minister as 'a fussy little man who trots around Europe . . . running little errands for French ministers of state'.[7] Stresemann relished the subordinate, even humiliating, position into which Beneš and his Polish colleague had been forced during the Locarno negotiations in 1925.[8] For the Hungarian diplomat Kálmán Kánya, Beneš was a 'horrible individual',[9] whilst Sir Orme Sergeant, a senior Foreign Office official, thought

the Czechoslovak foreign minister 'the greatest political humbug in Europe'.[10]

Some of the dislike of Beneš arose from professional disputes; Lloyd George, for example, had been enraged when Beneš revealed to his journalist friend Henry Wickham Steed confidential material given to him by the British prime minister, and Kánya's disparaging remark was merely returning in kind the sort of thing Beneš frequently said about Hungarians.

There were personal as well as professional reasons for coldness. Beneš was humourless and aloof. He was also vain. His sensitivity about his size – he was little more than five feet – was so intense that he discouraged anyone over six feet tall in his entourage, banned any official picture which showed his shortness too strikingly, and instructed photographers to take pictures from angles which would diminish the differences in height between himself and those around him.[11]

With vanity came arrogance. In a private letter in December 1918, he wrote, 'I have never failed in my life and never will. . . . I never fight unless I am certain that I can win.'[12] In the spring of 1938 as the pressures were building over Hitler's interference in Czechoslovak affairs, a friend warned Beneš that France might not be entirely reliable as an ally. Despite the views on the internal state of France he was to express to Fantl immediately after Munich Beneš retorted, 'I know the history of France. She has never failed her word. She will not begin today.'[13] Even on the day when the fatal four-power conference began in Munich Beneš seemed unshaken, telling the Czechoslovak peoples in a nation-wide broadcast, 'I have made plans for all eventualities, and I cannot be surprised, whatever may occur. . . . I repeat, I see things clearly and I have my plan.'[14] In his memoirs he refused to concede that he had been mistaken in 1938.

> I only wish to make it clear that in the years 1936–38 Czechoslovak policy rightly diagnosed what was the matter with Europe. It did everything, really everything, to retrieve the situation of Czechoslovakia, of its friends, and of all Europe in the face of fascist gangsterism and pan-German Nazism and of war itself. *In that period when the European and world crisis was approaching, there was no state in Europe which could have a clearer conscience of doing its duty towards its nation and its friends than the Czechoslovak Republic under the presidency of Masaryk and myself.*[15]

Beneš's domination of Czechoslovak foreign policy

Beneš's arrogance and self-confidence derived to a considerable degree from the fact that he enjoyed almost total domination over foreign policy. This was possible for three main reasons: first because of the hard work and competence he had shown both in exile and in the negotiations for the peace treaty; second because Masaryk had absolute faith in him and in his judgement; and third because most other politicians, particularly in the early years of the republic, were preoccupied with domestic issues. His domination was further entrenched by structural factors within the Czechoslovak political system.

Beneš's personal domination of Czechoslovak foreign policy began early in the history of the first Czechoslovak republic. In 1919 he secretly concluded a military convention with France without, however, informing the minister of war, Štefánik, with whom he had fallen out.[16] Little changed in the subsequent two decades when in terms of Czechoslovak foreign policy 'it was Beneš who masterminded it and guided public opinion within parliament and outside of it. His decisions were made alone or in consultation with Masaryk.'[17]

And after Masaryk's departure from the public scene in 1935, Beneš often acted entirely alone. In November 1936 Albrecht Haushofer, a close associate of the future Nazi foreign minister, Ribbentrop, visited Prague for confidential conversations. The Czech president stressed he had always been friendly towards Germany and would happily sign a non-aggression pact with her now and 'insisted there would be no internal opposition to him – he could sign with Germany at any time'.[18] Little wonder that in that very month it could be noted that the chief demand of the Agrarians, who had more members in the coalition cabinet and in the Assembly than any other party, was an end to the 'recent secrecy and narrow control (by Dr Beneš) of foreign policy'.[19] There was no change and, critically, at Munich Beneš took almost all major decisions on his own, either without consultation with or in opposition to others within Czechoslovakia. General Luža, who served in Moravia and Silesia in 1937–1938, told his son, the historian Radomir Luža, that 'he and other military leaders had never been warned of the international isolation of their country' and that Beneš should have made clear to the Czechoslovak public the danger of that isolation, and to the Western powers he should have made it clear that the Sudeten question was the pretext for destroying democratic countries, but 'Beneš was used to secret cabinet diplomacy and this was a great mistake.'[20] Another observer noted that '. . . the problem in September 1938 is that, really, Beneš took

upon himself the sole responsibility for the Czechoslovak state'.[21] During the Second World War Beneš took into his own hands, and his alone, the responsibility for negotiating with Stalin on the future of sub-Carpathian Ruthenia. The area was ceded to the Soviet Union.[22] The baleful Czechoslovak–Soviet treaty of December 1943 was also primarily his work.

Beneš and the Czechoslovak political system

Beneš's control of foreign policy was not merely the result of his own capabilities and reputation, and of Masaryk's confidence in him. It was also helped by a number of structural factors within Czechoslovakia's political system.

Inter-war Czechoslovakia's democracy was sophisticated and successful, but it was not perfect. One criticism levelled at it was that it was 'a state of political parties'.[23] The Czechoslovak system of proportional representation required voters to cast their ballots not for individuals but for political parties and seats in the assembly were then allocated according to the proportion of votes cast for each party. The chances of being elected therefore depended to a considerable extent on how near the top of the party list a candidate was, and the ranking of candidates in that party list was decided by party officials. Good conduct might not secure a high place; questionable behaviour would certainly ensure a low one. The power of the party apparatus was further increased by the fact that elected deputies were employees of the party they represented. In effect a successful party career depended on loyalty and obedience to the party leaders and the party machine.

There was a further factor. Czechoslovakia was governed by a series of coalitions and a tendency developed for particular government departments to become the preserve of particular parties: the Agrarian Party, understandably, usually held the ministry of agriculture and the administration of the state railways became a preserve of the social democrats. The ministry of foreign affairs was in the hands of Beneš's party, the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party. This meant that throughout the period from 1918 to 1938 Beneš could totally dominate appointments, both in the ministry for foreign affairs at home and in diplomatic posts abroad; because of the power which the parties wielded he could be certain of an obedient, dependable and loyal apparat.

All governments in inter-war Czechoslovakia were coalitions. Czechoslovakia was no exception to the general rule that coalitions involve complex horse-trading between partners within the

coalition. Beneš was able to use this system to prevent encroachment on his foreign policy preserve. The British representative in Prague who had recorded the Agrarians' demand for an end to Beneš's personal and secret control of foreign policy noted that

> As has often been the case in Czechoslovakia, this high-principled attack has petered out – so far as principals are concerned – under a gentle rain of somewhat materialistic concessions to Agrarian demands for a larger share of the profits of various State monopolies; for shelving of some inconvenient plans for a fresh land reform; and for other pickings from the common flesh-pot.[24]

Beneš's position was further strengthened by the two peculiar unofficial, extra-constitutional institutions which became a central, and at times crucial, part of the Czechoslovak political system: the Petka and the Hrad. The former had emerged during the premiership of a non-party bureaucrat, Jan Černý in 1920. The prime minister, having little political experience or ambition, had been advised by informal gatherings of the leaders of the country's five major political parties (pětka is the Czech word for 'five'). So successful were these meetings that they were continued when party government returned and they became, in the words of one commentator, 'the real government of the country'.[25] The Hrad derived its name from the Hradčany Palace, the official residence of the president. The Hrad concerned itself more with foreign than domestic policy and its membership was fluid, but Beneš was almost always present at its meetings; the others involved included the leader of the powerful Agrarian Party, Antonín Švehla, together with journalists, writers and other associates of the president.

Neither the Pětka nor the Hrad interfered with the official organs of Czechoslovak democracy, but on occasions, particularly occasions of considerable tension, those official organs might be bypassed. This could help the country to weather storms, but it also bred a readiness to leave complicated and sensitive matters to the unofficial organisations. In so doing it contributed to the emasculation of those political forces not within the unofficial organisations. Of his role in Munich Beneš wrote after the Second World War, 'I had to assume the entire responsibility because I realised that everything would have fallen apart had I left it to the cabinet. I did not want to play any role, but simply had to do it as there was no one else who could have done it.'[26] Tellingly when Milan Hauner complained that at Munich Beneš had taken everything into his own hands, his complaint continued, 'And

the ministers – right down from the prime minister to all diplomats and ambassadors – were quite happy he was doing that.'[27] And perhaps this unconscious abdication or handing over of political responsibility also accounts for the passivity of the non-communist forces, the students excepted, during the communist takeover in February 1948 after which both Beneš and the non-communist forces blamed each other for letting the other down.[28]

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Beneš's mental maps: science, socialism and synthesis

Although Beneš's mental maps were recontoured by the great political earthquakes of the twentieth century, there were some features which remained more or less unchanged. Three concepts in particular appear in many stages of his evolution: science, socialism and synthesis.

As a sociologist Beneš was conscious of the great, underlying movements in human evolution, but at the same time he argued that as far as his own nation was concerned these great movements were the agglomeration of efforts by the malý česky čověk, the small, Czech person. 'Science', his sociological training had convinced him, showed that revolution was the synthesis of the small person and social evolution. Beneš believed that the tradition of the Czech nation was democratic from the time of Jan Hus and Petr Chelčický, as opposed to the spirit of feudalism which Beneš and Masaryk believed was Catholic and German in character. In the middle ages the Czechs had fought the Catholic church and the Habsburgs; in the nineteenth century 'the Czechoslovak nation of modern times emerged from the hard struggle for the existence of the little man'. Beneš was very much aware of the 'great movements of the lower classes of the peasants and the workers . . . the advance of socialism and its success and participation in the government as well as the participation of the broadest peasant classes has become something permanent in our case'.[29] Beneš told the National Assembly in September 1919 that the personification of the people was

> the little Czech person who created this state. It is his state. It was created out of the pain and suffering of the little Czechoslovak man. And it is characteristic that these little people of ours created the state because they fought a life-and-death struggle against feudal and aristocratic policy and against the perfidious violence of the Central Powers, and that they ended this fight and gained independence by fighting against anarchy.

Scientific analysis determined his view on the evolution of the Sudeten question. In December 1936 he told Hitler's envoys:

> The movement of Czechs in this direction was an irresistible urge deeply rooted in the historical and economic background of the last two centuries and must be accepted as a fact.... Already under Austrian rule this process had developed swiftly. Our own German territory had been industrialised with the help of the Austrian government and bourgeoisie and the new industries had necessarily been manned by elements from the neighbouring Czech agricultural regions. It was an irresistible process, which, in these modern days could be seen wherever a nationally mixed territory was being industrialised on the edge of a less highly developed agricultural area. *What was happening therefore was no deliberate policy initiated by an independent Czechoslovakia*. It was a natural modern sociological process and nothing could be done about it.[30]

In his broader mental map, Beneš saw revolutions in the Western world as the result of scientific or rational advances. In an exposé of his views on Europe published in the *Slavonic and East European Review* in 1925, he argued that the enlightenment and the English, American and French revolutions had destroyed the medieval, aristocratic–feudal world and created modern political individualism and constitutionalism. 'America and the whole of Western Europe were subject to this development, and produced the modern type of man freed from the fetters of absolutism: these countries proclaimed the philosophy of humanity and respect of man for man, the philosophy of political and social equality and of full, modern political democracy.'[31]

In the same essay he expounded on the evolution of Czech nationalism, giving new emphasis to the notion of scientific or 'philosophical' revolution. This, he said, the Czechs underwent during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He then presented the Czech national revival as a synthesis of this scientific revolution and the fundamental social changes experienced later in the nineteenth century. The struggle for national rebirth showed, he said,

> the philosophical character of our spiritual revolution; in addition, the struggle created our new national social structure which arose from the political, economic and social resistance of our nationally-conscious elements in the past century to the Austro-Hungarian environment. It was the struggle of the small Czech farmer and artisan

> for an economic, national and cultural independence. This struggle was successful, and at the beginning of the war our nation stood as a rather isolated island, spiritually, culturally and to a considerable extent also economically, in its Austro-Hungarian environment.[32]

For Beneš the First World War was a revolutionary event, but he saw the cataclysm not as a clash between Teuton and Slav, a view popular in many nationalist circles, but as the conflict between democracy, the product of the Enlightenment and the scientific revolutions on the one hand and the forces of authoritarianism on the other.

The new states which emerged at the end of the war were 'nation states' not because of their composition – the ubiquitous minorities made that impossible – but because they had been created by 'national' revolutions. In the early post-war years, Beneš did not regard the minorities as a serious, long-term threat to the stability of the new states. The main problem, he admitted, was 'that of establishing a liberal regime and of facilitating their [the minorities'] cultural and economic development by a thorough application of democratic principles'.[33] This should not be difficult because nationalism was the product of the scientific revolutions and was 'a direct expression of the respect of an individual of one nationality for an individual of another nationality, and thus expresses the philosophy of pure humanity . . . '[34] In such circumstances the nation states, guided by nationalism, should find their own path to inner harmony and stability. If they needed help on the way it would be provided by the League of Nations in which was to be found the mechanism for incorporating 'the idea of international democracy in inter-state relations'.[35]

In this the new states would play an important role. These states were relatively small states, and in Beneš's mental map the small state would play as important a role in international history as the malý člověk had played in Czech historical evolution. Beneš wrote in his 1925 essay for the *Slavonic and East European Review*,

> Throughout the world there are few states which so genuinely desire peace to be maintained, the authority of the League of Nations to be as strong as possible, and the Pact of the League to be consistently observed under all circumstances, as do all the small states and nations of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Today the interests of these small states coincide with those of the Scandinavian states, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal and the South American Republics, etc. In this I see today the chief mission of the small states and nations in

> Europe. Owing to their great number in the League of Nations, they can assist by their international policy in strengthening the authority and influence of the League and in ensuring thereby more and more that the peace of Europe may be a lasting one.[36]

In an essay for the same journal in 1929, Beneš developed this point further. He noted that the small states could help link various parts of Europe.

> These states may serve as bridges between the East and the West, between the north and the south of Europe; they must incorporate the new ideas and methods of international cooperation. This is their special Central European function, on the comprehension of which obviously depends the whole stability of their international position. I think that this function is being more and more understood as time goes on, and I anticipate that the relations between the national minorities and majorities in the new States will be more and more the expression of this comprehension.[37]

Furthermore, the new states, which were based on democracy, brought a new concept of international relations.

> In contrast to the old foreign policy, which was determined by the interests and needs of dynasties or of the feudal, military and economic groups which backed them, the new states, in the democratic spirit which had inspired their resistance to the old regime, have insisted upon a foreign policy devoted to the simple task of promoting friendly cooperation with neighbouring countries, maintaining peace and helping to build up a democratic comity of nations.[38]

This ideology brought all the new Central European states into the League of Nations and was of course consonant with their natural interests. No small state could benefit from an imperialistic policy or by the desire for expansion.

> On the contrary, it is always in the interests of a small state to follow a policy of peace and agreement, and to promote a democratic international law such as would provide it with guarantees of security. The new states of Central Europe have been aware of this from the outset, and their support of international cooperation and the League of Nations signifies very decided progress towards an improved world.[39]

Even Hungary, Beneš believed, would one day come round. It would recognise that the historic mission of the Magyars had had to be ended because it had produced little else than unsuccessful drives for Magyarisation, and must now give way to nations which were now mature.[40]

As far as Czechoslovakia was concerned, it presented a synthesis of both these points. It, Beneš believed, could survive only if its domestic political structures were part of the scientifically derived democratic, liberal world, but at the same time, because of its geographic position at the crossroads of Europe, its security depended upon its being integrated into the new democratic, liberal international system.[41]

These ideas had been expressed in the 1920s when the spirit of Locarno was still alive and naturally they underwent considerable adaptation after the rise of Hitler and more especially after the tragedy of Munich. Yet Beneš retained his belief in revolution, in socialism and in synthesis. In fact Beneš seemed to claim any welcome development as 'revolutionary'; even the creation of the Churchill cabinet in 1940 was seen as 'truly revolutionary' because it contained prominent anti-Munich Tories and Labour leaders.[42]

Munich had inevitably redrawn some lines in Beneš's mental map. His previous confidence in France was dented and after 1938 he set more store by the revolutionary power to the East. This became a matter of necessity after Stalingrad, but Beneš seemed content to accept a subordinate role – during the negotiations for the December 1943 Czechoslovak–Soviet treaty of friendship and co-operation, a treaty which some scholars have condemned as having made unnecessary and ultimately damaging concessions to the Soviet Union, Beneš told Molotov, 'In questions of the organisation of central Europe, we will do nothing without your consent.'[43]

In the new world created after the Second World War Beneš's socialism became more pronounced. Even before the end of the fighting Beneš had made it clear to the Soviets that after the war he wished to see better relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia because the latter would be threatened by revanchist Germany and Hungary, but co-operation between Prague and Warsaw could not be unconditional and 'the social structure of both states must coincide because we cannot make a confederation with Polish aristocrats'.[44] In July 1945 Beneš had no objection to the immediate nationalisation of key industries and large enterprises[45] and if his enthusiasm had cooled a little by October of that year he offered little resistance to a nationalisation law which proceeded rather more rapidly than he would have liked because 'I know the

working masses and our industrial life and industrial population are ripe for this law'.[46] Beneš's understanding of science had once more shown him the way.

The post-war period was also one for synthesis. The fact that the December 1943 agreement gave Soviet blessing to the expulsion of Czechoslovakia's German and Magyar minorities led Beneš to believe that this represented the culmination of the efforts of the Czech national revival,[47] that it would be a synthesis of the national and the social revolution,[48] though this particular aspect of the treaty later led to the bitter accusation that Beneš had betrayed the tolerance of the Hussite tradition and the liberal philosophy on which the Czechoslovak state been founded.[49]

Synthesis was also taking place, Beneš believed, on the international plane. He was convinced that the post-war era would see a 'convergence' or synthesis of East and West. The West, in Europe at least, would move away from laissez-faire liberalism towards democratic, welfare socialism whilst the Soviet Union would shift away from totalitarianism.[50] Beneš saw vindication for these views in the British elections of 1945, in the French and Italian coalitions, and in the softening of attitudes in the Soviet-dominated sector of Europe where the communists did not talk of collectivisation or the dictatorship of the proletariat and seemed more interested in a nationalist variety of socialism than in Marxist ideology and international revolution. Stalin himself had encouraged Beneš in these beliefs, telling him that the Czechoslovak communists were too blinkered and suggesting that Beneš should 'undertake to broaden their outlook'.[51]

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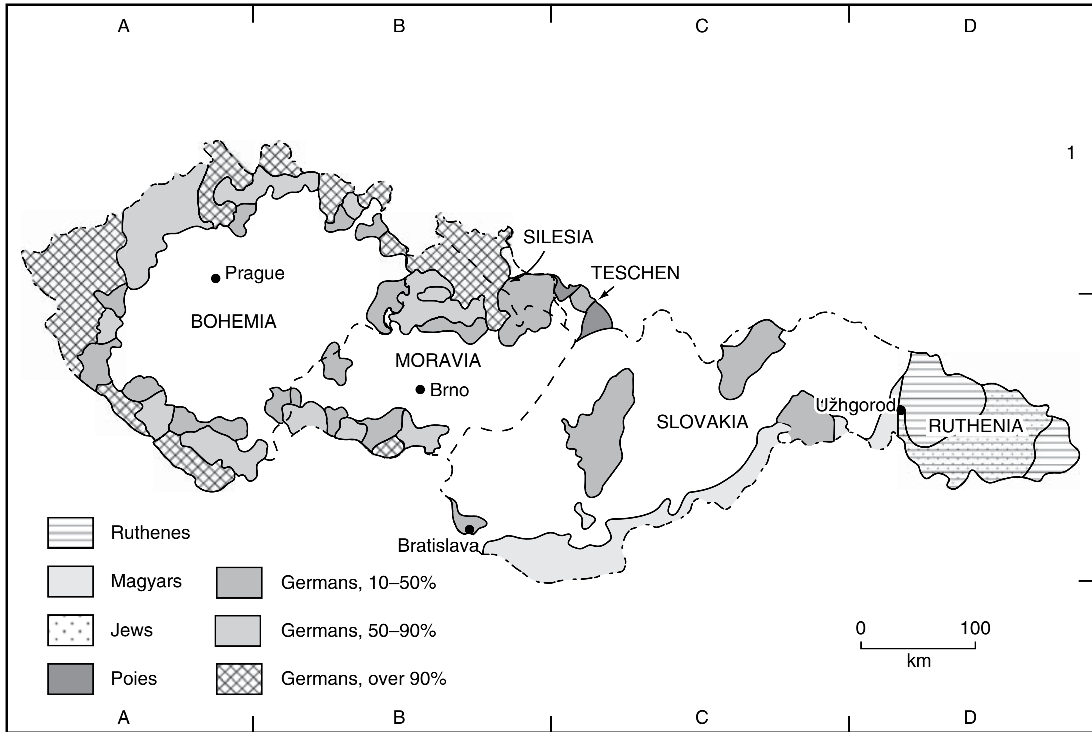
Beneš's foreign policy

When it came to the translation of general concepts into concrete policy the dominating feature of Beneš's mental map was, naturally, the need to provide Czechoslovakia with stability. As Czechoslovakia belonged to the zone of victorious powers, that security was to be found after the First World War primarily in close co-operation with France. Since his visits to Germany, Britain and France before the First World War Beneš had been a Francophile,[52] but France was also a power which had passed through the necessary revolutionary process and, more practically, it was the major 'treaty power' and, like Czechoslovakia, had as its primary foreign policy objective, the containment of their common German neighbour.



Map 8.1 Inter-war Czechoslovakia: ethnic minorities.

The military pact of 1919 was followed by political agreements which formed the bedrock of Czechoslovak foreign policy in the 1920s.

Germany and Austria Czechoslovakia could not ignore. The historic economic links, at least with the Czech lands, had not dissolved and the German minority made relations with the German states an important aspect of Czechoslovakia's external relations. Beneš wanted 'correct relations' with the Weimar Republic, and he told the Czechoslovak National Assembly in the autumn of 1919, 'Our policy with regard to Germany must be loyal and correct . . . we must never allow ourselves to be an instrument in the hands of our neighbour and lose our freedom of action. We must defend ourselves with the utmost energy against any repetition of Pangerman policy.'[53] For Beneš Pan-Germanism was the antithesis of the liberal humanitarianism represented in his view by nationalism.[54]

In 1921 fears of a Habsburg restoration in Hungary brought Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia together in the Little Entente which, after initial hesitation, the French supported. The Little Entente could have kept the peace south of Germany and south of the Carpathians had any threat to peace in those areas arisen, which it did not. It had no leverage, however, on the eastern borders of Poland and the concept of a central European security system which did not include that country was always a dubious one.

Beneš's attitudes to that country were complicated. The inclusion of Poland in a central European pact would no doubt have created a strong security barrier protecting the area against Russian and Hungarian Bolshevism and German and Hungarian revisionism, and the French concluded an alliance with Poland in 1921. But Poland and Czechoslovakia were divided over Teschen, part of which Czechoslovakia had snatched in 1920 when Poland was invaded by the Russians; Polish desires to retrieve that lost territory did not make Poland a 'revisionist' power in the full sense of the term but it meant that Warsaw could never be happy with the existing border with Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, Beneš mistrusted the aristocratic elements which were powerful in Poland, and particularly in its foreign service apparatus. There was also the problem of political instability in Poland where the executive was weak, as was shown when the legislature refused to ratify a Polish–Czechoslovak agreement in 1922.[55] Between 1923 and 1926 a more pro-Czechoslovak administration in Warsaw made a number of approaches to Prague but, despite Beneš's repeated statements as to the desirability of an agreement, these were always rebuffed.[56] And when order was imposed on Polish political life in 1926 it was by an undemocratic coup led by a soldier

with pronounced anti-Czech views. Poland therefore failed Beneš's tests for Bündnisfähigkeit (i.e. satisfying the conditions to be an ally).

There was criticism of and opposition to Beneš's policy in Czechoslovakia. Some senior military figures questioned so intense a commitment to France which, they argued, was not likely to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia were the latter to be attacked by Germany, although if a Franco-German war broke out Paris would expect Czechoslovak and Polish troops to tie down German units by invading Saxony and Silesia, which might leave Slovakia open to Hungarian aggression and would leave Bohemia and Moravia unprotected against an incursion from Bavaria.[57] The powerful Agrarian parties, meanwhile, were dubious of some aspects of the Little Entente. They saw little advantage in close association with two states which would compete with Czechoslovakia in agricultural exports whilst closer links to Poland, it was argued, posed fewer threats to Czechoslovak farmers.

Such criticism of Beneš had little impact during the 1920s when the foundations of his foreign policy seemed solid. Yet there were dangers. Hungary was still weak and until Mussolini's Italy gave it diplomatic support (which the Duce was not yet in a position to do) anything more than talk about revision of the 1919 peace settlement was impossible; and Poland, even after the coup of 1926, was beset by internal political difficulties and divisions. These factors were not necessarily immutable, and if they changed Czechoslovakia's security could be threatened. Most important of all, however, was the question of France's reliability, particularly after the Locarno agreements had, it seemed, contained the danger of German revisionism, at least in the west.

Beneš had placed his faith in the Western powers; for him 'the whole future of the Czechoslovak state was based on the assumption that the status quo in Europe would last and that the victorious powers would remain pre-eminent'.[58] In the 1930s these assumptions were increasingly called into question, above all with France's retreat into the Maginot mentality and then with Hitler's accession to power. For the first time in his career in international affairs, Beneš was swimming against the tide; he made little headway and in the end he was swept aside.

Beneš's initial response to Hitler's advent to power in January 1933 was to try to strengthen the Little Entente. This could have been a powerful factor in central Europe with its combined population of 47 million, together with the important armaments industry in Czechoslovakia. In February 1933 the three states signed an agreement setting up a standing council of foreign ministers, an economic council and a permanent

bureau with an office in Geneva. There was also agreement on the standardisation of armaments amongst the three powers and on the setting up of a joint command. But there were disagreements from the start and Beneš vetoed a plan of the Romanian minister for foreign affairs, Titelescu, to insert into the preamble to the agreement a clause opposing revision of any of the post-war treaties. Hitler's successes encouraged further moves towards consolidation. After the reoccupation of the Rhineland in March 1936 Beneš attempted to bind the three states into a single alliance rather than a mutual pact; the new association would then conclude an alliance with France. But there was little progress. The French feared the new bloc would appear too overtly anti-German and anti-Italian; both Romania and Yugoslavia had come to fear that too close a commitment to Czechoslovakia might involve them in a conflict with Germany, and this at a time when German trade (based on barter agreements for their agricultural produce and, in Romania's case, oil for German industrial goods) was proving the salvation of their shattered peasant economies; and the Yugoslavs took the view, after the Rhineland, that if the French would not lift a finger, or a rifle, to defend their own interests they were unlikely to do much for the small states of central Europe.[59]

Whilst seeking to give the Little Entente more teeth Beneš also took out an entirely new international contract. In June 1935 he travelled to Moscow where he concluded a Mutual Assistance pact with the Soviet Union. The most important clause of the agreement, inserted at Beneš's insistence, stated that in the event of a German attack on Czechoslovakia the Soviet Union would come to its aid only if France also did so. At the time Beneš proclaimed the agreement a great success, but it was of questionable value. At Munich the French did nothing and therefore the Soviet Union had no need to act. But even if it had, would it have been of any use? The Red Army was in disarray after it had been savagely purged in 1937, and had it tried to come to Czechoslovakia's aid how was this to be achieved? In no circumstances would Poland have allowed Soviet troops transit through its territory and although the Romanians were more accommodating it was an empty gesture. The only direct rail link between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia via Romania was for much of its route single track and it would have taken several days for a single division to move through Romania, even in the unlikely contingency that it were not subjected to heavy attack from German bombers.[60]

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The enigma of Benes

Much in Beneš's thinking and in his actions remains enigmatic. And despite his knowledge, both theoretical and empirical, he was capable of grotesque errors of judgement and self-deception. He knew much of the problems of nationalism in a multi-ethnic state, yet he could state in 1929 that although there had 'been problems in Yugoslavia [but] the three (sic) constituent nations are fundamentally united and the bases on which the state was created have not been changed', and that 'there is no hostility in the relations between the minorities and the majority nation'.[61] At the beginning of the year in which these observations were published the King of Yugoslavia had dissolved parliament, liquidated the political parties and imposed absolutist royal rule in an effort to contain the nationalist tensions which Beneš said did not exist.

Beneš's actions in the 1930s show that he realised the dangers posed by Hitler, yet when he visited Belgrade in 1937 he exuded confidence and told the leader of the Yugoslav government, Stojadinović, that there was no need to fear Hitler who was merely a puppet of the army who would soon jettison him, and that the Nazis did not want the Sudetenland which was unruly and had been one of the most radical areas of the Habsburg monarchy.[62]

His vanity could disguise reality and lead to mistaken judgement. In 1935 in Moscow the huge attendance at the receptions given in his honour were seen by Beneš as an indication of his own popularity and importance but a member of the British embassy staff reported that huge casks of Pilsner beer and acres of hot dogs had been laid on and so guests of all nationalities queued for ages to attend a reception; the journalist and former Comintern leader Karl Radek was heard to remark that with so much beer any treaty could have been negotiated.[63]

Perhaps the most enigmatic feature of Beneš's political life was his attitude to the communists, internal and external, after 1945. Despite his public talk of convergence and his insistence that the Czechoslovak communists could be house-trained and made responsible members of a functioning parliamentary democracy, and notwithstanding his apparent belief in Stalin's good intentions, in private he clearly had other feelings.

> 'Thank God, that God,' he said when I told him that Patton was at long last on Czechoslovak soil. Unable to control his excitement, he began to pace. Judging from the expression in his eyes, he

> was already visualising the beneficial political consequences of this event. Then he hurried into the adjoining room to share the good news with his wife. 'Haničko, Haničko, the Americans have entered Czechoslovakia', I heard him say to Madame Beneš in a voice filled with emotion.[64]

Two years later Beneš could still become emotionally agitated over this lost opportunity.[65] At the very end of his life Beneš accepted that he had been duped by Stalin, both in 1935 and in 1943 and thereafter. 'My biggest mistake was', he told Amelie Posse-Brazdová, a Swedish widow resident in Czechoslovakia, 'that I was reluctant for a long time to accept that Stalin lied to me in cold blood and cynically not only in 1935, but later as well, and that the promises he gave me . . . were nothing but plain lies'.[66]

Beneš's mental maps had been drawn in an age in which the ancien régime gave way, it seemed, to a world based upon scientific rationalism which would effect a synthesis of liberalism and humanity in nationalism. The new international order created by the defeat of the old system would allow the small state to flourish alongside the larger ones, the League of Nations serving to synthesise any differences which might arise between them. Similarly, socialism, of the non-violent and non-totalitarian variety, would provide social and economic justice within the confines of the nation state. As long as such fundamental tenets were held by those who decided international affairs, Beneš's mental map would remain intact whilst he himself, having established a reputation for energy, ability and an encyclopaedic knowledge, would have an influence out of proportion with the real power and influence of his country. But such punching above his weight became increasingly difficult when the real power brokers rejected these tenets. Beneš was a bantam weight and he could not survive in the same ring as heavy weights such as Hitler and Stalin, both of whom had entirely different concepts of the nature of politics, domestic and international. The world was now dominated by ruthless wielders of power driven by ideologies which had no time for compromise, liberalism or synthesis. As Beneš admitted in 1948, 'Masaryk and I were [also] impractical intellectuals. . . .'[67]

The persistence of well-intentioned intellectual illusions led Beneš into errors, but many of these were redeemed by the fact that in the great crises of 1938 and 1948 his conduct was conditioned by his determination not to plunge his people into the horrors of a hopeless war.

Notes

1. Zbyněk Zeman with Antonín Klimek, *The Life of Edvard Beneš, 1884–1948. Czechoslovakia in Peace and War* (Oxford, 1997), 7–11.
2. Gábor Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe, 1918–1933* (Oxford, 1999), 20.
3. Nigel Nicolson, ed., *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters, 1939–1945* (London, 1967), 145.
4. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 141.
5. David Vital, 'Czechoslovakia and the Powers, September 1938', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (October 1966), 37–68, 43.
6. Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 198.
7. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 45.
8. Jonathan Wright, *Gustav Stresemann: Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (Oxford, 2002), 336, 346.
9. Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 155.
10. Ibid., 156. My own PhD supervisor, the late Prof. Phyllis Auty, was far more outspoken. During the Second World War she had worked for the Political Warfare Executive and one of her jobs had been to take exiled politicians to the radio studios to make their broadcast to their occupied countries. Beneš had been one of her charges and when I asked her what he was like, she replied, 'Frightful little shit'.
11. Frantisek Moravec, *Master of Spies; The Memoirs of General Frantisek Moravec*, with a preface by J.C. Masterman (London, 1975), 115.
12. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 47.
13. Vital, 'Czechoslovakia', 38.
14. Otakar Odložilík, 'Edvard Beneš on Munich Days', *Journal of Central European Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (January 1957), 384–93, 390.
15. Eduard Beneš, *Memoirs of Dr Eduard Beneš: From Munich to New War and New Victory*, translated by Geoffrey Lias (Westport, Connecticut, 1978), 33. Italics in the original. The subtitle hardly betokens humility.
16. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 37.
17. Alfred D. Low, 'Edvard Beneš, the Anschluss Movement, 1918–38, and the policy of Czechoslovakia', *East Central Europe*, Vol. 10, nos 1–2 (1983), 46–91, 54.
18. Gerhard L. Weinberg, 'Secret Hitler-Beneš Negotiations in 1936–1937', *Journal of Central European Affairs*, Vol. 19, no. 4 (January 1960), 366–74, 369.
19. Bela Vago, *The Shadow of the Swastika: The Rise of Fascism and Anti-Semitism in the Danube Basin, 1936–1939* (London, 1975), 200. The quotation is from a report by the British representative in Prague, C.M. Bentinck.
20. Milan Hauner *et al*., 'Munich 1938 from the Czech Perspective', *East Central Europe*, Vol. 8, nos 1–2 (1981), 62–96, 75.
21. Ibid., 76.
22. František Němec and Vladimír Moudry, *The Soviet Seizure of Subcarpathian Ruthenia* (Toronto, 1955), 125–56.
23. Edward Táborsky, *Czechoslovak Democracy at Work*, with a foreword by Sir Ernest Barker (London, 1945), 94.
24. Vago, *Shadow of the Swastika*, 200–1.
25. Táborsky, *Czechoslovak Democracy*, 104.

26. Norman Stone and Eduard Strougal, *Czechoslovakia: Crossroads and Crises, 1918–88* (Basingstoke, 1989), 140, n. 1.
27. Hauner, 'Munich 1938', 76.
28. Edward Taborksy, *President Edvard Beneš Between East and West, 1938–1948* (California, 1981), 228.
29. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 52.
30. Beneš, *Memoirs*, 17–18. Italics in the original.
31. Edvard Beneš, 'The Problem of the Small States after the World War', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 4, no. 11 (December 1925), 257–77, 260.
32. Ibid., 263.
33. Edvard Beneš, 'Central Europe after Ten Years', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 7, no. 20 (January 1929), 245–60, 250.
34. Beneš, 'Small States', 266.
35. Ibid., 269.
36. Ibid., 275.
37. Beneš, 'Central Europe', 251.
38. Ibid., 256.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. See Mark Cornwall, 'Dr Edvard Beneš and Czechoslovakia's German Minority, 1918–1943', in John Morison, ed., *The Czech and Slovak Experience* (Harrogate and New York, 1992), 167–203.
42. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 169–70.
43. Karel Kaplan, *The Short March: The Communist Takeover in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1948* (London, 1987), 4. For other treatments critical of the 1943 treaty see, Jacques Rupnik, *The Other Europe* (London, 1988), 88 *et seq*; Josef Korbel, *The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938–1948. The Failure of Coexistence* (Princeton, 1959), 83–93.
44. Piotr Wandycz, *Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers, 1940–1943*, Vol. 3 (Bloomington, Ind. 1956), 80.
45. Jon Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution: Politics and the Czechoslovak Working Class, 1945–8* (London, 1979), 73.
46. H.J. Yasamee and K.A. Hamilton, eds, *Documents on British Policy Overseas, series I, volume VI, Eastern Europe August 1945 – April 1946* (London, 1992), Microfiche sheet 7, nos 73–74, for quotation see no. 73.
47. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 191.
48. '*That is to say, the national revolution must be merged with the social-economic one.*' Beneš, *Memoirs*, 212 (italics in original). During the war Beneš wrote to a Bohemian German Social Democrat that after the war Germans and Czechs must be completely separated or '*an unheard of massacre will ensue*', ibid., 221. He also wrote that it was clear to him immediately after Munich that the problem of the Germans in Czechoslovakia would have to be solved 'radically and finally'. Ibid., 210. On another occasion, he stated that 'There are 80 million Germans and *the small Czechoslovak Nation cannot possibly live with a German revolver permanently against its breast.*' Ibid., 318, italics in original.
49. For a powerful statement of this case see Stephen Borsody, *The Tragedy of Central Europe: Nazi and Soviet Conquest and Aftermath* (revised edn, Yale, 1980).

50. The theory has not impressed many historians. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 270 note that post-war Europe was a time of partition not convergence in Europe. An American historian, not renowned for harsh judgement, was much more scathing. After describing the cession of Ruthenia to the USSR, he wrote, 'Beneš even had the intellectual conceit to elaborate a pseudo-profound, semi-sociological "theory" to rationalise his pragmatic calculation that only through such a posture of flattery of and submission to the Soviet rulers would he be enabled to establish his own government in Czechoslovakia at war's end and would he be spared Communist criticism as a "Munich poltroon".' Joseph Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War II* (New York and Oxford, 1989), 39.
51. Harriman to Secretary of State, Moscow, 31 March 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1945, iv, 430–3, see 431.
52. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 10–11.
53. Ibid., 64.
54. Beneš, 'Small States', 266.
55. Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, 'Polish-Czechoslovak Relations, 1918–1922', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, no. 84 (December 1956), 172–93, especially 185–92.
56. Ibid., 'Polish-Czechoslovak Relations, 1922–1926', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, no. 85 (June 1957), 473–504.
57. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 77–8.
58. Ibid., 62.
59. Piotr S. Wandycz, 'The Little Entente: Sixty Years Later', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 59, no. 4 (October 1981), 548–64, 558–61.
60. See William A. Oldson, 'Romania and the Munich Crisis, August–September 1938', *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 11, no. 2 (Summer 1977), 177–90.
61. Beneš, 'Central Europe', 247, 250.
62. J.B. Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis: 1934–1941* (New York and London, 1962), 84.
63. Harry Hanak, 'The Visit of the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Dr Edvard Beneš, to Moscow in 1935 as seen by the British Minister in Prague, Sir Joseph Anderson', *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 54, no. 4 (October 1976), 586–92; for Radek's observation, 592.
64. Taborsky, *Beneš between East and West*, 212.
65. See Sir Robert H. Bruce Lockhart, *My Europe* (London: Putnam, 1952), 97.
66. Zeman and Klimek, *Beneš*, 279.
67. Ibid., 280.

9
Mussolini
Il Duce

Alan Cassels

The very notion of a mental map presupposes some fixity of purpose. This premise, however, immediately poses a problem in the case of Mussolini. Granted that most public figures change their spots over the course of a lifetime, nevertheless the gyrations and contradictions in Mussolini's career were excessive and startling. He began political life as a socialist, on the radical wing of the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) to boot, yet his rise to power as *Duce* of Italian Fascism was underwritten by rich landowners and big business. A republican, he would accept office at the hands of Italy's monarch and report to him regularly on his stewardship for over 20 years. A vociferous anti-clerical, he effected the reconciliation of church and state which had eluded Italian statesmen since the country's unification. As a young firebrand he served time in gaol for fomenting strikes in protest at Italy's colonial conquest of Libya; but in power his prime objective was to reinvent the greatest empire in history, a new Roman empire. Furthermore, his strategy to attain that goal showed a similar penchant for the volte face. For the first decade of the Fascist *ventennio* (the 20 years 1922–1943) he maintained an outward air of watchful caution towards Germany, and when Hitler came to power he entered into international pacts to curb German revisionism, threatened military action if Nazi elements in Austria attempted *Anschluss*, all the while ridiculing the *Führer's* obsession with race. Within the next half-dozen years, however, he proclaimed the Rome–Berlin Axis, imposed antisemitic legislation on Italy, and with Hitler seemingly poised for victory, entered the Second World War on his side. In light of this record of inconsistency, it is tempting to portray Mussolini as nothing but an unprincipled opportunist who miscalculated and blundered into a self-destructive war in 1940.[1] In short, can the historian impute any mental map to Mussolini at all?

To the contrary, this essay will contend that it is possible to discern, amidst all the fluctuations of position and policy, specific predilections which ultimately coalesced into a recognizable belief system or mental map. At the outset it is useful to note some of Mussolini's inherent character traits.[2] Born in 1883 in Predappio, a small village in the Emilia-Romagna, Benito Mussolini in many ways took after his father, by trade a blacksmith and local revolutionary socialist with a reputation for pugnacity. He was also a creature of his birthplace for the Romagna was known as a violent region of Italy.[3] As a schoolboy the young Benito showed flashes of the paternal rebelliousness and, quick to anger, once cut a fellow pupil with a knife. A few years later, when he began to participate in the internecine quarrels of the PSI, he boasted of his 'absolute intransigence', which he directed not just against the state but against his fellow party members deemed guilty of compromise.[4] At the national congress of the PSI in 1912 Mussolini's vitriolic attack on these reformists led to their expulsion from the party. Rewarded with the editorship of Avanti!, the PSI's newspaper, he preached direct action in the class war by means of the general strike and acts of sabotage. Throughout his adolescence and early manhood two aspects of his personality were consistently conspicuous. First, in his opinions Mussolini was an extremist, and no shade of doubt or nuance was allowed to cloud his absolute self-conviction. Second, in his conduct he had no compunction about resorting to force. Dogmatism and a violent temperament do not constitute a mental map, but these proclivities predisposed him to certain ideas and, even more, to the course he would pursue to express his belief system once it was formed.

For the genesis of Mussolini's mental formulation, one must focus on his emigrant stay in Switzerland (1902–1904). There, he acquired the intellectual concepts which would endure throughout his life. In Geneva's libraries he acquainted himself with the Marxist canon, principally through the works of Antonio Labriola and under the tutelage of Angelica Balabanoff. He also encountered syndicalist socialism and warmed to its creed of militant action and inflexible hostility to capitalism. But most important, he was attracted to writers in the tradition of Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism, and from these sources he absorbed notions of inequality, selection, evolution, and decay. He continued to explore these themes after his return to Italy: from Wilfredo Pareto, Robert Michels and Gaetano Mosca he culled theories of elites, from Friedrich Nietzsche the idea of a 'new man' and the will to power, and from Georges Sorel the role of social myths and a conviction that true revolution required a change of culture in the broadest sense. Hence, his

revolution, the young Mussolini wrote, would involve the creation of a 'new human character'.[5] Having discovered his métier as a journalist, of the polemical not the investigative sort, Mussolini fell into the category of those early twentieth-century intellectuals, or pseudo-intellectuals, who railed at bourgeois decadence and looked forward to a moral regeneration of society. This redemptive vision, it has been remarked, led to a conception of politics as religion – a phenomenon to reappear during the Fascist era.[6]

Many of the philosophies and social scientific theories that appealed to Mussolini were incompatible with orthodox Marxism, yet he stayed as editor of Avanti! until the First World War resolved his intellectual dilemma. On 18 October 1914, he published a sensational editorial critical of Italy's neutrality and calling for intervention on the side of the Entente powers, although his argument sounded suspiciously like a call to fight for its own sake: 'We have the most singular privilege of living at the most tragic hour of world history. Do we – as men and socialists – want to be inert spectators in this huge drama? Or do we want to be in some way protagonists?'[7] This was the language of the avant-garde Futurists whose idealized 'new man' exalted war, but it was apostasy to the PSI who regarded the First World War as an imperialist conflict to be shunned, and Mussolini was drummed out of the party. Soon, however, interventionist sources provided Mussolini with funds to launch his own newspaper, Il Popolo d'Italia. His new paper played a role in 'radiant May' of 1915 by inciting interventionist street riots which pushed the Italian government, against its better judgment, to enter the war. And after Italy's humiliating defeat at Caporetto in 1917, Il Popolo d'Italia joined in rallying the nation to a total war effort, for which it recommended leadership by a dictator. Mussolini himself did not shun military service; on returning home from his Swiss sojourn he had performed his compulsory term of duty, and in the First World War he served on the Isonzo front, was wounded though not seriously, and was invalided out of the army just prior to Caporetto. He thus qualified to belong to that 'generation of the trenches' which would shape Europe in the interwar years. In the immediate aftermath of the First World War fasci di combattimento (ex-servicemens' leagues) were to be found everywhere in Italy, and representatives of these groups supplied the core of Mussolini's audience at the Fascist movement's inaugural meeting on 23 March 1919 in Milan. There, they were joined by many of Mussolini's comrades from his wartime interventionist crusade. Henceforth, Mussolini's mental map and the Fascist revolution would develop within a context of Italian nationalism.

The nationalism that Mussolini came to embody contained a strong element of resentment at a perceived lack of respect for Italy in world political circles. It stemmed from the process of Italian unification that, at every stage, had advanced through the success of foreign arms. In the half century before the First World War Italy was regularly disparaged as the sixth wheel of European diplomacy. After the war, when the peace settlement failed to deliver in full Anglo-French wartime promises, Italian nationalists constructed the legend of a mutilated victory – a grievance epitomized in the seizure of the disputed port of Fiume by Gabriele D'Annunzio and his paramilitary following. Mussolini gleaned a lot from D'Annunzio's 15-month Fiume 'regency' which, especially in the realm of ceremonial staging and crowd manipulation, afforded him a practical lesson to supplement his study of theories of collective psychology by Gustave Le Bon and Ludwig Gumplowicz.[8] Post Fiume, it was Mussolini who appropriated the cause of aggrieved Italian nationalism, and his truculent bravado and staccato, aphoristic style of public speaking gave it perfect tongue. He captured its essence by pilfering the slogan of the arch-nationalist Enrico Corradini that Italy was a 'proletarian nation', with its connotations of poverty and exploitation.[9]

There was yet another component of Italian nationalism that would prove to be absolutely vital to Fascist discourse. This was the image fostered during the nineteenth-century risorgimento, the renewal of Italian culture that accompanied the drive for political unification. Giuseppe Mazzini was merely the most celebrated of those writers who had imbued the movement with a sense of mission – that it was the destiny of the Italian people to build a third Rome, a combined material and spiritual empire in succession to that of the caesars and the popes. The acquisition of Rome itself in 1870 to serve as the capital of united Italy had given an enormous fillip to this messianic brand of imperialism. The idea of Rome came into full flower a generation later when Italy made a first bid for empire under Francesco Crispi to whom Mussolini is often compared.[10] Like Mussolini, a journalist-turned-politico from the provinces, Crispi started out as a radical, but once in power grew increasingly conservative and authoritarian. Moreover, again like Mussolini, he sought to make his own mark and raise Italy's stature by overseas adventure. Crispi's plans, however, came to grief at the battle of Adowa in Ethiopia (1896), and it fell to Mussolini to pick up the pieces 40 years on. But for Mussolini the idea of Rome meant much more than avenging Adowa; it was a classic Sorelian myth of the kind that the pre-1914 intellectuals, Mussolini included, had envisioned to kick-start their revolution. The cult of *romanità* – an acute consciousness of Roman tradition – was

present from Fascism's earliest days. The word fascism itself derived from the Latin *fasces*, the bundle of rods and axes carried by Roman lictors to denote their authority, and the Fascists adopted the lictors' insignia (the *littorio*) as their official badge. And of course, the Latin *Dux* (leader) was translated into Mussolini's favourite title, *Il Duce*. As we shall see, when Mussolini finally embarked on his quest for empire, it was the myth of Rome that he invoked to kindle the sort of social revolution of which he had always dreamed.

When Mussolini became Italian premier on 31 October 1922, he had two principal goals in mind: one, to effect some not-yet clearly defined sociocultural revolution on the home front; and two, to make Italy a major imperial player in world affairs. However, both these projects had to defer to the more immediate problem of consolidating his hold on power.[11] Mussolini was an astute if unscrupulous political operator, and on the road to office had shown exceptional skill in balancing the use of force against tactical compromise. The threat of a Fascist March on Rome had provoked the right backdrop of violence, but in reality Mussolini received his mandate at the hands of King Victor Emmanuel III with the connivance of timid parliamentary mandarins. His initial government was a conventional coalition of which a paltry four were members of the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF). In shoring up his position, Mussolini continued this mixture of methods. Callous brutality was used to crush opponents (socialists and communists), and after surmounting the crisis provoked by the murder of the Socialist deputy, Giacomo Matteotti, he defiantly inaugurated the one-party state. On the other hand, Mussolini did not challenge Italy's traditional establishment, but rather he struck bargains with powerful interest groups – the Confindustria and their agrarian counterparts, the military, the monarchy, and most startlingly the Vatican in the Lateran Accords of 1929. In other words, the price Mussolini paid for Fascist dictatorship and his own self-exaltation (*ducismo*) was postponement of revolution.

In fact, in his early years in power Mussolini undertook only one initiative that smacked of his youthful radicalism. His education in socialism had acquainted him with Sorel's syndicalist version whose prescription of violent revolution suited his taste. He had contributed to syndicalist socialist journals and associated with many syndicalists, some of whom would emerge later as Fascism's tame intellectuals preaching empire.[12] The key role that trade unions (*sindacati*) played in syndicalist doctrine as the putative engine of revolution fed into the development of corporative theory – the idea that society and government be organized along occupational lines. In 1926 Mussolini announced the construction of

a Fascist corporative state, arguably a residue of his socialist past and, incidentally, another borrowing from D'Annunzio's Fiume regime. The edifice of triangular agencies bringing together on a permanent basis capital, labour, and the state as guardian of the commonweal was touted as the means to end the class war and, taken seriously, might have furnished a viable ideological framework for eclectic Italian Fascism.[13] But in practice, the system operated entirely for the benefit of those propertied interests to which Mussolini had sold his soul while labour had no genuine representation. Mussolini's corporative state was no more than a reservoir of jobs for Fascist party hacks and hangers-on, and in no way a catalyst for revolutionary change.

'Our preoccupation is primarily with foreign policy issues', Mussolini had affirmed in 1921,[14] and for most of the *ventennio* he was his own foreign minister – from 1922 to 1929, and from 1932 to 1936, after which his son-in-law and favourite, Galeazzo Ciano, served as his master's voice. However, in the 1920s the prior need to secure his power base at home inhibited ambitious excursions abroad. In comparison with the aggression-filled 1930s, the 1920s have sometimes been labelled a 'decade of good behaviour' on Mussolini's part. Nothing, though, could be further from the truth.[15] The bombardment and seizure of the Greek island of Corfu, from which Fascist Italy was only ejected by a veiled British threat of naval action, was a distinct omen of the belligerence to come. More to the point, however, was Mussolini's clandestine diplomacy. Behind the back of Italy's career diplomats, Italian money and arms reached various disaffected groups in the Balkans and, portentously, in Germany too. Presciently, Mussolini calculated that sooner or later Germany would revive militarily and, against that day, thought it politic to cultivate nationalist elements there, including the Nazis. In spite of his signature on the Locarno Pact of 1925, he anticipated the demise of the postwar settlement, observing more than once that 'treaties of peace are not eternal'.[16] A fluid international situation held out the hope of vindicating the mutilated victory.

One leitmotif of a magisterial Italian-language biography of Mussolini is the degeneration of Fascism, over time, from a revolutionary 'movement' into a stultifying 'regime', and indeed no one can deny the corruption, bureaucratic inertia, and downright incompetence which came to infect Fascist rule.[17] But the *Duce* in the 1930s showed little concern for administrative shortcomings and, now with a firm grip on power, was free to pursue his extravagant personal dreams. In the early years of the decade three things coincided to indicate the direction he was taking. In 1932 the 14th volume of *Enciclopedia Italiana* appeared

containing an article on Fascism signed by Mussolini. Actually, much of it was written by Giovanni Gentile, his former education minister, but it has Mussolini's stamp on it and affords useful clues as to the Fascist revolution that he had in mind. Second, in the same year, he started to plan the invasion of Ethiopia with the expectation of war in three or four years.[18] Removing the 'stain' of Adowa was to be the primary step on the road to a new imperial Rome. And last, in the early 1930s Hitler rose to power and quickly recast the European balance within which the *Duce* would have to work to build his Roman empire. Taken together, these three events would throw into high relief the true contours of Mussolini's mental map.

The Mussolinian article in *Enciclopedia Italiana* purported to be a statement of Fascist ideology and, by reference to a 'century of Fascism', to vault it into a world historical idea.[19] Apart from passing references to corporativism, however, it was mostly a disorganized and repetitive hymn to totalitarianism:[20] 'Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State.' Thus, the Fascist state's 'influence reaches every aspect of the national life and includes . . . all the political, economic and spiritual forces of the nation'. Yet this leviathan claimed to possess special attributes; the Fascist state was described as 'an ethic state' and Fascism itself as 'a living faith'. Mussolini was prone to refer to Fascism as a faith, and the hint of religion is significant. While the Concordat with the Vatican was, on Mussolini's part, a purely tactical ploy, a number of commentators have remarked how much Fascist ritual and language mimicked traditional religious practices, reflecting a 'civil religion' and a 'sacralization of politics'.[21] These were echoes of the semi-religious or moral revolution envisaged by the young turn-of-the-century intellectuals. In this, Mussolini was true to his earlier self when, under the rubric of totalitarianism, he contemplated a wholesale metamorphosis in Italian values. Conforming to this meaning of Fascist revolution, the crusade to alter the national character of Italians moved into high gear in the 1930s. In populist fashion, Mussolini talked of 'going to the people', and special emphasis was placed on organized leisure for the masses and youth training.[22] Naturally, Mussolini set great store by the generation reared under Fascism, and he counted on PNF youth organizations, as much as formal schooling, to instil correct beliefs. For the population at large the *Duce* relied on his favourite weapon – propaganda. The walls of Italy were plastered with slogans of which one of the most common captured the quintessence of the Fascist message: 'Believe, Obey, Fight.'

Of that trio of injunctions not the least important was the final one. Mussolini was a war lover. He liked to couch his domestic policies in military terminology – the 'battle of wheat', the 'battle for births'. All the Fascist youth groups, even the *Balilla* for 8- to 14-year-olds, featured military exercises and training. As one school textbook put it: 'Caesar has come to life again in the *Duce*.... Step into the ranks of his army and be the best soldiers.'[23] In his *Enciclopedia Italiana* article Mussolini derided the League of Nations and the illusion of perpetual peace, but exalted war: 'War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it.'[24] Mussolini always bridled at the tourist cliché of an Italy of ice-cream merchants and operatic tenors; his aim was to replace it with an image of a tenacious, ruthless, heroic warrior nation. And what better way to create his Nietzschean and Futurist 'new man' than by exposing Italians, and above all the rising generation, to the toughening experience of war in the conquest of empire? Moreover, if war happened to sweep aside the old guard of monarchy, church, and aristocracy – for whom the *Duce* had no liking despite his collaboration with them – so much the better. 'War and revolution are two words that are almost always coupled', he once commented. 'Either it is war that determines the revolution or revolution that ushers in a war.'[25] In the 1930s, therefore, the Fascist revolution at home and imperialist war abroad proceeded side by side, each complementing the other. It all lends substance to the thesis that Mussolini was, after all, a programmatic thinker.[26]

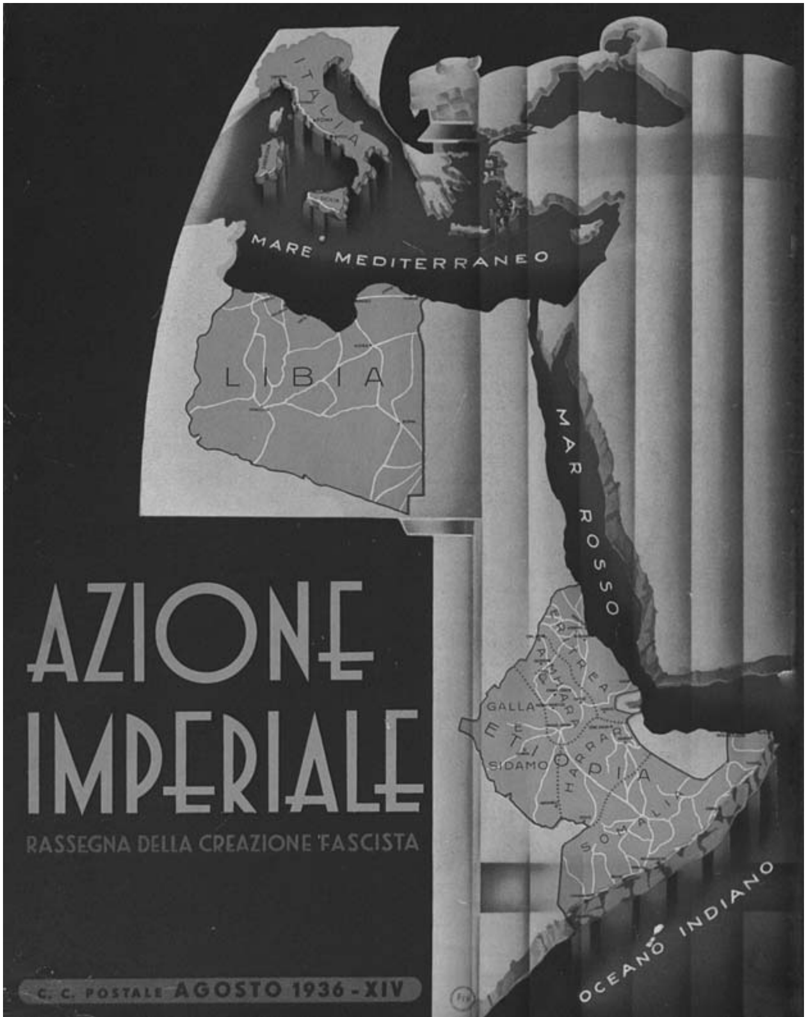
Mussolini's bid for a new Roman empire was intertwined from start to finish with the rise and fall of Nazi Germany. The *Duce* welcomed Hitler's arrival in power because it boded ill for France, Italy's rival 'Latin sister'. In addition, Hitler was the sole German nationalist of note who, for the sake of Italian friendship, accepted Italy's sovereignty over the South Tyrol (to Italians the Alto Adige), an area of mixed German and Italian population and Italy's major territorial reward for intervention in the First World War. Conversely, the mere presence of a government in Berlin bent on revising the postwar settlement stimulated Austro-German irredentist feeling inflamed by Mussolini's harsh Italianization measures in South Tyrol, and raised the spectre of *Anschluss* and German troops camped threateningly on the Brenner. Indeed, a crisis erupted soon enough; in July 1934 Austrian Nazis murdered Engelbert Dollfuss, Austria's chancellor and political client of Fascist Italy, in a coup specifically intended to bring about *Anschluss*. By chance or foresight, a larger number of Italian divisions than normal were training near the Brenner,

and the prospect of their crossing the border into Austria sufficed to save the day, at least for the time being.[27] The following year, after Hitler announced German rearmament, Fascist Italy joined Britain and France in the Stresa Front to warn against any future treaty violations – an unmistakable allusion to *Anschluss*. Mussolini's commitment to Austrian integrity seemed firm. By this token, his attack on Ethiopia at this juncture might be judged a wanton distraction and reckless gamble. Yet the timing was not wholly unpropitious. Since German rearmament was in its earliest stage, he had a window of opportunity to enjoy a swift triumph in Africa before resuming his watch on the Brenner. But, then, this stratagem also presupposed the compliance of Britain and France, the big colonial powers in Africa.

Without fully intending it, the British foreign secretary made a speech to the League of Nations that emboldened that body into levying economic sanctions on Italy. Mussolini was incensed, even though Britain made sure oil was not added to the list of embargoed goods and declined to close the Suez Canal to Italian ships. Unappeased, the *Duce* expressed his sentiments, not merely in verbal thunderbolts but in a total reversal of his foreign policy. Hitler, for understandable reasons, had not joined in the sanctionist experiment, but he could scarcely have anticipated the bonus he received in the new year of 1936. In the midst of the Ethiopian crisis Mussolini informed a surprised German ambassador that 'if Austria . . . were in practice to become a German satellite, he would have no objection'.[28] *Anschluss* had been the premier bone of contention between Rome and Berlin; now Mussolini's virtual removal of his veto opened the way to a Fascist–Nazi liaison. The *Duce* was true to his word and, in return for Hitler's *de jure* recognition of Italy's East African empire, gave his blessing to an Austro-German agreement that recognized Austria as a Germanic state whose future foreign policy would harmonize with that of the Third Reich. Shortly afterwards, Mussolini sealed the Italo-German *rapprochement* by declaring a special bond, or axis, to exist between Rome and Berlin.[29] *Anschluss* was now solely a matter of time, and when it came in March 1938, Mussolini made no protest. In effect, Mussolini had forfeited security in Europe for the sake of *spazio vitale* (living space) overseas; such was the seductive magnetism of the idea of Rome. The counterpart of Fascist Italy's drift into the German orbit was an inevitable estrangement from the Western democracies. One reason for Mussolini's animus to the West was that he regarded, with some justification, his Ethiopian venture as no more than an Italian equivalent of other European colonial conquests of the late nineteenth century. Anglo-French opposition, token

though it was, smacked of that denigration and unequal treatment of Italy that so rankled the nationalists. In Realpolitik terms, sanctions having failed to prevent Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, accomplished (apart from continuing guerilla skirmishes) in less than a year, there was no reason for Mussolini not to return to the Stresa Front. Or at least he might have taken up the position of *peso determinante* (decisive weight) between the Western states and Nazi Germany.[30] But Mussolini was by now no Realpolitiker – he was too swept away by the Rome myth – and in any case the role of international balancer again represented Italy's traditionally modest status he was pledged to elevate. Taking sides suited Mussolini's confrontational personality, and so hostility to Britain and France continued post Ethiopia. Admittedly, Fascist Italy signed two so-called 'gentleman's agreements' (Mussolini's own phraseology) with Britain, but the motive in Rome was plain and disingenuous: it was a manoeuvre to forestall an Anglo-French combination in opposition to the burgeoning Rome–Berlin Axis. In any event, Italian actions spoke louder. A build-up of Italian forces on the Libyan–Egyptian border and a stream of anti-British propaganda beamed by Radio Bari at the Arab world persisted unchecked by frequent and fruitless protests from London.

Romanità, the historical memory of classical Rome, 'was a key element in the official vocabulary of Italian Fascism and during the 1930s became something of an obsession in the regime's cultural rhetoric'.[31] In celebration of the Ethiopian victory, a Hollywood-style historical epic 'Scipione in Africa' was released, and in Rome wall maps on the Via dell'Impero were augmented to display side by side the stages of Roman imperial conquests and those of Fascist Italy (although Ethiopia was never part of the ancient Roman empire).[32] In other words, Mussolini was preparing to go in search of further imperial glory. Unfortunately for this purpose, there were no more uncolonized areas like Ethiopia to take over; the new Roman empire in future could only expand by supplanting the territorial holdings of Britain and France. A very public acknowledgement of this fact was a staged demonstration in late 1938 by Fascist members of the Chamber of Deputies who rose to their feet, chanting variously the names of French possessions – Tunis, Nice, Corsica, Savoy, Djibouti. But Mussolini's main target was, of course, the British empire, which he made abundantly clear in February 1939 when he presented the Grand Council of Fascism with an overview of the international situation. Delivered in secret session, it was a frank exposition of the full scope of Mussolinian ambitions that bears comparison with Hitler's notorious address to his generals minuted by Colonel Hossbach.[33] He



Map 9.1 Illustration from an Italian Fascist journal celebrating Mussolini's African Empire. Courtesy of University of Wisconsin–Madison.

began with the premise that a state's freedom is 'proportional to its maritime position', and went on to voice the familiar lament that Italy was 'a prisoner in the Mediterranean' blocked at either end by the British at Suez and Gibraltar: 'The bars of this prison are Corsica, Tunisia, Malta,

Cyprus: the sentinels of this prison are Gibraltar and Suez.' From this geopolitical postulate he drew two conclusions:[34]

1. The task of Italian policy, which cannot and does not entertain any territorial objective on the European continent save Albania, is first to break the prison bars.
2. Once the bars are broken, Italy's policy can have only one watchword: to march to the ocean. Which ocean? The Indian Ocean by linking Libya with Ethiopia by way of the Sudan, or the Atlantic by way of French North Africa.

The *Duce* wanted his comments recorded under the title 'The March to the Sea' to serve as 'a password to future generations'.[35]

By the logic of his Roman imperial fantasy Mussolini anticipated fighting the Western powers, and all his diplomatic activity and strategic planning pointed in that direction.[36] What is more, he welcomed the prospect. He was, it should be remembered, a believer in the warrior virtues for their own sake. Furthermore, warfare was the instrument by which his 'permanent revolution' – the 'nationalization' of the Italian masses – would be brought about. Yet the gap in economic resources and combat strength between Britain and Italy was formidable and, in spite of the boasts of eight million bayonets and an air force to block out the sun, the problem was compounded by the mix of Fascist ineptitude and corruption which left Italy woefully unprepared for war (as Mussolini's refusal to join Hitler's war in 1939 was to prove).[37] His friendship with Hitler was based loosely on a north–south division of interests; the *Führer* had his own fish to fry in Central and Eastern Europe and was not going to become involved in the Mediterranean and Africa. How, then, it must be asked, did Mussolini imagine that Italy without allies could challenge Britain, let alone Britain and France together? The answer leads to the nub of his mindset.

Mussolini subscribed to no precise monocausal ideology to match Hitler's credence in race or Lenin's in class as arbiters of world history, but that is not to say he did not think in an ideological manner.[38] The Rome–Berlin Axis was at first no more than a statement of Fascist–Nazi ideological affinity, pronounced on the heels of Ciano's trip to Berlin to co-ordinate the two countries' propaganda. Simplistic ideological thinking lends itself to conspiracy theories, and the *Duce* was for ever suspecting plots by freemasons, Zionists and communists. The election in 1936 of Popular Front governments in both Paris and Madrid convinced him an international communist conspiracy was at work, which

was at least one motive behind Fascist Italy's intervention in the Spanish Civil War.[39] Soon after, he aligned Italy with Germany and Japan in an anti-Comintern pact. However, it was through his self-confessed lifelong guiding rule that Mussolini's blinkered quasi-ideological thought process stood most clearly revealed. As long ago as 1909 he had expressed his admiration for Charles Darwin in a centenary article, and his public statements were rife with Darwinian precepts: 'The will to dominate is the basic law of life in the universe from its most rudimentary to its most advanced form', and 'strife is the origin of all things because life is full of opposites . . . and because these opposites are irreconcilable, struggle will be forever rooted in human nature'. The *Enciclopedia Italiana* stated in the same vein that the Fascist 'conceives of life as duty and struggle and conquest'.[40] Fundamentally, Mussolini's personal philosophy was unadulterated Social Darwinism, and he applied it nowhere more thoroughly than in foreign policy. In this field he was much influenced by Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, from whose theory of the inevitable decay of cultures Mussolini extrapolated his own notion of the rise and fall of nation states. Accordingly, in the competitive international anarchy a natural law of the jungle worked to favour the strong and to ensure that some nations were on the rise and other in decline. In Mussolini's preferred vocabulary the former were 'virile', the latter 'effete'. Naturally, in Mussolini's eyes Nazi Germany exuded virility, an impression enhanced by the spectacular military display Hitler put on when the *Duce* visited Berlin. In contrast, Britain and France, the 'demoplutocracies' in Mussolini's dismissive phrase, were allegedly crippled by materialism and pacifism. He set great store by the resolution passed in the Oxford Union Society that its student members would not fight for king and country, and he was highly susceptible to anecdotal accounts from dubious sources of widespread drunkenness and sexual perversion. Out of such gossip and demographic statistics of the low French birth rate, a surplus of spinsters in Britain, and populations too old to fight, Mussolini conjured the delusion of Italian strength vis-à-vis Western frailty.[41] After meeting British Prime Minster Neville Chamberlain, he stated confidently, 'These men are not made of the same stuff as the Francis Drakes and the other magnificent adventurers who created the empire. These, after all, are the tired sons of a long line of rich men, and they will lose their empire.'[42]

This vainglorious mentalité was much in evidence during the Munich crisis in September 1938. Not surprisingly, the *Duce* openly endorsed the German case in the Czech Sudeten question, and crucially he also assured Hitler Italy would fight should the issue result in war. Yet, full

mobilization of Italy's armed forces was never ordered, only that sufficient for 'armed neutrality'.[43] In the event, his promise to Hitler was not put to the test for Chamberlain, using Mussolini as intermediary, persuaded the *Führer* to attend the historic conference at Munich. En route there Mussolini remarked to Ciano that he was 'only moderately happy because, though at heavy price, we could have liquidated France and Great Britain for ever'.[44] It brings to mind one historian's fanciful proposition that the *Duce* was so adept a propagandist that he convinced himself that he had, in fact, transformed Italy into a mighty power; his supreme triumph was to mislead himself.[45] By any yardstick, however, his cavalier brinkmanship in the Munich crisis was staggering – until one takes into account another dimension of his Social Darwinian creed.

Social Darwinism belongs to the school of natural law that views the universe in a mechanistic fashion whereby events unfold according to a predetermined pattern. Ergo, in the context of international relations, at any given moment certain nation states are historically destined to be rising and others to be falling – regardless of human will. There are strong grounds for believing Mussolini was guilty of this kind of fatalistic thinking, a trait he shared with more notable ideologues of the twentieth century. His speeches and writings had always been peppered with references to destiny, becoming more frequent with the passage of years. He rejoiced in the title 'man of providence' that the Pope had bestowed on him at the time of the Lateran Accords. And it is surely no accident that, on the eve of his momentous switch of international sides in 1936, he struck a note of fatalism: 'Between Germany and Italy there exists a community of destiny. It will become ever stronger. It cannot be denied. They are congruent cases. One day we shall meet, whether we want to or not! But we want it! Because we must!'[46] Fatalism goes some way to explaining the gulf between Mussolini's bellicosity and the woeful lack of preparedness for war. Trust in providence apparently took precedence over planning.

But reality was bound to intrude, and did so in 1939 as the Second World War drew closer. When the Axis was converted into an Italo-German alliance, Mussolini conceded his unreadiness for war by binding Hitler to a verbal understanding that hostilities should not begin before 1942. It was, of course, a futile safeguard, and as the Pact of Steel was an offensive instrument, Fascist Italy was technically obligated to fight alongside Nazi Germany at the outbreak of the Second World War. The long list of supplies that Italy requested of Berlin before entering the war – Ciano estimated 17 million tons ferried in 17,000 trains – spoke volumes about Fascism's deficiencies.[47] Eventually, the *Duce* was propelled into war by the speed of German military successes in the spring of 1940 that

threatened to deprive him of any say in the expected reconfiguration of Europe. Having chafed for nine months at Italy's ignominious neutrality, he was not unwilling to have his hand forced. In announcing his decision for war on 10 June 1940, he resorted appropriately enough to the language of fatalistic Social Darwinism to which he was so attached: 'An hour signalled by destiny is sounding. . . . We go into battle against the plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the West. . . . This is a struggle between peoples fruitful and young against those sterile and dying.'[48]

Mussolini relied on Hitler to keep Britain and France engaged while he garnered his Roman empire, but had not counted on the subaltern status in the Axis into which he fell. Strangely, the most visible symbol of his subservience was not any international humiliation but sprang from his domestic policy. Where Mussolini had once derided Hitler's racism as 'unscientific folly' and 'a joke',[49] he himself in 1938 drafted the Fascist 'Charter of Race'. A racist policy in Africa and rants against Zionism were one thing, but antisemitism within Italy was a different matter altogether, and the Italian public naturally viewed Fascism's antisemitic legislation as craven imitation of the Nazi Nuremberg Laws. Ironically, the *Duce* acted without any pressure from Hitler,[50] though for some time he had patently been trying to attune his ideology to that of the *Führer*. His embrace of antisemitism can be seen as part of the modernizing project of national regeneration, a 'desire to remain at the forefront of Axis Europe's "new order"'.[51] More mundanely, it reflected his simplistic either/or approach to problems that forbade half measures; once he threw in his lot with Hitler, he was constrained to go the whole way. On the other hand, Mussolini's imitation of Hitler conflicted with his self-image of steadfast Italian nationalist. Consequently, a series of gestures and doublespeak endeavoured to keep up the pretence of Fascist Italy's autonomy. Albania had been a poverty-stricken virtual protectorate of Italy since the mid-1920s, and its military occupation in 1939 was undertaken to equate with Germany's recent and more substantive absorption of Czechoslovakia. Mussolini's desertion of Hitler at the outset of the Second World War was disguised behind the term non-belligerence lest the word neutrality recall Italy's posture in 1914.[52] Having joined hostilities, the *Duce* announced that his was a 'parallel war', although catastrophic Italian campaigns in North Africa and Greece quickly forced the Germans to assume command of the Mediterranean theatre of operations.[53] When Hitler turned against the Soviet Union, Mussolini insisted, against the wishes of the *Führer* and for no other reason than prestige, on dispatching Italian troops to the Eastern Front where they suffered horribly: 'We cannot have a lesser presence than Slovakia', he explained.[54]

Less than a year after Fascist Italy entered the Second World War Mussolini's imperial dreams had ended in smoke, his mental map in tatters. He had staked his reputation on his foreign and war policies, and failure on those counts was encapsulated in the baleful Axis partnership. When he could not or would not extricate Italy from Nazi Germany's war, he was ultimately, in 1943, toppled and imprisoned by those who had once sustained him in power. Once rescued and propped up as puppet ruler of the Salò Republic in Nazi-occupied northern Italy, Mussolini sought revenge on the establishment by reverting to his youthful socialism and devising schemes for the nationalization of industry.[55] To the end, then, he dabbled in revolution and, as always, to no real effect. At Salò he had neither power nor time to realize what remained of his primal mental map.

Mussolini's basic personality, notably his dogmatism and brutality, was apparent from an early age, but his mental map grew more slowly. The First World War determined that it would be formulated within nationalistic parameters, and the aims of revolution at home and international greatness occupied his mind from the start of the *ventennio*. However, a clear profile of how to accomplish these dual aspirations did not surface until the thirties decade. Then, the symbiotic linkage of *fascistizzazione* (fascistization) of the Italian people with a new Roman empire became the focus of a grandiose design. Neither the goal of integrating the mass of Italians fully into the nation state nor the idea of Rome was novel; Fascism was no parenthesis in Italian history. But to these pre-Fascist yearnings Mussolini brought a new intensity and unprecedented measures for their fulfilment: totalitarianism within Italy and the subordination of the nation's continental security to the pursuit of overseas empire. It was the latter, in the form of the Axis and all that it entailed, that persuaded the erstwhile Fascist 'flankers' or fellow travellers to bring down Mussolini. They were nationalists and not ill disposed to authoritarian rule, and they differed from the *Duce* more in degree than in kind.

Unlike Hitler whose officials 'worked towards' the leader, interpreting his will intuitively, Italy's *Duce* was relatively a more hands-on dictator.[56] He attended his office regularly, although he spent much time on trivial items – secret police reports on enemies and rivals rather than matters of state. Nonetheless, the major decisions can all be traced back directly to Mussolini's office in the Palazzo Venezia, and so too can the decisive failure of the Fascist experiment. Unscrupulous political skill and the alchemy of charisma could take Mussolini only so far. Even the claimed consensus of popular support for Fascism between the Lateran Accords

and the victory in Ethiopia (1929–1936) was largely passive toleration and enforced conformity of opinion, and in the final analysis the Fascist national revolution foundered on Italians' ingrained loyalties to locality and family.[57] Frustration of his pseudo-religious revolution was as complete, if not so noisily obvious at the time, as the debacle of 'parallel war'. The root cause of Mussolini's failing lay in lazy thinking, in his fondness for glittering but glib generalizations, and above all in his trust in the terrible simplifications of Social Darwinism. He thought, as he spoke, in aphorisms and slogans. An early and long-term mistress once astutely observed that, mindless of power and office, he 'has not ceased to be a journalist. He takes a supply of scribbling paper with him even to Cabinet Councils and, when he may seem to be engaged on ministerial memoranda, he is really composing "little articles" for the press. Even in his official communications we shall often find the true journalist's touch.'[58] As journalist-propagandist, Mussolini craved headlines, however empty of meaning, and privileged the 'stile fascista' (Fascist style) at the expense of substance, exploiting for his own ends Italians' well-known love of spectacle (*fare buona figura*). Italian Fascism has often been dismissed as a regime of gestures; in this it mirrored all too accurately the mentalité of its *Duce*.

Notes

1. Good expressions of this view are to be found in D. Mack Smith's very readable *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (London, 1977), and his *Mussolini* (London, 1981).
2. On the character of the future Fascist *Duce*, see R.J.B. Bosworth's comprehensive and balanced biography, *Mussolini* (London, 2002).
3. P. Milza uses the phrase 'dictateur romagnole', *Mussolini* (Paris, 1999), v.
4. B. Mussolini, *Opera Omnia,* E. and D. Susmel, ed. (Florence, Rome, 1951–1980) [hereafter *OO*], Vol. III, 209.
5. Ibid., Vol. II, 128.
6. D. Musiedlak, 'Religion and Political Culture in the Thought of Mussolini', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 6 (2005), 395–406. For more on Mussolini's early intellectual journey, see A. Balabanoff, *My Life as a Rebel* (London, 1938), ch. 4; A.J. Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley, 1979).
7. *OO*, Vol. VI, 402–3.
8. M. Ledeen, *The First Duce: D'Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore, 1977).
9. M. Marsella, 'Enrico Corradini's Italian Nationalism: The "Right Wing" of the Fascist Synthesis', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 9 (2004), 203–24.
10. F. Chabod, *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders* (Princeton, 1966), Part 2: 'The Idea of Rome'.
11. A. Lyttleton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy, 1919–1929* (London, 1973).

12. D.D. Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Chapel Hill, 1979); A.J. Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, 2005).
13. C. Landauer, *Corporate State Ideologies: Historical Roots and Philosophical Origins* (Berkeley, 1983).
14. *OO*, Vol. XVII, 13.
15. A. Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy* (Princeton, 1970).
16. *OO*, Vol. XIX, 18; Vol. XXIII, 176.
17. R. De Felice, *Mussolini*, 4 vols in 7 parts (Turin, 1965–1997).
18. E. De Bono, *Anno XIIII: The Conquest of an Empire* (London, 1937), 3–15; De Felice, *Mussolini*, Vol. III: *Mussolini il duce*, Part I: *Gli anni del consenso*, 417–18.
19. Seizing on these words, a group of young Fascist intellectuals attempted to set up a Fascist international along the lines of the socialist internationals. Mussolini showed scant interest, and the scheme collapsed amid wrangling between corporativists and racists (M. Ledeen, *Universal Fascism: The Theory and Practice of the Fascist International, 1928–1936* [New York, 1972]).
20. An authorized English translation appeared under the title 'The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism', *Political Quarterly* 4 (1933), 341–56.
21. E. Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, MA, 1996). For further examples of Fascist religiosity, see S. Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (Berkeley, 1997); M. Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca, 1997).
22. *OO*, Vol. XXV, 50; V. De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, 1981); T.H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy, 1922–1943* (Chapel Hill, 1985).
23. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight*, 21.
24. 'Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism', 344–5.
25. *OO*, Vol. XXI, 363.
26. The portrait of Mussolini as a programmatic thinker usually involves comparison with Hitler, for example, M. Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge, 2000); A.A. Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922–1945* (London, 2000).
27. R. Mallett, 'The *Anschluss* Question in Italian Defence Policy, 1933–1937', *Intelligence and National Security* 19 (2004), 680–94.
28. H.J. Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar Years, 1918–1940* (Westport, CT, 1997), 131.
29. *OO*, Vol. XXVIII, 69–70.
30. An Italian school of historians does argue, albeit without much credibility, that Mussolini strived to play *peso determinante* up to the eve of Italy's entry into the Second World War (De Felice, *Mussolini*, Vol. III, *Mussolini il duce*, Part II: *Lo Stato totalitario, 1936–1940*; R. Quartararo, *Roma tra Londra e Berlino: la politica estera fascista dal 1931 al 1940* [Milan, 1980]).
31. P.V. Canninstraro, '*Romanità*', in *Historical Dictionary of Fascist Italy* (Westport, 1982), 461. See also R. Visser, 'Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the *Romanità*', *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992), 5–22.

32. For Mussolini's reconstruction of Rome to reflect *romanità*, see B. Painter, *Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City* (New York, 2005).
33. In another Nazi parallel M. Knox calls the speech 'a sort of Mussolinian *Mein Kampf*' (*Mussolini Unleashed, 1939–1941: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* [Cambridge, 1982]), 39.
34. *OO*, Vol. XXXVII, 151–2.
35. G. Ciano, *Diary*, *1939–1943*, M. Muggeridge, ed. (London, 1947), 22.
36. G.B. Strang, *On the Fiery March: Mussolini Prepares for War* (Westport, CT, 2003); R.M. Salerno, *Vital Crossroads: Mediterranean Origins of the Second World War, 1935–1940* (Ithaca, 2002); R. Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933–1940* (Basingstoke, 2003); M.A. Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad: Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935–1940* (London, 2006).
37. Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed,* ch. 1; B.R. Sullivan, 'The Italian Armed Forces, 1918–40', in A.R. Millett and W. Murray, ed. *Military Effectiveness*, Vol. 2: *The Interwar Period* (London, 1988), 169–217.
38. The phenomenon of an ideologue without an ideology, or the distinction between ideology and ideological thinking, is explored in my book *Ideology and International Relations in the Modern World* (London, 1996).
39. J.F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, 1975), 12–13, 29, 78–82.
40. *OO*, Vol. II, 8–10; Vol. X, 327; Vol. XV, 216; 'Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism', 345.
41. Some of Mussolini's unorthodox sources of information are detailed in Mack Smith's *Mussolini's Roman Empire*.
42. Ciano, *Diary*, *1939–1943*, 9–10.
43. G. Ciano, *Diary*, *1937–1938*, M. Muggeridge, ed. (London, 1948), 161–3.
44. Ibid., 166.
45. D. Mack Smith, 'Mussolini: Artist in Propaganda', *History Today* 9 (1959), 223–32.
46. R. Whealey, 'Mussolini's Ideological Diplomacy: An Unpublished Document', *Journal of Modern History* 39 (1967), 435.
47. Ciano, *Diary*, *1939–1943*, 135.
48. *OO*, Vol. XXIX, 403–4.
49. Ibid., Vol. XLIV, 73; N. Goldmann, *The Autobiography of Nahum Goldmann: Sixty Years of Jewish Life* (New York, 1969), 160.
50. For example, P. Baxa, 'Capturing the Fascist Moment: Hitler's Visit to Italy in 1938 and the Radicalization of Fascist Italy', *Journal of Contemporary History* 42 (2007), 227–42.
51. R. Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy*, *1922–1945* (Berkeley, 2001), 149.
52. Ciano, *Diary*, *1939–1943*, 148.
53. Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed*, ch. 6.
54. *OO*, Vol. XXX, 112.
55. Ibid., Vol. XXXII, 20, 149, 171, 178–9, 183, 267, 318.
56. On this distinction between I. Kershaw's *Hitler*, 2 vols. (London, 1998–2000) and Mussolini, see Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 5–10.
57. De Felice, *Mussolini*, Vol. III, Part II: *Gli anni del consenso*. In refutation see L. Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge, 1987); R.J.B. Bosworth, 'War, Totalitarianism and

''Deep Belief'' in Fascist Italy', *European History Quarterly* 34 (2004), 475–505, and 'Everyday Mussolinianism: Friends, Family, Locality and Violence in Fascist Italy', *Contemporary European History* 14 (2005), 23–43; P. Corner, 'Italian Fascism: Whatever Happened to Dictatorship?', *Journal of Modern History* 74 (2002), 325–51, and 'Everyday Fascism in the 1930s: Centre and Periphery in the Decline of Mussolini's Dictatorship, *Contemporary European History* 15 (2006), 195–222.

58. M. Sarfatti, *The Life of Benito Mussolini* (London, 1925), 341.

10 Hitler

Neil Gregor

How does one map the mind of Adolf Hitler? One striking formulation of the problem was offered by the émigré journalist Sebastian Haffner, who, in a set of 'Observations on Hitler' first published in 1978, opined that 'the decisive characteristic of this life is its one-dimensionality' and that, political obsessions aside, it was a life 'devoid of content'.[1] Even more pervasive, perhaps, than the interpretative tradition which proceeds from the assumption that Hitler was an 'empty nobody' onto whom ordinary Germans projected their hopes and fears has been a strand of writing which explains his radicalism as a product of illness. There has been no shortage of writing characterising Hitler as a 'neurotic psychopath', a 'psychopathic paranoid' or simply a 'very sick man'.[2] Typically, such analyses suggest that one or another experience of early-life trauma generated an inferiority or oedipal complex which found expression in a visceral hatred of the Jews. A recent attempt to portray Hitler as a secret homosexual sits very much within this tradition of explaining Hitler's politics as the product of one or another kind of supposed deviancy from the social, cultural and political norms of mainstream German society.[3]

This implicit emphasis on Hitler as an 'outsider' has been reinforced by a quite separate strand of historical writing which, focussing on the literary influences which helped to shape Hitler's thought, draws attention to the fringe position of many of the authors whose writings he consumed in the low-life environment of pre-1914 Vienna. As early as 1958 Wilhelm Daim was claiming that the mystic lapsed monk Lanz von Liebenfels had been 'the man who gave Hitler his ideas';[4] a more recent,

and in many ways highly compelling treatment of Hitler's time in Vienna has also focussed on very marginal, if not downright cranky figures, along with local Pan-German politicians, when seeking to analyse the origins of his thought.[5]

The cumulative effect of such work, in all its varieties, has been to enforce stubbornly a view – particularly prevalent in the voluminous outpourings aimed at a more popular market – that Hitler had very much come from outside of the main currents of German history. This, in turn, has encouraged a formulation of the problem of explaining Hitler's rise to power which asks how such an outsider, an 'arriviste' or – in Walter Langer's words – 'an apparently insignificant and incompetent ne'er do well' could capture the state in such a modern, complex and highly civilised society and remould it so effectively in pursuit of his expansionist and genocidal ambitions.[6]

If such a formulation suggests an apparently compelling conundrum, it is, in many respects, misleading. For one thing, it pays insufficient attention to the very widespread changes which had occurred in German society itself since the 1890s. These changes had radically expanded and transformed the opportunities for political mobilisation in Germany, and had made possible the emergence of radical populist politics pursued by figures such as Hitler in a manner which had not been the case before.[7] More specifically, in the context of a discussion of Hitler's mind, it fails to acknowledge that Hitler's ideas represented a distillation – albeit only one of a number of possible distillations, and a highly vulgarised at that – of far more mainstream scientific, medical, political, cultural and historical discourses from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century than a one-sided concentration on those embodied in the writings of eccentric monks or fringe Nordic mystics would suggest. His distillation of these was inflected, in turn, with a fluid blend of the diverse conservative, nationalist, militarist, colonialist and racist messages which had circulated widely through Wilhelmine society and which were, in many respects, part of the common sense of its political and popular culture.

This essay proceeds from the assumption that Hitler, while rightfully characterised as the representative of a new style of political activism in the post-1918 years, is thus to be understood less as a fringe figure who captured German politics from the outside than as a product of Germany's own complex transitions from the late nineteenth century onwards; it argues that his worldview, whilst shaped in a social and then political environment which was, clearly, in many respects initially marginal, was far from being the product of ideas or experiences which

were in themselves unusual; moreover, it sees the key to understanding his mentality less in terms of the study of individual pathology than as a question of Hitler's socialisation and experiences against the wider background of the cataclysmic changes and events which occurred in Germany in the first two decades of the twentieth century. It suggests, above all, that the coordinates of Hitler's mental map were set by neither childhood trauma nor encounters with marginal literature, but by the wider world of ideas of pre-1914 Austria and Germany, by the radical political transformations and upheavals of the post-1918 era, and – most significantly of all – by the formative experience of the First World War.

As Sebastian Haffner, with whom this essay opened, noted, Hitler's empty personal life was accompanied by an unusually intense political one: the end product of Hitler's pursuit of his radical visionary politics was a brutal war of imperial conquest and racial annihilation which left millions dead, Europe in ruins and reduced Jewish life and culture across the continent to a pale echo of its former self, destroying it completely in many areas.[8] He was, first and foremost, a man of action: if ever the mentality of a historical figure should be judged by what he did, as much as by what he said, then it was Hitler.

Hitler was also, however, a man of words – primarily of the spoken word, but also the written word – whose speeches and writings reveal much both about the ideas, their origins and influences, but also about the mindset which encouraged the translation of vision into reality into such an ultimately horrifying way. Drawing both on Hitler's own writings from the 1920s – not only *Mein Kampf* and the unpublished Second Book but also his many articles for the *Völkische Beobachter* – and on the reports of his speeches provided by both Nazi and non-Nazi observers from the same era this essay seeks to outline some of the main characteristics of this most radical of minds, before offering a few suggestions concerning Hitler's ability to appeal to and connect with a wider audience. It draws on this body of sources, first, because the period was that in which all the main elements of his worldview were consolidated; secondly because, for all the tactical manoeuvring within the political milieu of the far right which characterises the writings of this period, they represent the clearest expression of Hitler's convictions, relatively unencumbered as they then were by the need to adapt to an audience or to consider diplomatic ramifications; it uses both Hitler's main political tracts and the much wider array of articles and speeches, finally, not because this aids further the 'systemization of fragments' which others have seen as central to the problem of analysing his ideology, but rather because the extensive repetition of many of his central themes in

both articles and speeches, as well as in *Mein Kampf*, underlines further that, much as one recognises the unsystematic qualities both of Hitler's writing and his thinking, there was nonetheless a discernible core of broadly constant attitudes and beliefs present from an early stage in his career.[9]

In an essay on the subject of 'mental maps' it is perhaps appropriate to begin by surveying how Hitler saw geographical space – how he imagined the world itself. His view of Germany and its relationship to its neighbours, like his view of everything else, was determined by a Darwinistic belief in struggle as the underlying principle which governed all human affairs. For Hitler, 'politics is history in the making. History itself represents the progression of a people's struggle for survival'.[10] Accordingly, Hitler essentially divided the nations of the world into two: Germany and Germany's enemies. Throughout his writings and speeches of the 1920s, he made regular reference to the massive coalition of powers which had faced Germany in the First World War. In a speech in Hamburg in 1927, for example, he insisted that 'you can abuse and spit upon our army, you can besmirch our valuable German name, but one thing you will never erase from history: that one people, one state stood firm against 24 states of the earth for years'.[11] Such remarks conveniently ignored the presence of powerful, albeit unloved, allies on Germany's side, and the very minor role played by many of Germany's antagonists in the war. They also demonstrate how Hitler's friend–foe image of Germany's relationship to the outside world was inserted into a history of the origins of the First World War heavily shaped by the 'encirclement' narrative embraced by broad sections of the German right in the 1920s.

Hitler did, however, distinguish between Germany's various enemies. To the West, he argued consistently that 'the implacable deadly enemy of the German people is and remains France. No matter who rules or will rule in France, whether Bourbon or Jacobin, Napoleonist or bourgeois democrat, clerical republican or red Bolshevik, the goal of their foreign policy activity will always be the attempt to hold the Rhine border and to secure this river through a dissolved and shattered Germany.'[12] On another occasion, he insisted in characteristically contorted language that France aimed at the 'dissolution of Germany into small states which make war on one another, and the securing of France via the Rhine, which in turn will be secured by the dissolution of Germany into small states i.e. through the Balkanisation of Germany'.[13] Criticising those who, with Gustav Stresemann, saw the possibilities of rapprochement with the former enemy, he repeated that 'France will always try to smash Germany, to dissolve Germany into nothing but small states, to

win the Rhine border and to secure the Rhine for good, because France is incapable of any greater world-political acts as long as a powerful Germany sits on its northeastern flank'.[14]

This radical antipathy towards France was undoubtedly shaped by Hitler's own experience of fighting on the Western front during the First World War, and compounded both by French intransigence at the Paris peace negotiations and by her subsequent occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. But it was inscribed in the conventional language of nineteenth century German nationalism. *Mein Kampf* was replete, for example, with references to the Wars of Liberation, to the 'Watch on the Rhine' of 1840 or to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. In his account of his own military mobilisation in 1914 he described how

> for the first time I saw the Rhine as we rode westward along its quiet waters to defend it, the German stream of streams, from the greed of the old enemy. When through the tender veil of the early morning mist the Niederwald Monument gleamed down upon us in the gentle first rays of the sun, the old Watch on the Rhine roared out of the endless transport train into the morning sky, and I felt as though my heart would burst.[15]

Moreover, the traditional nationalist symbol of the Rhine figured firmly in his imagination of future wars too – at the first meeting of the re-founded NSDAP following the failed Munich putsch of 1923 Hitler made the following appeal to 'our German youth': 'you do not know whether you will one day have to be there where the freedom of the German fatherland must be fought for again. But if you have to go once more in your lives to the Rhine then you too will not be torn apart, but will march again shoulder to shoulder.'[16]

In the early 1920s much the same was true of how Hitler imagined Russia. Resonating through his speeches and writings of the early post-war years was, above all, an image of Russia which saw it as the source of the 'hordes' of 'eastern Jews' (Ostjuden) who were now emigrating westwards from the many diverse parts of Eastern Europe, fleeing war, civil war, ethnic conflict and persecution.[17] A police report of a very early speech of February 1920, for example, registered Hitler as saying that 'the workers are always being told that they should emigrate to Russia. Wouldn't it then be more useful if the eastern Jews stayed there, if there is so much work there?'[18] According to a similar report on an NSDAP meeting held in April 1920, he likewise called for the 'expulsion of the eastern Jews and banning of further

immigration'.[19] Here, again, there was little to distinguish Hitler's notion of Russia as a source of ethnically and culturally different, and implicitly inferior, migrants from the rhetoric of the nationalist right in general.

During the early 1920s, however, Hitler's views of Russia and of the Soviet Union evolved: crucially, he gradually came to associate Bolshevism in particular, and not just Russia in general, with the Jews.[20] At a demonstration of right wing organisations in Munich in August 1922, for example, the *Völkische Beobachter* recorded him speaking clearly of 'eastern, Jewish Bolshevism'.[21] By the time of writing *Mein Kampf*, at the latest, this view had become fixed. In a key passage of anti-Semitic invective Hitler implored his readers never to forget that

> the rulers of present-day Russia are common blood-stained criminals; that they are the scum of humanity which, favoured by circumstances, overran a great state in a tragic hour, slaughtered and wiped out thousands of her leading intelligentsia in wild blood lust, and now for almost ten years have been carrying on the most cruel and tyrannical regime of all time. Furthermore, do not forget that these rulers belong to a race which combines, in a rare mixture, bestial cruelty and an inconceivable gift for lying, and which today more than ever is conscious of a mission to impose its bloody oppression on the whole world.[22]

If, for Hitler, an alliance with Russia before 1914 had been a possibility, the triumph of 'Jewish Bolshevism' there now made this inconceivable, for 'if a man believes that he can enter into profitable connections with parasites, he is like a tree trying to conclude for its own profit an agreement with a mistletoe'. He continued: 'The fight against Jewish world Bolshevisation requires a clear attitude towards Soviet Russia. You cannot drive out the Devil with Beelzebub.'[23]

In his remarks on France or on the Soviet Union, or in similar remarks on other states, including Great Britain and the United States, Hitler revealed a mind in which particular nation-states were associated with particular histories, constitutional systems, cultural characteristics and political agendas, and a view of the world in which, on one level, relationships and conflicts were worked out according to the dictates of conventional Realpolitik against the specific background afforded by the events of the First World War and the post-war settlement. Yet Hitler did not view these, or any other states, as fixed or permanent features on the world political map, to be vied with solely within the inherited

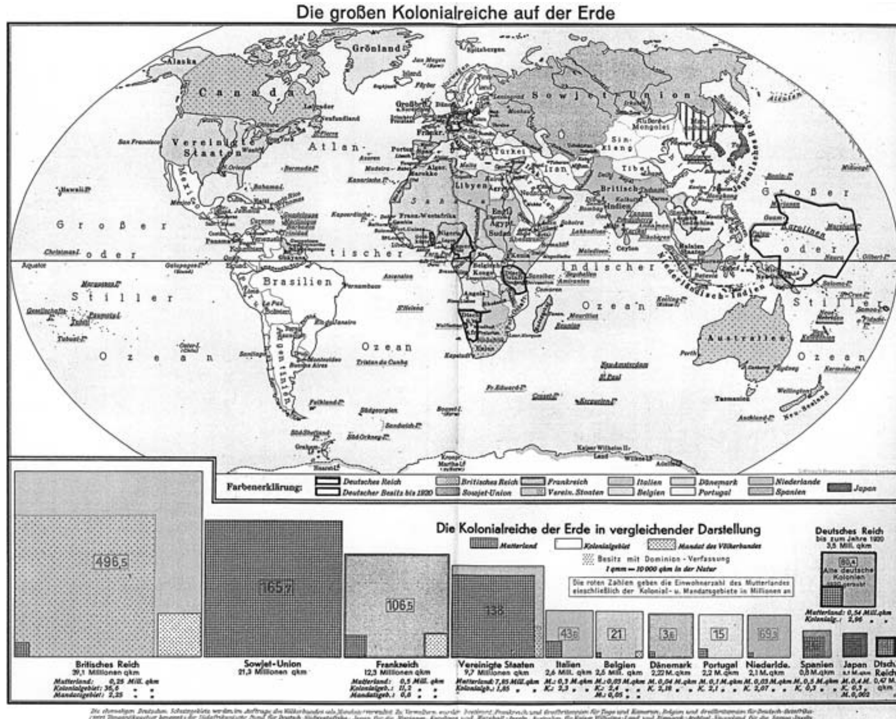
framework of nineteenth century great power politics. For Hitler, the struggle was far more deep-seated and fundamental. It was a struggle not for influence but for existence; it was, above all, a struggle without limit.

In *Mein Kampf* he outlined the nature of this struggle thus:

> [N]o people on this earth possesses so much as a square yard of territory on the strength of a higher will or superior right. Just as Germany's frontiers are fortuitous frontiers, momentary frontiers in the current struggle of any period, so are the boundaries of other nations' living space. And just as the shape of our earth's surface can seem immutable as granite only to the thoughtless soft-head, but in reality only represents at each period an apparent pause in a continuous development, created by the mighty forces of Nature in a process of continuous growth, only to be transformed or destroyed tomorrow by greater forces, likewise the boundaries of living spaces in the life of nations.[24]

Central to Hitler's vision of history as a process of competition between peoples for space was the inevitability of violence. According to the report of a speech in Hof in 1927 – during the period in which, to judge by his constant repetition of them, he was consolidating these ideas – he argued that 'it is not so that individual peoples are allocated a space from the start. Rather, each people has a claim to as much territory as it can defend for itself or is able to conquer.'[25] During the election campaign of 1928 he similarly argued that 'heaven does not allocate space, but puts on earth the peoples who have to live on it, and gives it to them as an exercise ground. In the free play of forces it is then decided who is strongest, and, shocked as the democrats might be: the strongest is in the right.'[26] It was, he argued, an 'iron principle: the weaker falls, so that the strong one maintains life'.[27] Time and again he argued that the choice was therefore simple: 'whoever does not wish to be a hammer must be an anvil'.[28]

At the root of the constant competition for space, according to Hitler, was the search for food. The search for food, along with the urge to reproduce, was the dominant motive force of human existence and thus of history. On more than one occasion he made clear his view that the search for improved food supplies to meet the needs of the expanding populations of healthy nations made imperialism not only necessary but natural. Perhaps his clearest statement of this position was in his 1927 brochure on 'The Path to Revival', which was circulated privately within



Map 10.1 The Nazi view of 'the great colonial empires of the earth'. The map is designed to show the disparity between the large empires, of which the greatest was the British Empire, and the area remaining to Germany after the Versailles Treaty of 1919.

industrial circles at the behest of the industrialist Emil Kirdorf. Here he argued that

> every people needs the necessary space for the development of itself on this earth. The task of politics is to ensure that the fixed space is constantly adjusted and matched to its changing number. As a people can only be characterised as healthy when it participates in the general struggle of life, while the precondition for this is the increase in numbers of a people, it must be seen as the highest task of politics to give this natural imperialism the equally natural satisfaction.

The very task of politics, indeed, was to 'make possible the struggle for life of a nation through the constant matching of the means of food supply to the number of the people. A people whose political leadership departs from this principle can, for sure, live on for the moment, but it is condemned to die in the near or distant future.'[29] The motives for this were the same that drove parents to provide for their children. As he explained to the Nazi party rally at Nuremberg in August 1927, 'if someone says: you are imperialists, then ask him: do you not wish to be one? If not, you can never become a father, for if you have a child then you have to provide for its daily bread. And if you provide for bread then you are an imperialist.'[30] For these reasons, he argued in the Second Book, 'every healthy, native people sees nothing sinful in the acquisition of land, but rather something natural'.[31]

If such observations underlined that Hitler's vision had moved beyond the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and the pursuit of a German-dominated central Europe towards the embrace of notions of implicitly boundless conquest – at least in theory – his rhetoric still contained strong echoes of wider, often older refrains in the nationalist discourse of early twentieth-century Germany. The idea of Germany as a 'People without Space' was itself commonplace on the right: in 1926 the writer Hans Grimm had published a best-selling novel with the same title.[32] Moreover, the assertion that 'today one does not say that there are virgin territories on this earth that are untapped and that we Germans will exploit . . . wherever we turn up in the world, others are already standing there' had more than faint echoes of complaints in the Wilhelmine era that Germany had not acquired her rightful 'place in the sun'.[33] Yet if some of the language which Hitler used was familiar, the colonial vision in Hitler's thought by the mid-1920s differed considerably from, and went considerably beyond that of turn-of-the-century *Weltpolitik*.

What kind of colonial vision did Hitler develop over the 1920s? His vision of empire, like his imagination of Europe's geopolitical spaces more generally, was still evolving in the period after the First World War. His early speeches, which focussed on the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles, hardly distinguished themselves from the demands of the mainstream German right; calls for the restoration of German 'freedom' were expressed in language which, again, was reminiscent of much nationalist and colonialist rhetoric of the Wilhelmine era.[34] In a letter of March 1920 accompanying a copy of the NSDAP's programme of February 1920 Hitler underlined that it showed that 'we, perhaps in contrast to the German-Socialist Party, place the greatest emphasis on the complete uniting of all German tribes, without regard to their previous citizenship', indicating that his thinking had developed little beyond that of the visions of Greater Germany common within pre-war Pan-German nationalist circles.[35] Around the same time, the Munich police recorded him as saying that 'we hope that a united German Reich will soon re-emerge, which reaches from the Memel to Pressburg and from Königsberg to Strassburg';[36] three years later, the Munich police were still noting comments to the effect that 'we hope and wish for a Germany stretching from Königsberg to Strassburg, Hamburg to Vienna'.[37]

By the mid-1920s, however, this vision of continental domination had clearly evolved into something more expansive. Above all, Hitler rejected the idea that restoration of the borders of 1914 would be sufficient:

> they can at most satisfy romantic memories, but not the future of this people of 70 or 80 million, for this will not be brought to life with another 50,000 or 60,000 square kilometres of space. Either we become an economic power again, i.e. we rebuild our strength on the foundation of the world economy again, or we try to gain territory and land, in which case we need not only 60,000, but 300- or 400,000 square kilometres.[38]

During the mid-1920s Hitler's colonial gaze came to focus more and more on the east. In February 1926 he argued that the search for adequate territory to feed the population demanded that Germany should embrace 'an eastern orientation and a colonisation of the east, as in the middle ages. The best German blood was lost to us in the shape of the 2 million dead heroes, and only a far-sighted colonial policy, not in other parts of the world, but in Europe, on our eastern borders, will enable a renewal of our race.'[39] In one of the key foreign policy passages of *Mein Kampf*, he was even more unambiguous about the scope of his ambition:

'If we speak of soil in Europe today, we can primarily have in mind only Russia and her vassal border states.'[40]

As his references to the Middle Ages show, Hitler's thinking was based on a highly historical analysis of Germany's position. Indeed, for all the references to other countries or territories in Hitler's speeches and writings of the 1920s, it should be emphasised that – surprisingly, perhaps – overt references to geographical or territorial spaces figure in a relatively limited way. Even in the period when his colonial vision was being worked out most intensively his speeches focussed much more on domestic politics than on foreign policy, outlining the causes – as he saw them – of the schism between bourgeoisie and working class, the associated national disunity and with it Germany's defeat in the First World War and its current parlous state. Ultimately Hitler thought historically, rather than in primarily spatial terms, mapping the evolution of politics through time, and surveying the rise and fall of nations, races and empires in history in order to contextualise contemporary events which themselves often received relatively little adumbration.[41]

The historical nature of Germany's presence and mission in the east, as Hitler saw it, was underlined in many speeches in the mid-1920s. In March 1927 he explained to a Nazi party meeting in Vilsbiburg that

> if you look from here further over to the east, you find the eastern marches and almost the whole of today's German-Austria, which our ancestors acquired . . . A second occasion: the territory east of the Elbe was conquered by the sword and given to the German peasant hand, and again a balance was created between land and territory and the number of population.[42]

He elaborated on this theme in a speech in Ansbach in the same month:

> the whole territory which stretches from Halle or somewhere from the Elbe over to Königsberg was once colonised by our ancestors in order to create a channel into which they could send the numbers of their population. The German people in those days sent thousands and thousands of peasant sons who could not be fed at home over to the east every year.[43]

Just as important, however, as this repeated emphasis on Germans' historical drive eastwards was Hitler's explanation of why this process eventually came to an end. Indeed, his reading of the failures of recent German history, and his explanation of why the 'colonial policy' of

the Middle Ages was not continued, contained not only his recipe for German revival but also the seeds of his genocidal vision.

For Hitler, the ability to pursue conquest abroad depended on the maintenance of unity within. In his account of German history first the religious divisions of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and, second, the economic and social divisions of the industrial era had led to a loss of that unity. The inevitable result was decline. The fractured, divided nation's weakened ability to feed itself led to emigration and with it the loss of the best of the nation to other countries – especially to the United States, whose strength Hitler believed to be rooted, amongst other things, in the high quality of its immigrant population.[44] While emigration had been reversed with the advent of Germany's industrial strength, the refusal of the bourgeoisie to countenance an adequate social policy to mitigate the negative social effects of industrialisation had resulted in the growth of Social Democracy and the loss of the working class to the national cause. This was, for Hitler, the 'great historic sin of the German bourgeoisie', for it ushered in a period in which

> one spoke outwardly of a unified Reich, but did not see that this state had not possessed any inner unity for a long time, that already in the [18]80s and [18]90s the nation ceased to be a united national community, that a division opened up and that finally this people now only consisted of two halves, of proletariat and bourgeoisie [. . .][45]

The delusion that Germany's ambitions could be fulfilled by peaceful, trade-based expansion, meanwhile, led it into direct competition and ultimately into war with Britain. Germany entered this war internally divided, and was thus condemned to defeat. Hitler's view of the Wilhelmine Reich in this respect was damning: 'if a state collapses so suddenly as did our Reich then this state must already have been hollow';[46] in *Mein Kampf* he refuted the idea that military weakness in itself was to blame for defeat, arguing that 'no, this military collapse was itself only the consequence of a large number of symptoms of disease and their causes which even in peacetime were with the German nation'.[47]

In Hitler's mind the root cause of the internal divisions which had left Germany open to revolution in 1918 was the infiltration of the nation by the Jews. For him an international Jewish capitalist conspiracy, supported by the Jewish press, had foisted upon Germany the pacifist delusion that national strength could be acquired by peaceful economic means, causing a loss among the German people of the necessary willingness to fight; the same Jewish conspiracy had fostered the growth of

Marxism in order to seduce the workers away from their national loyalties and to manipulate them into supporting the revolution; revolution had paved the way for Germany's national collapse and the triumph of international Jewish capitalism – as manifested for Hitler in the reparations stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles or the Dawes Plan of 1924.

In the biological metaphors through which Hitler imagined politics, the national body had gone to war weakened by an illness, a poison or a parasite, the spread of which had led to the eventual collapse of the national body itself. Regenerating the national body meant removing the illness, poison or parasite – or, in a more literal register – eradicating the Jews. As he argued as early as August 1920 in a speech in Salzburg,

> do not think that you can fight an illness without killing the pathogenic agent, without destroying the bacterium, and do not think that you can fight the racial tuberculosis without ensuring that the people is freed from the pathogenic cause of the racial tuberculosis. The effects of Jewry will never cease, and the poisoning of the people will not end, as long as the pathogenic agent, the Jew, is not removed from our midst.[48]

The biological metaphors through which Hitler explained Germany's defeat in the First World War contained, ultimately, the origins of genocide during the Second World War.[49]

If Hitler's vision of colonial expansion eastwards was more radical than most by the mid-1920s, the regimes of knowledge which informed his rhetoric were still, for the most part, decidedly nineteenth-century in origin. As has been already noted, the central notion of life as struggle represented a vulgarisation of the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin, whose ideas permeated widely, and in variously distorted ways, through the political culture of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Europe. Many of his ideas on history and culture were drawn from equally commonplace sources. The focus on history as the rise and fall of civilisations was, itself, a standard feature of the history-writing of the era. More specifically, in his critiques of the peaceful, trade-based expansion of the nineteenth century or in his veneration of the positive effects of war one can see the influence of the famous nineteenth-century German historian Heinrich von Treitschke.[50] Similarly, Hitler's understanding of the relationship between politics and war rested on a self-serving reading of Clausewitz, whose life and work was regularly referenced in his speeches and writings.[51]

As far as the more overtly racist and anti-Semitic dimensions of Hitler's thought were concerned, his belief in the essential inequality of races had an unappealing intellectual archaeology which went back at least to Arthur de Gobineau, whose 1850s work *The Inequality of Human Races* was arguably the founding text of European racist ideology.[52] A German translation of this work appeared in 1900.[53] A potent blend of radical nationalism, biological anti-Semitism and opposition to Social Democracy was present in the writings of the leader of the Pan-German League from 1908 Heinrich Class, whose 1912 pamphlet 'If I Were the Kaiser' was widely circulated both before and after the First World War.[54] A focus on the negative influence of the allegedly materialistic, alien Jews through history, and on their associations with the negative forces of democracy, was central to the work of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, as was their juxtaposition to the supposedly superior 'Aryan' race. Chamberlain's writings were very widely circulated in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Germany: his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* went into its 28th German edition in 1942.[55] These were merged, of course, with thoughts stimulated by the constant reading of the nationalist press and of books and pamphlets by more obscure writers. The key point, however, is that the intellectual antecedents of central aspects of Hitler's thought were not always as marginal as is sometimes believed.

Hitler's world view was not, of course, based on open-minded reflection on Darwin, Treitschke or Clausewitz, or anyone else. His knowledge of these works, where it was not second-hand, was based on selective, partial and exploitative reading – he read only for confirmation of that which he already intuitively believed. The ideas he gleaned from his voracious reading were applied to his experiences of pre-war Vienna, the First World War and the chaos of the post-war world in which his career on the extreme of German politics took off. It was through the ongoing application of this eclectic array of second-hand ideas to the experiences of war, revolution and post-war upheaval that his ideological views gradually emerged over the mid-1920s.

Yet while his ideology was still in a process of formation in the 1920s his mentality had been decisively shaped at an earlier stage. In considering Hitler's 'mental map' it is important, indeed, to consider not only his view of the external world, and with it the evolution both of his geopolitical conceptualisations of territorial space and of his sense of historical change, but also to chart the main characteristics of his mind itself. Here, the crucial experience was undoubtedly the First World War: it is in this, as much as in his territorial vision or his understanding of

history per se, that the key to understanding the genocidal quality of his politics lies.

Contemporaries were clearly of the view that the war had been a formative experience for Hitler. Hans Frank, who participated in the Munich putsch, later became Governor General of Poland and was executed at Nuremberg, opined in his posthumously published memoirs that 'the world war was the greatest, most decisive educational experience of all' for him.[56] As far as Hitler's direct accounts of his war experience are concerned, we have little clear evidence to go on. The few surviving letters written by Hitler from the front suggest a soldier who genuinely seemed to relish the war. They are striking, moreover, for their very unemotive descriptions of both the violence and the high losses at the front.[57] Interpreting soldiers' letters is, of course, highly complex, influenced as they are by the imagined obligation to conform to notions of martial masculinity, by the shaping power of the perceived expectations of the reader at home, and, not least, by the awareness of the presence of the military censor. Yet it is difficult not to detect in his uninvolved, unsparing account of the killing of enemy soldiers during the clearing of trenches – 'many put their hands up. Those who do not surrender are gunned down [niedergemacht]. We clear trench after trench in this way' – a hardened indifference to death from an early stage.[58] This is hardly, in itself, evidence of a genocidal mindset, but such graphic descriptions of death at the front do remind that the language of 'destruction' and 'eradication' of the enemy which resonates so strongly through his post-war speech and prose was not necessarily entirely figurative, and was rooted instead in the direct experience of witnessing mass killing in the First World War.

In his post-war speeches, Hitler certainly projected an image of himself as the proud but ordinary front soldier of the war. In a court hearing in 1926, he proclaimed that 'I wore the grey tunic for nearly six years. These six years will remain for me not only the most eventful, but the most honourable of my entire earthly existence.'[59] Likewise, in a speech before a Nazi party meeting in Munich in April 1927 he insisted that 'I am happy that fate forced me through this hell of blood and fire as an ordinary soldier for four years.'[60] In the former, of course, Hitler was painting a picture of himself as an ordinary patriotic German before judges whose own nationalist proclivities he would have been able to assume; in the second, he was clearly drawing political capital from his military service. Yet when Hitler described to the NSDAP rally in Nuremberg in 1927 his night-time stroll through the mass quarters of the assembled party faithful – 'I felt myself to be a soldier again, and my heart rose high' – there is

little reason to assume that he was being disingenuous.[61] His remarks in *Mein Kampf* on a beerhall riot at which opponents were brutally beaten and shooting occurred – 'your heart almost rejoiced at such a revival of old war experiences' – certainly indicates that such comments were not one-off utterances.[62]

Violence was, moreover, central to the ways in which Hitler imagined world history, and, in particular, the endless struggle with the great ideological enemy, Marxism. In an early memorandum on the development of the NSDAP he emphasised with regard to Marxism that 'it is a struggle of life and death between two worldviews which cannot exist alongside one another and in which struggle there will be only the victors and the destroyed . . . a victory of the Marxist idea means the total eradication of the enemy'.[63] In 1926, similarly, he told a general meeting of the Nazi party that 'with the best will this final struggle is unavoidable, and that this final struggle will not be fought out in the parliaments, but that one day there will be a trial of strength, after which one will remain lying on the floor, either Marxism or us'.[64] That this was not just a figurative, abstract global struggle, but a real, physical one in which he saw himself and the movement as directly engaged was made even more clear by a speech in January 1923: 'we know exactly that if the others take power our heads will roll in the sand. But I proclaim one thing: if we come to power, then woe to the others, then their heads will roll!'[65] As Hitler emphasised in 1927: 'National Socialism is not the doctrine of theoretical struggle, but also of practical struggle in all fields.'[66]

Hitler's speeches and prose were not merely infused with violent rhetoric, however – they were replete with specifically military metaphors and images. He imagined political stances as military positions, and pictured the political contest in terms of military campaigning. The terrain on which the political contest was engaged was, for him, a battlefield: the mobilisation of political forces was described as 'marching', the adherents of political parties were their 'ranks'. Criticising the old bourgeois parties of the right for their inadequate response to Marxism, for example, he argued that 'in contrast to Marxism these bourgeois parties fought purely defensively, while for decades Marxism was permanently on the attack. Hardly a year went by in which it did not somewhere force a breach . . . '.[67] Similarly, noting the weak state of the National Socialist students in their current struggles he demanded in 1927 that 'from this insight a stronger platform must emerge, so that out of the battle for the approaches [Vorgelände] will come the attack on the main positions [Hauptstellung] of the opponent!'[68] In one extended metaphor he compared the emergence of the Independent

Social Democratic Party from the radical wing of the mainstream Social Democratic Party in 1917 to the formation of an elite battalion:

> During the course of the war a small, but brutally determined fighting troop was formed – I would say as attack battalions – just as one takes from the great front armies a few core troops from the best elements and makes them into attack battalions, and in practice these forge the path through which the great army in the rear follows up, so the Independent party made a formation, had the best human material in its ranks. . . . these people later made the revolution possible.[69]

Later on in the same speech he chided those who saw in the separation of USPD and SPD a weakness, noting that the former was merely 'the advance attack, and it was clear that on the day the attack battalion raised the flag the other army would also march, and that, if the independent wing of the Marxist world view actually stormed the citadel the majority socialists would not stand still'.[70]

Accordingly, Hitler imagined the NSDAP as an army, or as a weapon, and its members as political soldiers. His speeches were replete with images and analogies which made this clear. In his appeal to former party members on the occasion of the re-founding of the NSDAP following its disintegration after the Munich putsch – a period in which its political opponents were 'marching together to destroy our movement' – he emphasised that it should 're-emerge as the sharpest weapon in the struggle of our people'.[71] Likewise, in a speech in 1928 he insisted that 'we feel ourselves to be soldiers, as soldiers of a coming German army, of a new German Reich and of the ideas that will one day forge this Reich'; in the ranks of this movement, he argued, the individual soldiers would become one, forged together into 'a phalanx for our German people'.[72] The notion of the NSDAP as a preliminary formation of a future rearmed and remilitarised Germany was similarly intimated during his trial following the Munich putsch, where he proclaimed with characteristic theatre that

> the army that we have formed is growing at a faster rate from day to day and hour to hour, and precisely in these days we cherish the proud hope that our wild squads will become battalions and the battalions regiments and regiments divisions, that the old cockade will be fetched out from the dirt and the old flags will flutter. . . .[73]

It was not, moreover, just military imagery in general which characterised Hitler's speech and prose. He repeatedly drew on a vocabulary based on the trench experiences of the First World War when analogising German politics. The attacks of political opponents were regularly described as 'drum-fire' (Trommelfeuer).[74] In *Mein Kampf* he insisted that one must 'combat poison gas with poison gas' when dealing with opponents;[75] in the same text SPD attacks were described as a 'veritable barrage of lies and slanders' which continued 'until the nerves of the attacked persons break down';[76] in an account of a beer-hall riot of the early 1920s he recalled how beer mugs flew through the air 'like howitzer shells'.[77] On another occasion he insisted, according to the police account of the meeting, that 'the press, our only weapon, our light artillery, must be able to deploy in heavy calibre as soon as possible'.[78]

As these many examples indicate, violence was at the core of Hitler's conception of history and politics. The presence of violence was not, however, confined to his graphic imagery, nor did it function merely as a metaphor for political activism. Ever-present in Hitler's speeches and writings was the explicit threat – indeed promise – of extreme violence against those he deemed to be Germany's enemies. Sometimes these enemies were the conventional hate-figures of the right during the inflationary era. In August 1922, for example, the *Bayrischer Kurier* newspaper recorded him as calling for a 'ruthless struggle against profiteering and racketeering, through exceptional courts equipped with the most brutal powers'.[79] On other occasions it was the so-called 'November criminals', the revolutionaries of 1918–1919 who were in the rhetorical – and literal – firing line: in *Mein Kampf* he made clear his view that 'there is no use in hanging petty thieves in order to let big ones go free; but that some day a German national court must judge and execute some ten thousand of the organising and hence responsible criminals of the November betrayal and everything that goes with it.'[80] Tellingly, this campaign of 'smashing and destroying the Marxist worldview' was imagined in the biological-medical language of eradication, for 'if the worldview is not eradicated Germany will not be able to rise again, no more than you can make a person healthy so long as he is not cured of tuberculosis.'[81]

Hitler's – and his audience's – understanding of the nature of Germany's problems and the underlying causes of these was such that threats of violence against, variously, 'profiteers', 'criminals' or 'Marxists' should be – and would have been – simultaneously understood as implicit threats to the Jews.[82] On other occasions, the focus was

made explicit. In August 1920, for example, when castigating the Jews for their supposed involvement in prostitution – a favourite theme on the right which drew on deep-seated anti-Semitic stereotypes – he proclaimed that 'to the German sensibility there could only be one punishment here: the punishment would be death.'[83] On the same occasion he underlined that 'if a major race systematically destroys the living conditions of my race I do not say I do not care where it comes from. In that case I say that I belong to those who, when they receive a blow on the left cheek, give two or three back.'[84] Addressing those who criticised the Nazis for being 'mob Antisemites' [Radauantisemiten] he replied in April 1923 that 'yes, we want to kick up a storm, and the people should not sleep but should know that a storm is brewing.'[85] On this occasion his comments were confined to citizenship issues, underlining again that much of his early anti-Semitic rhetoric continued to focus on expulsion. Elsewhere, however, he was less restrained: 'traitors to the national people's cause should be hanged once and for all . . . one prevents the Jewish undermining of our people if necessary by the securing of its initiators in concentration camps.'[86]

What is most striking, finally, about the aggressive violence of Hitler's language towards the Jews is the direct rhetorical link he constantly made between the experience of Germany during the First World War and the impending fate of the Jews. Again, the examples are numerous. In an early speech on 'Politics and Jewry' given in Munich in 1920 he proclaimed – according to the police report – that 'if we dealt with all the treachery and devilry of the external enemy for 4½ years we will also deal with the devil within.'[87] Similarly, in September 1922 the *Völkische Beobachter* reported him as demanding in a speech a 'reckoning with the November criminals of 1918 (minutes-long hefty applause). It cannot be that two million Germans fell in vain and that one later sits in friendship with traitors at the same table. No: we do not forgive, but demand – revenge!'[88] Most striking and explicit of all in this respect was a proclamation by Hitler in the *Völkische Beobachter* in the following week:

> If the Jew believes he can win, then we wish to prove that the German skull is harder than his, and that a people for whose existence two million people once died on the battlefield will also generate the means to revenge those who were cheated of their lives out in the field and whose deaths for our fatherland were in vain because of swindlers and criminals.[89]

None of the examples above amount to an announcement of genocidal plans or intentions. Their cumulative impact, however, is such that one can clearly speak, with Ian Kershaw, of an 'inherent genocidal thrust'.[90] When the language of 'eradication', 'extermination' and 'annihilation' is viewed in the broader context of the biological metaphors through which Hitler imagined the racial struggle, it is clear that genocide was a logical possibility in his ideological beliefs, but it is equally clear that Hitler was possessed of a temperamental proclivity towards extreme violence which made a genocidal outcome more likely. The constant linking of these biological and medical metaphors to a rhetoric of struggle which was not only highly militarised but also replete with references to the First World War suggest, moreover, that this extremely violent mentality was decisively moulded by that cataclysmic conflagration, however much refinement his ideological beliefs had still to undergo.

The murderous quality of Hitler's tirades, and their role not only in legitimating genocide but also in fostering a genocidal climate, is underlined further when the intensely visceral quality of his hate rhetoric is recognised. Time and time again, Hitler proclaimed himself to be a purveyor of hatred. In January 1922, for example, he insisted that 'one of the first preconditions for the moral rebirth of our people, as awful as it may sound, is the generation of an unlimited hatred against the recognised destroyers of our fatherland. . . .'[91] Similarly, in a speech in Heidelberg in 1927 he insisted that the movement was 'not a community of miserable, pitiful grovellers but a community of fighters and of hate'.[92] The most striking example of all, perhaps, came from a speech in April 1923 which was recorded by the police, by the *Völkische Beobachter* and by the non-Nazi *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*. The police recorded Hitler as saying 'there is only defiance and hate, hate and more hate (stormy applause!)'; the *Völkische Beobachter*, meanwhile, recorded his words as 'to become free . . . demands pride, will, defiance and hate, hate and again hate!'; similarly, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* recorded him as saying 'to become free demands national pride, fanaticism, defiance, hate and again hate (lively agreement)'.[93] The comments were made in the context of the French occupation of the Ruhr, and France was, in this case, the focus of his anger, but it is difficult not to see such words as more broadly symptomatic of his mentality.

The noting of 'stormy applause' and 'lively agreement' by, respectively, the police and the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* raises a final question: how did Hitler's audience respond to these tirades of hateful invective? How, in a broader sense, did someone with such a radical ideological vision and ultra-aggressive mentality connect to his public?

Account after account documents the regular, rapturous applause offered by his listeners. In the case of the *Völkische Beobachter*, repeated reports of 'applause', 'lively applause' or 'long, stormy applause' were, of course, an element of the propagandistic representation of Hitler's oratory to a wider readership. However, non-Nazi reports of such events document the applause in equally consistent fashion. As early as November 1919 the Munich police was recording the 'thunderous applause' which greeted anti-Semitic remarks made by Hitler.[94] His audiences in the 1920s were, of course, relatively small compared to the mass ranks of the Nazi party rallies which he addressed in the 1930s. In party-political terms they also represented the fringe at that point. Yet they still consisted of many hundreds, and soon thousands of people; if some categories of the population were under-represented they still contained a diverse cross-section of society – including ex-soldiers, students, housewives and professional people, none of which were marginal social groupings. Under conditions of crisis, moreover, this audience expanded very rapidly indeed. The mutually affirmative relationship between speaker and audience which characterised Hitler's charismatic activism remained essentially the same throughout, even as his support expanded.[95]

In this respect, it is worth reflecting further on some of the interjections and applause recorded by police reports of other early meetings. Here, again, two examples must suffice. In April 1920 the Munich police noted how the 'speaker then rounded sharply on international big capitalism. Our people must be implanted with the feeling of hatred against everything foreign (stormy applause).'[96] Two months earlier, it had recorded the following: 'First the guilty, first the Jews out, then we will clean up ourselves (lively applause). For do fines have no meaning for the criminal swindlers and profiteers (Beat them! Hang them!)? How do we protect our fellow people from this band of leeches (Hang them!)?'[97]

Such evidence of violent proclivities among the audience underlines that it is a distortion to think of Hitler's speeches as deceiving people into believing something that they did not already think. Rather, the successful mobilisation of fascism in Germany rested on Hitler's ability to articulate that which the audience already intuitively knew. It is, of course, an oversimplification of its own to argue from this that Hitler was typical, just as it is an oversimplification to argue that he was an outsider. The Nazi capture of the state and the gradual unfolding of the genocide of the Jews were both complex processes, themselves born of a crisis which was multi-dimensional, which cannot be adequately explained if one starts from either assumption. Yet if it is probably going too far to argue that 'the Führer's genocidal fantasies came to be shared

by millions of Germans' it should nonetheless be remembered that at the core of the relationship between Hitler and the party, Hitler and the masses, was a substantial degree of consensus, of shared understanding and shared belief.[98] His colonial vision was more radical than that of most others, but his ideological beliefs drew on nationalist and racist attitudes, and were expressed in a nationalist and racist idiom, which were commonplace. The experiences upon which he brought these to bear – the First World War and the subsequent conditions of crisis – were experiences shared by all Germans, albeit of course in a wide variety of different ways. Far from being an outsider to German history, Hitler – radical and exceptionally aggressive as his mentality doubtless was – was a product of it.

Notes

1. Sebastian Haffner, *Anmerkungen zu Hitler* (Frankfurt/Main, 1981), 8–9.
2. Walter C. Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler* (London, 1973), 17; Erik Erikson, 'The Legend of Hitler's Childhood', in *Childhood and Society* (New York, 1950), 329–30; Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York, 1973), 432.
3. Lothar Machtan, *The Hidden Hitler* (New York, 2001).
4. Wilhelm Daim, *Der Mann der Hitler die Ideen gab* (Munich, 1958).
5. Brigitte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien. Lehrjahre eines Diktators* (Munich, 1996), 285–336.
6. Langer, op. cit., 11.
7. Crucial here is the work of Geoff Eley: see, above all, the landmark study *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change since Bismarck* (New Haven, 1980, 2nd edn, 1991); for a more recent summary of the state of scholarship concerning the widespread transformations of the Wilhelmine era see the essays in Geoff Eley and James Retallack, eds, *Wilhelminism and its Legacies. German Modernities, Imperialism and the Meanings of Reform, 1890–1930* (Oxford, 2003).
8. Haffner, op. cit., 8. The best political biography of Hitler is the two-volume study by Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris* (London, 1998); *Hitler 1936–1945: Nemesis* (London, 2000).
9. Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's Worldview: A Blueprint for Power* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 25; on the relationship between the writing of *Mein Kampf* and Hitler's writings for the *Völkische Beobachter,* see Othmar Plöckinger, *Geschichte eines Buches: Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf 1922–1945* (Munich, 2006); for a recent study of *Mein Kampf* which emphasises its 'inner logic' see Barbara Zehnpfennig, *Hitlers Mein Kampf. Eine Interpretation* (Munich, 2000), the quote is from p. 34.
10. Gerhard L. Weinberg, ed., *Hitler's Second Book. The Unpublished Sequel to Mein Kampf by Adolf Hitler* (New York, 2003), 7.
11. '"Volk-Staat-Wirtschaft", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Hamburg' (10 December 1927), in Institut für Zeitgeschichte, ed., *Hitler. Reden, Schriften,*

Anordnungen Februar 1925 bis Januar 1933 [hereafter *RSA*] (Munich, 1992), Vol. 2, *Vom Weimarer Parteitag bis zur Reichstagswahl Juli 1926–Mai 1928*, part 2, *August 1927–Mai 1928*, 580. For other examples of Hitler's 'encirclement' rhetoric, see '"Der Weltkrieg und seine Macher", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (17 April 1920) in Eberhard Jäckel with Axel Kuhn ed., *Hitler. Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905–1924* [hereafter *SA*] (Stuttgart, 1980), 123; '"20 Millionen Deutsche Zuviel!", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Ansbach' (26 March 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 210.

12. 'Die Südtiroler Frage und das Deutsche Bündnisproblem' (Munich, 1926), reprinted in *RSA* 1: 269–93; here 279; for an almost identical formulation, see Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (trans. R. Manheim) (London, 1974), 565.
13. '"Geist und Dr Stresemann?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (2 May 1928), *RSA* 2, 2: 816.
14. '"Stresemann – der Kandidat von Frankreichs Gnaden", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (17 April 1928), *RSA* 2, 2: 781.
15. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 150–1; for further discussion of this passage, see Neil Gregor, *How to Read Hitler* (London, 2005), 23–7.
16. '"Deutschlands Zukunft und unsere Bewegung", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (27 February 1925), *RSA* 1: 27.
17. On the image of the 'Ostjude' in early twentieth-century Germany, see Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers. The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness 1900–1923* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1982), especially 229–45; on the particular hostility towards eastern European Jews in post-war Bavaria, see Reiner Pommerin, 'Die Ausweisung von "Ostjuden" aus Bayern 1923' in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 34 (1986): 311–40, especially 316–22.
18. 'Rede auf einer DAP-Versammlung' (24 February 1920), *SA*, 110.
19. 'Diskussionsbeitrag auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (6 April 1920), *SA*, 120.
20. Jäckel, *Hitler's Worldview*, 37: 112.
21. 'Rede auf einer Kundgebung der Vaterländischen Verbände' (16 August 1922), *SA*, 680.
22. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 604.
23. Ibid., 605; Jäckel, *Hitler's Worldview*, 30–1.
24. Ibid., 596.
25. 'Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Hof' (16 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 521.
26. '"Geist und Doktor Stresemann?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (2 May 1928), *RSA* 2, 2: 815.
27. '"Der Weg zu Freiheit und zu Brot", Rede auf NSDStB-Versammlung in München' (21 November 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 552.
28. See, for example, '"Deutschland vor seiner tiefsten Erniedrigung", Rede auf einer DAP-Versammlung' (10 December 1919), *SA*, 97; '"Der Friedensverrat von Versailles als ewiger Fluch der November-Republik", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (17 April 1923), *SA*, 901.
29. 'Der Weg zum Wiederaufstieg' (Munich, 1927), reprinted in *RSA* 2, 2: 501–9, here 504.
30. 'Rede auf NSDAP-Parteitag in Nürnberg' (21 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 495. See also the very similar remarks in '"Was ist Nationalsozialismus?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Heidelberg' (6 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 462.
31. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Hitler's Second Book*, 19.

32. Hans Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum* (Munich, 1926); for a discussion of the various usages of the term 'Living Space' in Germany in the 1920s, see Heike Wolter, *Volk ohne Raum. Lebensraumvorstellungen im geopolitischen, literarischen und politischen Diskurs der Weimarer Republik. Eine Untersuchung auf der Basis von Fallstudien zu Leben und Werk Karl Haushofers, Hans Grimms und Adolf Hitlers* (Münster, 2003).
33. ' "Was ist Nationalsozialismus?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Heidelberg' (6 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 447.
34. Geoff Eley, 'Making a Place in the Nation', in Eley and Retallack (eds), *Wilhelminism and its Legacies*, 27.
35. Hitler to Walter Riehl (1 March 1920), in *SA*, 112. The German-Socialist Party was a rival ultra-nationalist party, based in Nuremberg and led by Julius Streicher.
36. ' "Politik und Judentum", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (27 April 1920), *SA*, 128.
37. 'Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (1 Mai 1923), *SA*, 919; for the *Völkische Beobachter's* report, which contains the identical geographical references, see 919–20.
38. ' "Geist und Dr Stresemann?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (2 May 1928), *RSA* 2, 2: 815. For similar comments on the borders of 1914, see Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 593–4.
39. 'Rede auf NSDAP-Führertagung in Bamberg' (14 February 1926), *RSA* 1: 295.
40. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 598. Emphasis in the original translation.
41. On Hitler's views of history, see H.R. Trevor-Roper, 'The Mind of Adolf Hitler', in *Hitler's Table Talk 1941–1944. His Private Conversations* (London, 2nd edn, 1973), xxi–xxviii; see also Jäckel, *Hitler's Worldview*, 87–107 and, similarly, Gregor, *How to Read Hitler*, 14–18.
42. ' "Zukunft oder Untergang", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Vilsbiburg' (6 March 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 167.
43. ' "20 Millionen Deutsche zuviel!", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Ansbach' (26 March 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 200.
44. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Hitler's Second Book*, 13; for Hitler's view of the United States, see also Gregor, *How to Read Hitler*, 83–9.
45. ' "20 Millionen Deutsche zuviel!", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Ansbach' (26 March 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 204.
46. 'Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Schleiz' (18 January 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 125.
47. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 210.
48. 'Rede auf einer zwischenstaatlichen Tagung der Nationalsozialisten' (7 August 1920), *SA*, 176–7; for very similar early comments see the letter of Hitler to Konstantin Hierl (3 July 1920), *SA*, 155–6.
49. Gregor, *How to Read Hitler*, 64–7.
50. See, for example, *Selections from Treitschke's Lectures on Politics*, trans. Adam L. Gowans (London, 1914), 21–6.
51. P.M. Baldwin, 'Clausewitz in Nazi Germany', *Journal of Contemporary History* 16 (1981): 5–26.
52. Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races* (New York, 1999).
53. Hamann, *Hitlers Wien*, 288.
54. Daniel Frymann [=Heinrich Class], *Wenn Ich der Kaiser Wär: Politische Wahrheiten und Notwendigkeiten* (Leipzig, 1912).

55. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des Neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1899); on the publishing history, see R. Stackelberg and S. Winkle, eds, *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook. An Anthology of Texts* (Abingdon, 2002), 11.
56. Hans Frank, *Im Angesicht des Galgens* (Munich, 1953), 238.
57. See, for example, Letter of Hitler to Joseph Popp (3 December 1914), *SA*, 60–1; Letter of Hitler to Ernst Hepp (22 January 1915), ibid., 61–2; Letter of Hitler to Joseph Popp (26 January 1916), ibid., 63–4.
58. Letter of Hitler to Ernst Hepp (5 February 1915), *SA*, 67.
59. 'Ermittlungsverfahren wegen Verdachts auf Meineid. Erklärung' (14 April 1926), *RSA* 1: 383.
60. ' "Nicht Stresemanns Dawesjünger nocht internationale Bolschewiken werden einst die Knechtschaft brechen, sondern Wir als Deutsche Sozialisten", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (9 April 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 247–8.
61. 'Rede auf NSDAP-Parteitag in Nürnberg' (21 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 497.
62. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 461.
63. 'Ausbau der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei. Denkschrift' (22 October 1922), *SA*, 703.
64. 'Rede auf Generalmitgliederversammlung der NSDAP/NSDAV e.V.' (22 May 1926), *RSA* 1: 450.
65. ' "Zwei Fronten in Deutschland", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung' (18 January 1923), *SA*, 795.
66. ' "Was ist Nationalsozialismus?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Heidelberg' (6 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 463.
67. ' "Bayer. Volkspartei u. Bayer. Kurier – Die Stützen von Thron und Altar", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in München' (29 February 1928), *RSA* 2, 2: 683.
68. 'Studentenschaft und Politik', Nationalsozialistische Hochschulbriefe (January 1927), *RSA* 2, 1: 144.
69. 'Rede vor dem Nationalklub von 1919 in Hamburg' (28 February 1926), *RSA* 1: 300.
70. Ibid., 301.
71. 'Aufruf an die ehemaligen Angehörigen der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei' (*Völkische Beobachter*, 26 February 1925), *RSA* 1: 4.
72. 'Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung München' (14 May 1928), *RSA* 2, 2: 836–7.
73. 'Vor dem Volksgericht. Vierundzwanzigster Verhandlungstag' (27 March 1924), *SA*, 1215–16.
74. See, for example, ' "Über die allgemeine Lage der Bewegung", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Stuttgart' (8 July 1925), *RSA* 1: 110.
75. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 41.
76. Ibid., 40.
77. Ibid., 460.
78. 'Rede auf einem NSDAP-Parteitag' (30 January 1922), *SA*, 558–9.
79. ' "Kann es so weitergehen?", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (17 August 1922), *SA*, 685.
80. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 496.
81. 'Rede vor dem Nationalklub von 1919 Hamburg' (28 February 1926), *RSA* 1: 318.

82. On the interchangeability of these and other categories see Gregor, *How to Read Hitler*, 8–9.
83. '"Warum sind wir Antisemiten?", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (13 August 1920), *SA*, 198.
84. Ibid., 202.
85. '"Politik und Rasse: Warum sind Wir Antisemiten?", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (20 April 1923), *SA*, 909.
86. 'Rathenau und Sancho Pansa' (*Völkische Beobachter*, 13 March 1921), *SA*, 347–8.
87. '"Politik und Judentum", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (27 April 1920), *SA*, 128.
88. '"Die Teuerung als Folge der Börsenrevolution von 1918", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (18 September 1922), *SA*, 692.
89. 'Aufruf' (*Völkische Beobachter*, 23 September 1922), *SA*, 694.
90. Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1836*, 244.
91. 'Generalmitgliederversammlung und Parteitag der NSDAP' (*Völkische Beobachter*, 25 January 1922), *SA*, 550.
92. '"Was ist Nationalsozialismus?", Rede auf NSDAP-Versammlung in Heidelberg' (6 August 1927), *RSA* 2, 2: 462.
93. '"Deutschland am Scheidewig", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (10 April 1923), *SA*, 876, 878, 880.
94. '"Brest-Litovsk und Versailles", Rede auf einer DAP-Versammlung', *SA* 93.
95. The best starting points for considering this problem remain Martin Broszat, 'Soziale Motivation und Führerbindung des Nationalsozialismus', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 18 (1970): 392–409 and Ian Kershaw, *Hitler* (London, 1991).
96. '"Der Weltkrieg und seine Macher", Rede auf einer NSDAP-Versammlung' (17 April 1920), *SA*, 123.
97. 'Rede auf einer DAP-Versammlung' (24 February 1920), *SA*, 110.
98. Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust. Disputed Histories* (Ithaca, 2003), 97.

11
The Maps on Churchill's Mind

Geoffrey Best

We cannot tell exactly how maps related to everything else inside Churchill's busy brain, but there is no mistaking the importance that maps had for him. Churchill loved maps. He liked to be surrounded by them. They fired his imagination. They were essential to his warrior well-being. 'Map Room' and 'War Room' were one and the same thing for him, as they had been at the Admiralty, where from 1912 to 1915 he cut his teeth as warlord. His style of war direction required maps in the same way that it required the tabular statements and coloured graphs about production and resources that his Statistical Departments placed weekly before him. The officer who ran the Map Room noted the parallel between the two suppliers: 'The drama and secrets of the Upper War Room had a quieter but equally influential counterpart in the First Lord's Statistical Branch.'[1] Tables, graphs and maps together gave him information in the visual forms he found especially congenial. To critics outside his inner circle, it sometimes seemed that he read too much or too little into his beloved tables and graphs. It is possible that the same could have been said of his use of maps. This is legitimate matter for speculation.

His romance with maps is evident in his recollection of the dramatic Cabinet meeting of 24 July 1914.[2] The Irish question had dominated its agenda. The Cabinet had been reduced to tedious and frustrating wrangling about minutiae of Ulster topography. 'Upon the dispositions of these clusters of humble parishes [in the counties of Fermanagh and Tyrone] turned at that moment the political future of Great Britain.' The Cabinet was about to disperse when Sir Edward Grey began to read a document that had just been sent in from the Foreign Office. Everyone was fidgeting to get away but, wrote Churchill, as Sir Edward Grey persisted, the quieter and stiller they became. What he was reading was the

Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. 'As the reading proceeded, it seemed absolutely impossible that any State in the world could accept it.' Churchill's pen moved from the practical to the poetic. 'The parishes of Fermanagh and Tyrone faded back into the mists and squalls of Ireland, and a strange light began immediately, but by perceptible gradations, to fall and grow upon the map of Europe.'

He was at that time First Lord of the Admiralty. This was where he had learned the grand uses of maps. Since the turn of the century the Admiralty had been elaborating techniques of mapping the movements of shipping all round the world. Its motives for this work were mixed. The departmental mindset being aggressive, its primary focus was on potential enemy warships; but the positions of merchant ships too seemed worth marking, as the means of conducting economic warfare and the protection of Britain-bound vessels came increasingly under consideration. The fruits of Intelligence gathered from a variety of sources, some of them covert, ended up on large maps or charts kept up to date by a 24-hour watch in what was sometimes called the Map Room, sometimes the War Room. Churchill found these maps in situ when he arrived at the Admiralty in October 1911. The volume and quality of the information on them was growing so fast that within a year there were two of these Rooms, one for home waters and the other for the rest of the world. What lay behind their strictly guarded doors may be sensed in the sentence concluding his summary of the Admiralty's command and control system: 'Robed in the august authority of centuries of naval tradition and armed with the fullest knowledge available, the Board of Admiralty wielded unchallenged power.'[3]

The charts and maps which he seems to have studied most closely were those displaying the German continental coastline. French naval power had for the previous 200 years preoccupied the Admiralty but by 1910 it had become clear that the German navy, not the French, was the one the Royal Navy was going to have to deal with. This entailed a revolution in British naval planning. The North Sea (which Germans significantly called the German Ocean) and the Baltic now demanded all the thought and, if it could be obtained, expenditure that had hitherto been lavished on the English Channel and the Mediterranean. Churchill spent hours with his naval chieftains poring and puzzling over maps and charts of the Frisian Islands and the Heligoland Bight: Germany's home waters. 'Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike', they condemned themselves to a frustrating exercise. 'Intricate navigation, shifting and extensive sandbanks and currents, strong tides, frequent

mists and storms' and the heavy fortification of the three most strategically interesting islands – Heligoland in the centre, Borkum by the Dutch frontier and Sylt by the Danish one – presented difficulties that always, in the end, persuaded them nothing could be done.[4]

Borkum in particular mesmerized Churchill. Of all the German islands it was the closest to the naval base of Harwich (though that was 200 miles away), and it stood guard at the mouth of the Ems estuary with its many naval bases. The Dutch islands further to the west fascinated him too. If only the Netherlands would come into the war on the Anglo-French side, then the Royal Navy would be able to base itself in those islands and bring nearer the closure of the Heligoland Bight! These were pipe dreams, like his similar strategic musings about the narrow entrance to the Baltic and the chances of Norway and Denmark letting the British through it. The principal interest of these yearnings is to demonstrate how, already in the First World War, Churchill experienced that excessive fascination with the strategic potentialities of islands off enemy coasts that was to recur in the Second.

Maps not only showed him islands temptingly close to an enemy, they also temptingly showed – at any rate, appeared to show – a waterway to an enemy's back door by forcing passage through straits. Churchill was not at all discouraged by what had happened in the Dardanelles when he had promoted just such an operation on 18 March 1915. In 1939 it was (again) the Baltic, the idea of passing into it a fleet suitably proofed against mines and torpedoes, with the assumed connivance of the Scandinavian states. (He never allowed small neutrals to spoil his grand strategic schemes.)[5] He had been at the Admiralty for less than a week when he set its planners working on Operation Catherine, 'a plan for forcing a passage into the Baltic' no later than March 1940. Encouragement in this extravagant notion came mainly from fire-eating old salts whom he had come to admire 25 years earlier. His extensive coverage of it in *The Gathering Storm* makes it appear as a more practical and reasonable venture than it was adjudged by expert opinion at the time and by naval historians since. It is perhaps a measure of how close it was to Churchill's heart that he sacked the Director of Plans 'for criticising the plan too vigorously'.[6]

Churchill and his maps were conspicuous and inseparable throughout the Second World War. It became clear that he needed them not just, indeed not mainly, for such factual information as might be gained from them, but for inspiration and for comfort. He had them at home and they had to go with him wherever he went, under the management of Captain Richard Pim, who subsequently placed his recollections at Sir

Martin Gilbert's disposal. From them comes an extraordinary picture of the place of maps in Churchill's wartime life.[7]

At the Admiralty he found the Map or War Room already in operation. The maps were normally covered by curtains, even though they had been coloured (or was it re-coloured?) 'in pastel shades', Churchill alleging that strong colours under bright lights gave him headaches. He visited the Room early every day unless it was one of his late-rising days, in which case Pim reported to him in his bedroom. He also tended to look in at 1 or 2 a.m. on his way to bed. We learn more about those nocturnal occasions from another of Gilbert's naval interviewees, Geoffrey Shakespeare, the Admiralty's Parliamentary Secretary. 'If he finished dictating by 2 a.m. he usually wanted to visit the War Room, to study the position of warships on the oceans of the world. It was very difficult to get him to bed. We were dropping with fatigue.' It was equally difficult to get him out of the War Room in the hectic days after the German invasion of Norway. The official historian, a naval officer himself, wrote with scarcely concealed disapproval that 'during critical periods of naval operations' Churchill used 'to spend long hours in the Admiralty Operational Intelligence Centre'; what he was doing there could be described, according to point of view, either as assisting in the making of decisions or as interfering with the professionals in their making of decisions.[8] One participant, the Deputy Director of Operations, noted in his diary that 'the Admiralty' in those days actually meant 'Churchill in a high state of executive excitement in the Map Room'.[9]

When he moved to Downing Street in May 1940, Map Rooms were constructed in both the subterranean Cabinet War Rooms and the more comfortable 'Number Ten Annexe' above them, where Churchill preferred to live and work; there was also one, even if only created ad hoc for special occasions, at Chequers. From the Admiralty he took with him Captain Richard Pim as his Map Room's manager. Pim was henceforth one of the retinue (doctor, valet, bodyguard, private secretaries and stenographers) that accompanied Churchill on all his travels. Churchill had a Map Room in the private train that took him around Britain on his occasional forays into the provinces. Pim fitted one up at the Anglo-American strategic summit at Casablanca in January 1943, a comprehensive one as befitted the occasion, with maps for every theatre of operations. Map Rooms were set up next to Churchill's cabin on the 'Queen Mary' going to Washington in May 1943 and in November on H M S 'Renown' going to Algiers. In January 1944 Pim and his staff were flown specially to Marrakesh to instal a Map Room right next

to the bedroom where Churchill was recovering from pneumonia.[10] In February 1945 he was with Churchill at Yalta, where the other two of the 'Big Three' were brought into the Map Room after dinner for half-an-hour's 'discussing world strategy'.

It is clear that his Map Room wasn't important to Churchill just because of its practical uses, the information it provided about the locations of people and places and the movements of ships and troops. It was in part a play room, reminiscent of the years when he had amassed toy soldiers on broad surfaces and moved them about in mimic battle. Everyone recognized the boyish streak in Churchill. It was one of the things that made him such an unusual and engaging personality. Pim recalled how 'it was always a source of pleasure to the Prime Minister to mark in chinagraph pencil in very considerable detail advances made by various divisions and brigades, and if just a little bit of wishful thinking was included and the advance portrayed somewhat optimistically, at least no harm resulted'. That was when the British and American armies were scrambling across Sicily in the summer of 1943. A year later, Pim was required to produce models of landing craft and the Mulberry harbour to adorn a map table of Arromanches bay for the edification of the King and Queen. So much did Churchill like it, a duplicate had to be made for presentation to the American President.

More serious and supportive were the inspirational functions of the Map Room. The quietness of the room as Pim's staff padded about their precision work, the patterned maps, the enclosed atmosphere calmed and comforted him. My interpretation of Churchill's love of it is that it supported his sense of being at ease in the global society of states and it confirmed his satisfaction at Great Britain's imperial place among them. The dominant maps in the underground Cabinet Room were not ones that could be of any practical use; they were inter-war political maps of the world, on Mercator's projection, with the British empire conspicuous in red as it was in every history textbook; an empire still intact during the Second World War, and – if Churchill had anything to do with it – continuing to be intact when the war was over.

Churchill the orator was good at tours d'horizon, his mind moving easily from one nation to another and brightening the scene by giving to the people of each their particular attribute – 'the hardy Swiss', 'the valiant Greek people', 'the peaceful, trustful Dutch', 'the brave and efficient German foe' and so on. Churchill the statesman and strategist similarly found it easy to speak and plan in sweeping and grandiose terms; the large-scale maps he loved to linger over gave him a feeling of being at home in the world – and perhaps of knowing it better than he

actually did. This feeling of global command and control was spotted by one of his most intelligent generals, Sir Frederick Morgan, in the spring of 1943. Morgan was the officer charged after the Casablanca conference with the planning and preparations for the Normandy landings, and he recalled how Churchill had summoned him out to Chequers to find out how he was getting on. During a lull in the business, Morgan wrote,

> I was shown the Prime Minister's latest gift, a magnificent illuminated terrestrial globe together with a suitably curved, graduated glass protractor. There was something infinitely inspiring in watching the great man reach up for the special handle he had had fitted at the North Pole so that he might twist and twirl the whole inhabited world as suited the train of thought of the moment. We travelled together swiftly from theatre to theatre of operations, regarded them from every aspect and from every point of the compass.[11]

The maps that adorned the walls of the two of the Cabinet War Rooms most used by Churchill – his private room, with bed and desk in it, and the Cabinet Room close by – merit closer inspection. I have been able to scrutinize them by courtesy of the War Rooms' Director, Mr Philip Reed (Director also of the adjacent Churchill Museum). One of the two political maps of the world in the Cabinet Room is quite commonplace, but the other is full of interest and suggestion. It is a production of the Navy League, undated but from internal evidence about 1930 or 1931. The Navy League was a patriotic association and interest-group well past its Edwardian prime but retaining enough vigour to keep up to date its tables of 'Empire Statistics' and its comparisons of the strength of the Royal Navy with its rivals. This map highlights such maritime points of interest as naval dockyards, coaling ports, wireless stations, undersea cable lines and the locations of the First World War sea battles and incidents. It is comprehensive and instructive with regard to flags and emblems: the evolution of the Union Jack, the flags of the self-governing dominions and of India and the distinctive emblems of Britain's myriad colonies. Its mantra was Nelson's Trafalgar signal, 'England expects every man will do his duty', printed twice over, down each vertical border. It is one of a species of maps that must have adorned many a school-room wall and hung beside many a lecturer's rostrum, an updated survival from the Great Britain that died in the First World War.

The two other maps hanging there now, the nondescript world political map already mentioned and a political map of inter-war Europe, are of no interest, but in Churchill's time there were two more that have given

way to the windows through which the visitor now peers. The Director produced a photograph of that wall as it was before the viewing windows were cut into it, on which can be made out business-like regional maps of the Eastern Mediterranean and of South and South-East Asia. By far the most business-like map in either room is the Home Defence Map in Churchill's private room. This is a large-scale map in three parts showing, respectively, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, indicating by a rich mixture of symbols and colours the defensive status of beaches (which were suitable for tanks, which had strong tides, etc.), estuaries, ports, aerodromes and main road junctions. Unmistakeably dating from the days when invasion was believed to be imminent, it does not look like the sort of map that could be altered from time to time to keep its information up to date, and indeed does not seem to have been so. Whenever this map was composed, a great deal of trouble was taken over it. It seems reasonable to suppose that it was done to Churchill's order in June or in July 1940, and that it had been completed by the time he circulated on 5 August 1940 the memorandum, 'Defence against Invasion', with whose concerns and contents it corresponds quite closely.[12]

The innermost and obscurest wall of this room is covered by a curious map, the purpose of which is unclear. Pieced together from a number of large sheets of cartridge paper, it is a hand-drawn map of the coastline of Western Europe and the northern edge of the Mediterranean with coastal cities and towns carefully placed and named. The hinterlands are a perfect and absolute blank. The only legend on it reads: 'Ports at which there are foreign naval authorities are shown thus', a circle with a blob in the middle. Were it not for that unwarlike advice, one might suppose it had something to do with the early stages of thinking about the counter-attack on Hitler's continent; but even that seems unlikely. Perhaps it is the first stage of a larger design that never got finished.

It was not in these rooms but in Captain Pim's Map Rooms, wherever they were, that Churchill pored over maps with strategy in mind and took note of the pins, flags and ribbons that marked from time to time the progress of the allied armies and the positions of their foes. The Chiefs of Staff and other privileged visitors would pore and observe with him. About those sessions and the consequent discussions and arguments (sometimes, rows) that occurred in the Defence Committee and War Cabinet, there is nothing more to be said; it has all been said already. But there is something more to be said about two map-related notions that became lodged in Churchill's mind and, because they were less than well-founded, caused a great deal of trouble.

The first of these comes under the heading of 'the Ljubljana Gap'. Ljubljana, now the capital of the sovereign state of Slovenia, before the Second World War was known as a city in northern Yugoslavia, familiar to tourists and strategists as a landmark on the road from Trieste towards the frontier of Austria and ultimately to Vienna, more than two hundred kilometres of bumpy country to the north-east. It is not known whether Churchill had ever heard of the Ljubljana Gap, let alone been interested in it, before 1944. What is very well known is that by the summer of 1942 he had conceived the idea – and if he had not got it from maps not too closely examined, how had he got it? – that the southern side of the European continent would be easier to attack than the northern. In his memoir-history he recalled how in Moscow, at his first encounter with Stalin, he had sugared the bad news that there was to be no cross-channel Second Front that year with the prospect of a second front in the Mediterranean theatre. 'If we could end the year in possession of North Africa we could threaten the belly of Hitler's Europe.' He already had 'a map of Southern Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa' unfolded in front of them. (It could not have been a large one.) 'To illustrate my point I had meanwhile drawn a picture of a crocodile, and explained to Stalin with the help of this picture how it was our intention to attack the soft belly of the crocodile as we attacked his hard snout.'[13]

Both his crocodile image and the impression he derived from the map were extremely misleading, and the historian is entitled to wonder how it was that Churchill allowed himself to be deluded by them. The wish must have been father to the thought. He was at one with the Chiefs of Staff in wishing to stick to campaigning in the Mediterranean, which in any case promised to be the easiest thing to do. After clearing the Axis forces out of North Africa (which he expected to be done half a year sooner than actually happened), what was geographically more apposite than to head towards Italy? It was psychologically very much in Churchill's interest to believe that his imagined crocodile offered a helpful comparison. In fact it did no such thing. All too soon his armies in Italy discovered, what less eager planners might have foreseen, that there was little in common between the Apennines and the 'soft belly' notion.

Beyond the Apennines lay the Alps, curving all the way round from Provence at their western end to Slovenia and Croatia at the head of the Adriatic. By the summer of 1944 Allied armies were half way up Italy. Rome was taken on 5 June and the Germans retreated towards their next line of defence, the Gothic Line. There began to be some point in considering what would happen if the Gothic Line could be

broken. The Alps looked like a formidable obstacle, but surely Churchill had not forgotten them when he set the image of the 'soft belly of the crocodile' in circulation? The answer was found in 'the Ljubljana Gap', suddenly on every planner's tongue. Generals Alexander and Maitland Wilson became enthusiastically optimistic about the prospect of sweeping up to the valley of the Po before winter, seizing the great port of Trieste, and then, besides giving support to Tito's Balkan partisans, moving through this fabled 'Gap' into Austria and so on to Vienna. Churchill was immensely taken with this prospect; it would, he wrote, be the glorious conclusion of 'all our great affairs in the Mediterranean', presenting 'dazzling possibilities'.[14]

The interesting speculation for the historian is, how far was Churchill blinded to the fact that this Ljubljana Gap was not much of a gap after all by his ambition to get to Vienna before the Red Army and his passionate desire that British arms should achieve something great independently of the Americans? We do not know from what maps he formed his idea of it. Relief maps of the region show that there is less high ground between Ljubljana and the coast than at any other point along the Alpine chain, but that was not the Gap that excited Churchill's and so many others' imaginations. What they had in mind was what came next: the direct route over the Alps to Vienna via Klagenfurt, and that was 2000 feet high with gradients of 25 per cent in some places on tortuous roads on both sides. One might wonder why the planners did not consider the longer road to Vienna, via Zagreb and the less mountainous country on the Hungarian side of the mountains. The fact is, they didn't. The Alpine route is the one understood by Alexander's biographer and it was what Alexander had in mind too; he expected to be fighting his way through the mountains between Trieste and the valley of the Drava river.[15]

Alanbrooke for one was never taken in by it. He was against the idea and, as was his wont, made no secret of his opinion when Churchill pressed Alexander's project on the Chiefs of Staff. Alanbrooke's diary for 22 June 1944 records that they 'examined Alexander's wild hopes of an advance on Vienna and all the other alternatives. The proposals he has made are not based on any real study of the problem but rather the result of elated spirits after a rapid advance!' Next day, they had to go over it all again.

> We have had a long and painful evening of it listening to Winston's strategic ravings! Never have I seen him more adrift in his strategic arguments. In the main he was for supporting Alex's advance on

> Vienna. I pointed out to him that even on Alex's optimistic reckoning the advance beyond the Pisa-Rimini line would not start till after September. Namely we should embark on a campaign through the Alps in winter![16]

Winter or summer, it was sure to be rough going. A Special Operations Executive man who had personal experience of it made clear in his memoirs, 'how tough the countryside actually was in the "Ljubljana Gap" through which so many amateur strategists have marched so many armies'.[17]

Churchill was always producing bright ideas for offensive action and pressing them on his Chiefs of Staff. Throughout the war, for example, he recurrently urged them to (re-)consider the idea of launching an assault on the German occupying forces in Norway. From the fact that Hitler continued throughout the war to think this a possibility and to retain many divisions in that land, we may judge that it was not such a bad idea after all; but the Chiefs deemed it to be more than hard-pressed Britain could undertake. How far Churchill's judgement was influenced by his memories of the maps that had been his companions in the Admiralty War Room in April 1940, or by his mental picture of the North Sea and the superficially inviting Norwegian coastline on the other side of it, is impossible to judge.

There was, however, another strategic idea for which Churchill's addiction to maps – which at its most primitive encouraged the two-dimensional simplification of multidimensional realities – undoubtedly had some responsibility: the idea that the recovery of Singapore and the destruction of the Japanese forces in Burma could be facilitated by amphibious operations around or on the northern tip of Sumatra. This became an obsession with him for more than a year, beginning (according to Alanbrooke) in early August 1943.[18] It is not difficult to understand why. Sumatra lay between the Indian Ocean and the Malay Peninsula with Singapore at its southern end. The Indian Ocean was back under British naval control, after some nasty months of Japanese superiority in 1942, and the surrender at Singapore on 15 February of that same year had distressed Churchill more than any other of Britain's defeats in the war; he had felt it not just as a giant military setback but, more than that, as a national humiliation and as an event which, if not redressed, must seal the end of Britain's empire in that part of the world. The recovery of Singapore had an emotional power that kept it at the forefront of his strategic thinking through the many months when the Chiefs of Staff were wrestling

with the problems of concerting strategy with the Americans in the whole South-East Asian region, from the Burmese jungles on the Chinese border on one side to the islands off the northern edge of Australia on the other: a complex of problems to which Churchill's fixation on Singapore and on the approach to it via Sumatra had little relevance.

The Sumatra issue recurs again and again in Alanbrooke's diaries. 19 August 1943: 'He is insisting on capturing the top of Sumatra island irrespective of what our general plan for the war against Japan may be . . . ' 30 September 1943: 'We again struggled with the north Sumatra operation to see whether it could possibly be done without affecting the Mediterranean operation. Intelligence is inadequate . . . ' 14 February 1944: 'He was again set on carrying out an attack on north tip of Sumatra and refusing to look at any long term projects or concrete plans for the defeat of Japan.' 17 March 1944:

> He then informed us that he had discovered a new island just west of Sumatra, I think it is called something like Simmular [Simeuluè]. He had worked out that the capture of this island, when once developed, would answer as well as the top of Sumatra and would require far less strength!! . . . I began to wonder whether I was Alice in Wonderland, or whether I was really fit for a lunatic asylum!

1 June 1944: 'We had a long COS meeting at which we discussed the paper we are preparing . . . Not an easy paper to prepare when we have to steer clear between the rocks of Winston's ramblings in Sumatra, Curtin's subjugation to MacArthur', etc. 8 August 1944: 'Winston still hovers back to his tip of Sumatra and refuses to look at anything else.'

Churchill's Sumatra obsession petered out during the autumn of 1944. Maps of Europe were by then more important to him, increasingly those that showed the advances of the Red armies in relation to the states of Eastern and Central Europe. What would happen after the war absorbed his attention as much as what was going on in the war not yet finished. The memoir-history of the war whose composition occupied much of his time between 1946 and 1952 was sufficiently supported by maps, but there is no telling how much interest the author himself took in them, or who in fact produced them. The Acknowledgments with which Churchill prefaces each of the six volumes make no mention of them; neither 'maps' nor 'Pim' appears in the index to David Reynolds's big book about the composition of the great work.[19] Captain Pim and his Map Room staff were rewarded with a good party before they disbanded.

They must have felt some sadness when the last of their services to the great man, the rearrangement of the Map Room in the later days of July 1945 so as to 'present a continuous tale of election results as they came in', was to present him, not with a victory but with, as he needlessly but understandably felt it to be, a humiliating defeat.[20]

Notes

1. Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill* (London, 1966–1988) Vol. VI, 162, citing Captain Pim. This huge and indispensable biography will hereafter be referred to simply as Gilbert.
2. *The World Crisis* (London, 1923–1929), Part One, Ch. 9. This work has appeared in so many different editions, it is less misleading to refer to chapters than to pages.
3. Ibid., Ch. 11. This paragraph is based largely on Nicholas Lambert, 'Strategic Command and Control for Maneuver Warfare: Creation of the Royal Navy's "War Room" System, 1905–1915', *Journal of Military History* 69 (2005), 361–410.
4. *The World Crisis*, Part One, Ch. 7.
5. See Geoffrey Best, *Churchill and War* (London, 2005), 46, 107, 259, 287–9.
6. Stephen Roskill, *Churchill and the Admirals* (Barnsley edn, 2004), 94.
7. What follows, and every quotation not otherwise qualified, is based on the many 'Pim' references in Gilbert's Vols VI and VII.
8. Stephen Roskill, *The War at Sea, 1939–45*, Vol. I (London, 1954), 202.
9. Correlli Barnett, *Engage the Enemy More Closely* (London, 1991), 114, citing one Captain Edwards.
10. John Colville records how Churchill 'thrilled' the local chieftain, the Glaoui of Marrakech, with a sight of it. *The Fringes of Power*, Vol. II (London, 1985), 6 January 1944.
11. *Overture to Overlord* (London, 1950), 40. Morgan does not say, probably he was not told, from whom this splendidly appropriate gift came. The donor knew his (or her) man; as also must have done the donors of the two fine atlases that rest on the desk-top in Churchill's private room in the Cabinet War Rooms.
12. Churchill's *Second World War*, Vol. II (London, 1949), 257–60.
13. Ibid., Vol. IV, 432–3. It is possible that the second 'we' is a misprint for 'he'.
14. John Ehrman, *Grand Strategy*, Vol. V (London, 1956), 352, 356.
15. John North. ed., *The Alexander Memoirs* (London, 1962), 138 and Nigel Nicolson, *Alex. The Life of Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis* (London, 1973), 261. I have added the details about gradients from a large-scale road map in the Bodleian Library's Map Room.
16. Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman, eds, *War Diaries of Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke* (London, 2001), 561–2.
17. Peter Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields: The Story of an SOE Operative* (London, 1997); the sentence quoted is M R D Foot's, from viii of his Foreword.
18. *War Diaries of Alanbrooke*, 438.

19. *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London, 2004).
20. *Second World War*, Vol. VI, 583. The dismal occasion is well described by Mary Soames in Chapter 24 of her biography of her mother, *Clementine Churchill* (London, 1979). She says that her father went back to the Map Room after lunch and stayed there suffering throughout the afternoon.

12
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Steven Casey

'Mr Roosevelt', a friendly journalist observed in 1943, 'reads maps with the skill of a professional'.[1] Throughout his life Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was certainly intrigued and fascinated by them. For relaxation he liked to peruse the routes his next cruise or trip would take and to collect historical and military maps to house in his library in Hyde Park. Before he entered the White House he was a councillor of the American Geographic Society, the country's pre-eminent organization for the geographic profession.[2] As president, he periodically consulted atlases, even ripping out pages so that he could crudely sketch in pencil where he thought new boundaries should be.[3] And in 1942 he established the White House Map Room, a small, low-ceilinged room on the first floor, where large charts of the various battle zones adorned the walls and kept him up-to-date with the very latest developments in the war.[4]

Roosevelt's fascination for geography was a product of his early experiences. As a boy he travelled extensively through Europe. In the first decades of the twentieth century he then fell under the spell of the two giants of the American scene: his distant cousin Theodore Roosevelt, whose activist policy was underpinned by a hard-headed determination to bolster American power, and Woodrow Wilson, whom he served as a hawkish assistant secretary of the navy between 1913 and 1920 and whose liberal internationalism he witnessed at first hand.[5]

But FDR was by no means typical of his generation. After Versailles, Americans largely turned their backs on the outside world, at least in the political sphere, many of them disillusioned by the fact that Wilson's bold vision had got bogged down in endless spats over specific territorial claims. By the time that Roosevelt was elected president in

1933, the United States was mired in depression and the vast majority of Americans were far more concerned with the immediate problems of relief, recovery and reform at home. In FDR's second term, as Axis aggression developed apace, American indifference to the outside world was combined with an intense desire for peace at any price, a deep-seated distrust of allies stemming from the First World War experience and a persistent if ebbing sense of invulnerability, all of which turned isolationism into the dominant creed of the day.[6] Isolationism, to be sure, was effectively dead after the Pearl Harbor attack demonstrated that the United States was not unassailable, and this in turn provided Roosevelt with a 'second chance' to gain acceptance of the Wilsonian agenda. But even during the war years FDR constantly fretted that domestic support for internationalism was highly fragile and would evaporate as soon as the global crisis had passed.[7]

Roosevelt's sensitivity to the domestic environment was also driven by the fact that, like all US presidents, he had to share a degree of power with Congress. And throughout much of his tenure Congress was determined to play an assertive role in foreign policy. This was particularly the case in the mid-1930s, when an isolationist Congress passed a series of neutrality measures, which greatly complicated FDR's task in aiding the allies in 1939 and 1940. But it was also true during the perilous months of 1940 and 1941, when Congress' power to declare war hung over the most important decision of his presidency, not to mention during the latter stages of the war when the fraught task of getting Senate ratification for a post-war treaty loomed large.

Nor were these the only domestic constraints Roosevelt had to take into consideration. Compounding matters was the considerable bureaucratic chaos that invariably surrounded the president. This emerged partly by design. To ensure that control of all decisions remained in his hands, Roosevelt, as Arthur Schlesinger Jr has pointed out, 'deliberately organized – or disorganized – his system of command', often giving similar tasks to a bewildering array of different advisers, from Wilsonian internationalists to those with a 'Europhobic-cum-hemispheric tendency'.[8]

Roosevelt himself seemed unperturbed by the conflicting advice he received. Although he disliked personal confrontation, he was perfectly happy to hold diverging ideas in his own head. As numerous historians have pointed out, he was far from a systematic thinker. Not only did he produce no major works outlining his core philosophy but he could even tell astonished aides to incorporate diametrically opposed ideas in a single document. 'Roosevelt', writes Anthony J. Badger, 'had a flypaper

mind that could assimilate contradictory ideas in a way that was logically inconsistent but politically feasible'.[9]

These domestic restraints together with FDR's flexibility and pragmatism often resulted in big tactical shifts, as the president altered his day-to-day policy in line with the prevailing political winds. But some commentators have gone a lot further than this, by arguing that Roosevelt had few strong beliefs about anything. To contemporary critics, he was merely a shameless opportunist who would pursue any course as long as it was popular; as H.L. Mencken once joked, if FDR 'became convinced tomorrow that coming out for cannibalism would get him the votes he so sorely needs, he would begin fattening up a missionary in the White House backyard come Wednesday'.[10] Less colourfully, a host of historians have depicted Roosevelt as a 'pussyfooting politician', whose foreign policy 'sprang from a political strategy geared almost exclusively to movement on the home front'.[11] In other words, for all his fascination about geography, Roosevelt's mental map was not a map of the outside world; rather, it was first and foremost a map of the US Electoral College.

Even for those who insist that Roosevelt mattered, uncovering his attitudes and assumptions about any subject is far from easy. As a practical matter, FDR rarely committed his thoughts to paper, actively discouraged subordinates from taking notes in meetings and on one occasion even asked his top aides to falsify the documentary record so as to obscure the record for future researchers![12] In conversation he could be infuriatingly difficult to pin down. Advisers frequently referred to his 'thickly forested interior' or characterized him as 'the most complicated human being' they ever knew. Famously, Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson once complained that having a discussion with FDR was 'very much like chasing a vagrant beam around a vacant room'.[13]

What are we to make of all this? Of course, there can be no doubt that FDR was an intensely private man, a highly complex character and a practical and effective politician. Clearly, he often said and did contradictory things. Clearly, too, he was deeply sensitive to the vicissitudes of American popular opinion, not to mention the views of competing bureaucrats and the wishes of key allies. Yet this should not be confused with a lack of firm assumptions about the outside world. Nor does the absence of long, revealing memoranda place an insurmountable barrier in the way of uncovering these assumptions. While Roosevelt was never a systematic thinker, and while he often had to reverse course, change tack and abandon particular ideas, the available historical record nevertheless demonstrates that his fascination for geography translated into a number of basic assumptions about the outside world.[14]

True, as we shall see, even some of these assumptions evolved over time. But there is a simple reason for this. Between 1933 and 1945, the actual map of the world changed dramatically. Put simply, FDR was essentially on the defensive from 1933 to 1942, reacting to changes made by the Axis powers. Only between 1943 and 1945, with the Allies clearly on the offensive, could he at last start to contemplate how the United States might redraw the map, both to suit its own interests and to ensure a peaceful new world order.

A global vision

In his first years in office Roosevelt was often forced to look inwards – to focus on domestic reconstruction rather than international co-operation. But instinctively his vision was always global. 'A geographer and a power theorist', claimed one close observer in 1943, 'he was thinking globally when some recent advocates of global planning were confining their map reading to road maps'.[15]

Certainly few areas escaped his attention. During his presidency, FDR travelled periodically to Latin America, twice to North Africa and once to the Near East, the Pacific and the USSR. Before the United States directly entered the war, he was even concerned with the fate of the two Polar Regions, pressing for an expedition to Antarctica to establish a permanent US base in 1939 and controversially including Greenland in his definition of the Western Hemisphere two years later.[16] After Pearl Harbor he took great pride in the fact that the Allied coalition contained no less than 26 countries from 5 different continents.[17]

Roosevelt was so concerned about the fate of far-flung regions in part because he believed that the world was becoming increasingly interdependent, with developments in one region having a significant effect on others. In the economic sphere, this had been amply demonstrated by the global repercussions of the Wall Street Crash. Initially, FDR clung to the belief that the United States could solve the resulting Depression internally, famously rejecting international currency stabilization during the World Economic Conference in 1933 in favour of price-raising programmes within the United States. But he quickly came to recognize that states should not ward themselves off from the world economy. From 1934 this prodded him to support Secretary of State Cordell Hull's reciprocal trade programme. From 1936 he stressed on more than one occasion that while 'a more liberal international trade will not stop war, . . . without a more liberal international trade, war is a natural consequence'.[18]

As the global crisis deepened and war became ever more likely, Roosevelt started to notice a growing interdependence in the security sphere too. Germany's expansionist tendencies in Europe and Japan's aggressive actions in Asia certainly seemed to be closely intertwined. By the late 1930s FDR had reached the conclusion that the two powers were concerting their actions, engaging in sequential expansion to keep the democracies off balance.[19] By the end of 1940, after these 'bandit nations' had cemented their relationship by signing the Tripartite Pact, he even began to conceive of the world in classic bipolar terms – as a zero sum struggle in which any gain for the aggressors was a loss for the Allies.[20] In 1941 and 1942 this perception was greatly sharpened by a distressing lack of military hardware, for in this period Roosevelt repeatedly had to decide where to deploy America's meagre military capabilities. And each time there was no doubt that by, say, focusing attention on Germany, he could easily pave the way for a Japanese victory in Asia – and vice versa.[21]

FDR found this prospect so disturbing because he was increasingly convinced that the world was shrinking in size. Technology was the root cause of this fundamental change, especially the emergence of air power. Indeed, although a navy man through and through, Roosevelt increasingly came to the conclusion that the airplane, and not the battleship, was now the key weapon. For it was the *Luftwaffe's* apparent superiority that, in FDR's view, gave Hitler an edge over Britain and France in the late 1930s, forcing Neville Chamberlain into his highly risky appeasement strategy. It was air power that provided the Nazis with the potential to threaten the Western Hemisphere in 1940 and enabled the Japanese to launch the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor the following year. And it was the bomber that gave the Allies their best opportunity to strike back against the German and Japanese homelands in 1942 and 1943, first with the token Doolittle Raid on Tokyo and later with the more devastating around-the-clock attacks.[22]

Between 1938 and 1941 one of Roosevelt's greatest challenges was to convince his fellow countrymen that the United States was becoming more insecure in a shrinking world. In foreign policy, Roosevelt's leadership style was always cautious. He rarely went out on a limb, espousing causes that were clearly out of step with the domestic mood. As he once famously remarked, 'It's a terrible thing to look over your shoulder when you are trying to lead – and find no one there.' Rather than get too far in front of public opinion, FDR preferred to underline the import of key events, from the fall of France to the naval battles in the Atlantic, stressing that the world was now so small that even distant developments impinged on American security. Or, as he graphically put it in

May 1941, America's 'Bunker Hill of tomorrow may be several thousand miles from Boston.'[23]

To drive home this point, Roosevelt often acted like the nation's geography teacher. Before delivering a key fireside chat in February 1942, he implored Americans to purchase a map of the world, so that when he spoke they could follow his discussion about the interdependence of the various fighting fronts.[24] And when he toured the world to meet fellow leaders, he was keen to report back on the broader significance of his travels. In January 1943, for instance, FDR became the first sitting president to fly when he made the 8000-mile journey to meet Churchill at Casablanca. On his return he was not slow to drive home the implications of his journey, especially the new proximity of the Mediterranean and European theatres in an age of air power. 'It's an amazing thing', he informed reporters; 'Wednesday in Liberia, Thursday in Brazil! And I *don't* like flying!'[25]

Interests and threats

Roosevelt's decision to travel to North Africa for his first wartime summit outside the Western Hemisphere was no accident. For FDR, the bulge of Northwest Africa had long been what Alan Henrikson terms a 'visuo-geographic salient' – an area that captured his eye and attention.[26] In 1940 and 1941 he worried that Hitler might capture this region and use it as a staging post to invade Brazil. In 1942 he then agreed with Churchill that this area should be the location for Operation TORCH, America's first offensive of the war. And in 1943 and 1944 he repeatedly stressed that the United States should obtain a base at Dakar, in order to safeguard America's security in the post-war world.[27]

But what other regions were important to FDR, and why? Like most Americans, Roosevelt viewed Latin America as a special case. In his opinion, it was vital to protect the Western Hemisphere from foreign intervention – not just direct invasion but also covert infiltration and economic dependence on Europe – because if this area fell into hostile hands then the United States itself would be dangerously exposed. The problem was how to exercise American power in Latin America. Although implicated during his early career in some brazen acts of direct intervention,[28] by the time he became president FDR recognized that his predecessors' efforts had often been too heavy-handed, even counter-productive. He therefore worked hard to make the United States a 'Good Neighbour' – still the dominant leader in the Hemisphere, but a benign hegemon who exercised its leadership through negotiation, exhortation

and example. To this end, Roosevelt signed treaties establishing the norm of non-intervention in 1934 and 1936. When Europe was plunged into war in 1939, his administration was able to achieve an impressive degree of hemispheric solidarity, getting everyone to sign up to a common set of rules of neutrality; two years later, most Latin American countries then hurried to join the burgeoning alliance in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt was deeply proud of this successful record. He also believed it offered an object lesson on how the post-war world could be reconstructed – how trust and co-operation could be built up between states over a period of years.[29]

When FDR cast his gaze over other continents, his eye almost always fell upon Europe first. This was partly because of familiarity and a certain sense of cultural affinity. Before he became president, Roosevelt had travelled across the Atlantic 13 times and had spent a total of almost three years in Europe.[30] The impression he had gleaned was generally positive, if somewhat ambivalent – as his attitude towards Britain vividly demonstrates. On occasion, FDR could be sneering about particular aspects of British political life, from its selfish diplomacy to its acquisitive imperialism. But of all the countries of Europe, he had a particular liking for Britain, often referring to the British as cousins, regularly corresponding with British friends (including the king) and even holding the position as a vice president of the English-Speaking Union.[31]

Increasingly, however, there were other, more hard-headed, reasons for Roosevelt's focus on Europe. His frequent voyages across the Atlantic, together with the emergence of air power, had left him in little doubt that this ocean presented an increasingly flimsy protective barrier, especially when compared to the vastness of the Pacific. 'At one point between Africa and Brazil', he declared in a typical comment towards the end of 1940, 'the distance is less than it is from Washington to Denver, Colorado – five hours for the latest type of bomber'.[32]

By this stage FDR was also convinced that the European aggressor was far more powerful than its counterpart and ally in Asia. Indeed, unlike Japan, which was clearly dependent upon the United States for vital raw materials, Hitler's Reich appeared to be undergoing an impressive economic revival throughout the 1930s.[33] Moreover, unlike Japan, whose expansion in China had mired it in a debilitating quagmire, Hitler's incursions into Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and France had greatly improved Germany's capacity to menace the United States directly. By 1940 FDR even briefly feared a direct German attack, especially if the French fleet fell into Nazi hands. He also fretted about the

prospect that many South American states might defect to the Nazi camp, because around 40 per cent of their export market had now fallen under German control.[34] Small wonder, then, that FDR consistently adopted a 'Germany-first' strategy. The Third Reich was the most powerful menace, he stressed repeatedly. 'Once we lick the Germans, with help of England's fleet we can defeat the Japanese in six weeks.'[35]

In devising strategies to 'lick' these enemies, Roosevelt recognized the importance of allies. Initially, his thinking was driven partly by the domestic environment: the public's obvious reluctance in 1940–1941 to enter the war directly, which made a policy of aiding allies the only feasible alternative. It was also a product of sheer necessity: the fact that as late as May 1940 the United States had only the 19th largest army in the world, which meant that working with partners offered the only prospect of defeating the Axis. But geography also played a role. After the fall of France, Roosevelt recognized that British survival was essential in order to launch any sort of invasion of continental Europe. After Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, he also realized that such a risky cross-channel operation would be most likely to succeed if a large proportion of German military strength was ground down on the Eastern Front.[36] Later, in 1944 and 1945, as American attention shifted to the equally perilous task of invading the Japanese home islands, FDR and his military advisers were convinced that Soviet support would be vital in order to tie down as many Japanese forces on the Asian continent as possible.[37]

From 1938, Roosevelt therefore worked hard to construct some sort of balance against Axis power. Although initially shackled by neutrality legislation, in 1938 and 1939 he looked for innovative ways of strengthening British and French resolve to stand up to Hitler.[38] After the fall of France, he moved – albeit haltingly at first – to provide aid to Britain, from the destroyers deal of September 1940 to the Lend-Lease Act of the following March.[39] He was also increasingly willing to embrace an array of states, groups and individuals who became embroiled in the fight against Hitler, not just Stalinist Russia but even certain Fascist collaborators, justifying these arrangements in hard-headed terms. 'In times of great danger', he told reporters in November 1942, it is sometimes necessary 'to walk with the Devil until you have crossed the bridge'.[40]

These 'Devils' were useful because they had power. By contrast, Roosevelt tended to dismiss those countries he deemed to be weak and ineffective. Hence his scorn for France during the war years stemmed partly from its swift collapse in 1940. Thereafter, FDR invariably shied away from the prospect of making the French a major player in the post-war world, repeatedly stressing that it should remain disarmed,

initially opposing its acquisition of an occupation zone in Germany and, until 1945, fervently pushing for independence to be granted to its colony in Indochina.[41] On the Axis side, Roosevelt likewise never wasted much time worrying about Italy. In his opinion, Mussolini was undoubtedly a shameless opportunist, anxious 'to play the role of jackal to Hitler's lion'. But Italian morale, especially in its armed forces, was far too fragile to sustain a long war of aggression. As FDR ungenerously remarked at the start of June 1940, Italian soldiers would fight tolerably well while they were on the offensive, but 'once they were stopped, they were through, and if the line were ever turned, they would run like rabbits'.[42]

For Roosevelt, then, power was a significant indicator of what regions were important on the map. But what exactly did he mean by power? Geographic size was clearly important. FDR was so anxious to offer support to the Soviet Union and China partly because he recognized that their sheer vastness made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Axis to conquer these countries.[43] Population also had to be taken into account. In Roosevelt's opinion, China might be riven with feuding factions, economically weak and militarily unreliable, but the fact that it had 425 million inhabitants made it an important player, not just in the current conflict but also in the post-war world.[44] Industrial capacity was another aspect. As we have seen, Roosevelt's fear of Germany stemmed largely from its impressive economic revival, especially in sectors like airplane production. When seeking to contain German power in the post-war world, he eventually embraced proposals that would prevent the Reich from ever possessing such a capacity again, including for a brief period the Morgenthau Plan that would have turned Germany into an agrarian nation. Finally there was the morale of the population. FDR's own New Deal had aimed at restoring America's confidence in its economic and political systems. In the wake of the speedy French collapse in 1940, which Roosevelt, like many others, blamed partly on internal division, he became even more convinced that home grown pessimists, appeasers and fifth columnists could sap a nation's strength from within, leaving it ripe for plunder by the Axis states.[45]

Because he conceived power in these terms, Roosevelt's view of American strength was a complex blend of hope and concern. On the one hand, he was supremely optimistic that America had greater potential than its rivals. Indeed, although US rearmament began late and did not really take off until 1943, Roosevelt always had faith that his country had the resources and know-how to outstrip any rival. America had the ability, he confidently remarked to an aide in September 1939, to 'break

the rest of the world if they try to keep up with us'.[46] Yet, to be fully realized, US power had to be wielded carefully. Because partners were vital to defeat the Axis, the United States had to temper its own preferences to maintain the solidity of the grand alliance. And because internal division could easily sap the nation's will to wield its power effectively, FDR was keen never to get too far ahead of domestic opinion. In his view, it was especially important only to go to war when the public was united behind a legitimate cause.

In the months leading to America's formal entry into the war, Roosevelt was increasingly preoccupied with America's ability to translate these different dimensions into raw military capabilities. Only reluctantly did he reach the conclusion that large ground forces would hold the key to victory. Before Pearl Harbor he was often confident that air power could either deter the Axis or provide the key to victory – he also viewed bombing, together with the United States supplying its allies with the weapons of war, as a way of avoiding massive casualties. After Pearl Harbor he was quick to promise Churchill that 'American land forces should give their support as quickly as possible wherever they could be most useful'. But he also remained wedded to a vision of 'technowar', most obviously with his championing of the atomic bomb, a weapon that he and Churchill considered using 'after mature consideration'.[47]

Trouble spots

While Roosevelt placed considerable emphasis on power, he was by no means an out-and-out realist.[48] For realists, states will always respond suspiciously to any fluctuations in the distribution of power: in other words, if any state looks as if it is becoming stronger, others will naturally seek to balance against it. For Roosevelt, states had to balance against clear threats. But power on its own was not an indicator of threat.[49]

In fact, FDR always entertained the possibility that all the great powers could co-operate and work together. His confidence here stemmed partly from the existence of a fragile international society based upon agreements, norms and institutions. 'Permanent friendships between Nations as between men' were possible, he remarked in 1936. But they 'can be sustained only by a scrupulous respect for the pledged word'.[50] To build up this respect, Roosevelt placed great emphasis on personal meetings with leaders, where it was possible to look your counterparts 'in the eye and let them look you in the eye'.[51] At one stage or another, he contemplated negotiations or discussions with all his major contemporaries – not just Churchill and Stalin from 1941 to 1945, but also

Mussolini in 1940, Konoe in 1941 and Franco in 1942.[52] Although from 1938 onwards he believed it impossible to come to any arrangement with that perfidious 'madman' Hitler, during 1936 and 1937 he had even made some intermittent efforts to appease this dictator, asking his ambassador in Berlin to probe the Führer's intentions on disarmament and supporting the Welles Plan, which aimed partly at giving a boost to Britain's negotiations with Germany and Italy.[53]

During the war years, Roosevelt then grappled with the problem of restoring confidence and trust in the midst of the horrific carnage. At the heart of his vision was the vital need to get the four main Allied powers (the United States, the USSR, Britain and China) to turn their 'wartime alliance into a political society of nations'. To achieve this, the great powers would have to reach understandings on the central security and territorial issues, probably through experimentation, trying different methods to see what worked best. The smaller powers would then be drawn into this web of co-operation by their participation in a whole host of 'special conferences' convened to discuss technical and specific economic matters. The end result would not be a rigid institutional framework, but rather something akin to the inter-American system: 'flexible, representing no blanket surrender of sovereignty, affording the opportunity of frequent consultation and building a body of international law as it goes along'.[54] It was a vision that started to come to fruition towards the end of the war, not only with the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in the summer of 1944, which discussed the contours of a new international organization, but also with the numerous other gatherings to discuss more specific matters – from financial issues at Bretton Woods to refugee, relief and health problems handled by the UNRAA.[55]

Thus, the existence of a number of great powers in an anarchical environment did not doom the world to conflict, as realists suggest. Instead, international relations only descended into violence when key players acted anti-socially and refused to play by the rules of the game. For Roosevelt, this meant that an obvious crime was the violation of both the spirit and letter of international agreements. In the 1930s the Axis powers were clearly guilty on this score. From the very start of his presidency Roosevelt shared the judgement that underpinned the Stimson Doctrine, namely that since Japanese aggression in Manchuria had violated both the Washington Treaty and the Kellogg–Briand Pact it should not be officially recognized.[56] Nazi Germany, meanwhile, unquestionably became a pariah state by this standard in March 1939, when Hitler ignored the Munich agreement and sent his troops into Prague. From that point on, Roosevelt deemed it utterly pointless even to contemplate

talking to Hitler, for the Führer would undoubtedly use any respite to prepare for a new round of war. From this conclusion, of course, it was only a short step to start pressing for the total eradication of Nazism. Or, as Roosevelt famously put it in January 1943, the Allies would now seek nothing less than the 'unconditional surrender' of their enemies.[57]

In FDR's opinion, the acquisition of offensive military capabilities was a second indication that a state posed a threat to international order. Roosevelt firmly believed that 'the armaments race means bankruptcy or war; there is no possibility out of that statement'.[58] On the one hand, experience taught that states such as Germany and Japan, who engaged in a feverish rearmament effort, clearly had expansionist aims. On the other hand an arms build-up was undoubtedly the most damaging way to waste a nation's resources; as Roosevelt once told an aide, 'don't forget what I discovered – that over ninety percent of all national deficits from 1921 to 1939 were caused by payments for past, present, and future wars'.[59] Disarmament was thus the only sensible policy to adopt in the post-war world, albeit only for members of the Axis. 'As you know', FDR wrote an old associate in November 1942, 'I dream dreams but am, at the same time, an intensely practical person, and I am convinced that disarmament of the aggressor nations is an essential first step.' It was a step he wanted to entrust to the four major powers, acting as the four policemen, who would be charged with inspecting every other country 'to see that they did not begin to arm secretly as Germany did after the last war'.[60]

As FDR also recognized, the Axis powers had acquired offensive capabilities for a specific reason: to overturn the political maps of Europe and Asia. As a result, any post-war settlement would have to focus on drawing new borders that were more legitimate and feasible than the multiethnic states of Eastern and Central Europe, which had been easy prey for the aggressors in the 1930s. In this sense, Roosevelt was acutely concerned with the political geography of the post-war world. America's task, one of his key advisers commented, was the 'tidying up of the world map'. To see this job through, in 1942 FDR appointed a group of political experts and geographers to compile a series of '590 map-studded' reports covering most regions where borders remained a matter of dispute.[61]

When it came to this complex task of remapping, Roosevelt's liberalism was tempered by the lessons of the past. Indeed, although strongly convinced that national self-determination was a laudable goal, he was acutely aware that there had been too many transgressions of this norm in the peace settlement of 1919. As a result, in some areas peoples such as

the Serbs and the Croats had been forced to live in the same state, even though they preferred to go their own way. In Central Europe, meanwhile, Germans had been left inside Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, which had provided Hitler with the pretext for his initial acts of aggression. And in Asia and Africa, European imperialism had been allowed to survive, even though it was anachronistic, held back the economic development of many regions and was another cause of war and disorder.[62]

This time, FDR hoped to arrive at a better solution. 'In the case of certain populations and areas which have conducted century old feuds', he stressed in 1941, a series of plebiscites should be held to find the true preferences of the population, so that the new state borders were based on consent not coercion.[63] In Central Europe, however, plebiscites might well extend Germany's borders into areas claimed by Poland and Czechoslovakia. By 1943, FDR had no intention of sanctioning such an outcome. Instead, he advocated forced migration – moving the Germans out of East Prussia, 'the same way the Greeks were moved out of Turkey after the last war'.[64]

Central Europe was not the only area where Roosevelt was attracted to the notion that, rather than drawing state borders around national enclaves, the time had come to move certain national groups into areas where they would create less trouble. In 1942 he established an M-Project ('M' was for migration), which explored the possibility of housing 'the surplus population of certain European and Asiatic countries' in North Africa and south-western Australia, including the ' "so-called geopolitical problem children", minorities whose presence in certain countries is traditionally exploited for power-political purposes'.[65]

In Asia, meanwhile, FDR pressed for the end of empire. He hoped that America's decision to promise independence to the Philippines after the war would offer a striking example to other Western powers. But he was also willing to concede that European countries might have to decolonize more slowly. This was because he considered many of the peoples currently living under colonial rule to be like 'minor children'. As a result, they would require 'trustees in their relations with other nations or peoples', until such time that they proved themselves ready for full independence.[66]

Trouble makers

Roosevelt therefore had a clear conception of what types of action constituted a threat to international order. But why did certain states act aggressively? Here, there was far less clarity in FDR's thinking. Initially,

his answer was straight out of the Wilsonian lexicon. Dictatorships, he repeatedly stressed throughout the 1930s, were able to break international agreements, divert their resources into rearmament and exploit the nationalist problem because they contained no mechanism by which a pacific and prudent public could influence policy. All would be well, he seemed to suggest, if only the people were given a voice. As FDR put it on one occasion, 'I still believe that in every country the people themselves are more peaceably and liberally inclined than their governments.'[67] Even in Germany, he intimated, there remained groups who were opposed to Hitler's aggressive policies. From time to time, Roosevelt therefore looked for ways of encouraging them, of prodding them to stand up to Hitler and his cronies, from touring Latin America in 1936 in the hope that news of this would 'spread down to the masses of the people in Germany', to enunciating relatively soft peace proposals in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 in the hope that this might encourage the Germans to ditch the Nazi regime.[68]

Yet blaming everything on the evils of dictatorship was not without its problems. One was how the Soviet Union fitted into this scheme. Clearly, the Stalinist regime was not a democracy. Even at the height of the wartime alliance Roosevelt rejected some of the more rose-tinted proclamations issued by the likes of Joseph E. Davies and the *New York Times*, to the effect that in the USSR the 'Marxian system was out' and the 'capitalist system . . . is back'. Instead, he plainly recognized that on a scale of 1 to 100 the US and Soviet systems would always remain at least 20 places apart.[69]

Nevertheless, FDR still deemed it possible to forge a relationship with the Soviet dictator. This was partly because, in stark comparison to Hitler and the Nazis, Stalin had no real record of acting menacingly on the international stage. Indeed, the USSR might have rearmed during the 1930s, but Roosevelt recognized that this had been largely in response to German and Japanese actions. Stalin might have signed a deal with Hitler in August 1939, but FDR considered this to have been an unnatural alignment made only after British and French appeasement had effectively isolated the USSR – up to that point the Soviets had actually seemed to be the most ardent advocate of good old Wilsonian ideals like collective security. And the Soviet Union might have an expansionist ideology, but FDR believed that this threat paled next to a Nazi Germany that was hell bent on employing 'every form of military aggression outside of its borders for the purpose of world conquest'. Ultimately, Roosevelt was also confident that the Soviets could be drawn into the new framework of international society, especially if the West could build up a close and

more trusting relationship with Moscow. 'They didn't know us [before], that's the fundamental difference', FDR stressed in 1944. 'They are a friendly people. They haven't got any crazy ideas of conquest, and so forth; and now they have got to know us, they are much more willing to accept us.'[70]

By this stage, Roosevelt had long abandoned such thoughts about the Germans and the Japanese. Indeed, by 1943 he began to realize that another problem with this Wilsonian faith in the inherent pacifism of the masses was that it exempted the mass of Germans and Japanese from any blame for the global conflagration; and FDR was increasingly convinced that members of both nations were too susceptible to militarism, too willing to blindly follow authoritarian leaders and too prone to support aggressive wars. 'Too many people here . . . hold to the view that the German people as a whole are not responsible for what has taken place – that only a few Nazi leaders are responsible', FDR complained in 1944. 'That unfortunately is not based on fact. The German people as a whole must have it driven home to them that the nation as a whole has been involved in a lawless conspiracy against the decencies of modern civilisation.'[71] To drive it home, FDR no longer thought in terms of just removing the Nazi leadership and then reintegrating Germany speedily back into the international fold – as he had in 1941. Rather, by 1944 he was talking of the need for tough measures, from partition to pastoralization. 'We have got to be tough with Germany', the president muttered darkly that September, 'and I mean the German people and not just the Nazis. You either have to castrate the German people or you have got to treat them in such a manner so they can't just go on reproducing people who want to continue the way they have in the past.'[72]

Blind spots

Despite his global vision, Roosevelt had some obvious blind spots – regions he knew little about, areas he had a deeply flawed understanding of. Race underpinned some of these blind spots.[73] True, compared to many contemporaries, Roosevelt had a progressive attitude towards many races. He was never an anti-Semite, and not only sympathized with the plight of the Jews in Europe but also appointed a number of Jewish-Americans to important positions in his administration. Nor was FDR ever sneering about the Chinese ally. It was Churchill, he complained in 1944, who 'continually referred to the Chinese as "Chinks" and "Chinamen" and he felt this was very dangerous. He (Roosevelt) wanted to keep China as a friend because in 40 or 50 years' time China

might easily become a very powerful military nation.'[74] Yet there can be no doubt that FDR's record on race was spotty. In casual conversation he sometimes uttered the crude stereotypes often held by members of his class.[75] During the war he increasingly came to view Germany and Japan as deeply flawed nations, who would require, at minimum, close supervision and substantial re-education after the war. In 1942, he even sanctioned the internment of Japanese-Americans, in part because he believed that the Japanese were a 'treacherous people' who had aggression 'in the blood', and he thought that, as a group, their loyalty to the United States was suspect.[76] Moreover, although an anti-imperialist, FDR not only considered many peoples languishing under colonial rule to be child-like and immature, in need of tutoring by trustees, but also periodically ruminated about future clashes between 'white', 'yellow' and 'brown' peoples.[77]

During the Cold War it was fashionable to depict Roosevelt's main blind spot as his excessive naïvety in dealing with Stalin. According to this interpretation, while FDR optimistically thought he could work his personal charm on the Soviet leader, in reality his appeasement policy only resulted in the shameless surrender of Eastern Europe to communist rule at Yalta.[78] How accurate is this claim? Clearly, Roosevelt hoped to work with Stalin in the post-war world, and tried to recruit him as one of the 'four policemen'. Clearly, too, this entailed making a number of concessions to the Soviets, of which at least one – FDR's confused notions about Sakhalin and the Kurils – was based on a deep ignorance of the subject.[79]

Yet to label this as naïve appeasement is to miss the broader context within which FDR had to operate. Indeed, as well as believing that Stalin was less of a threat to international order than the Axis powers, FDR had to take hard military realities into account. On the Eastern Front the Soviets were obviously destroying more Germans and more German materiel than any other Allied power, and if they concluded a separate peace, as Washington feared was possible in 1943, then this would create a major, perhaps insurmountable, strategic problem. Furthermore, to get to Berlin the Red Army would have to march through countries like Poland, which would inevitably give Stalin the whip hand in deciding their post-war fate. Towards the end of the war Roosevelt and his military advisers also deemed the Red Army's involvement in the war against Japan to be vital.[80] More broadly, FDR thought long-term co-operation with Moscow was the best way of ensuring a peaceful new world order. He was even confident that Soviet supremacy in Eastern Europe would not be too objectionable. Indeed, he hoped to prevail upon Stalin to accept

an 'open' sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, exercising leadership over the region as one of the 'four policemen' without ever having to intervene directly in the economic and internal affairs of countries like Poland.[81]

Though Roosevelt thus had sound and defensible reasons for seeking to work with Stalin, this episode does highlight one of his deeper character traits: a tendency to look at the map with a jaunty optimism and to assume that everything would ultimately work out for the best. In domestic affairs, this breezy optimism had often been a virtue, for it had helped to restore confidence during the Depression years. In foreign policy, however, it could sometimes be a distinct handicap. Not only did it underpin his miscalculation that Stalin would accept an 'open' sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. But it also lay behind his overconfidence in the efficacy of trusteeships and plebiscites to solve regional problems – his belief that the former might allow Arabs and Jews to live side by side in Palestine and the latter might permit an enduring settlement of the nationalist problem in the Balkans.[82] Similarly, Roosevelt was slow to recognize the potential downside in his harsh vision for Germany. Indeed, blithely assuming that it 'was a fallacy that Europe needs a strong Germany',[83] he was too easily attracted to a variety of schemes that would have destroyed not just the Reich's industrial capacity but in all probability Europe's chances of a speedy reconstruction.

Roosevelt also approached many regional problems in an exceedingly vague manner, casually throwing out suggestions with his 'cigarette-holder gesture'[84] without ever really contemplating what conditions were like or without thinking through the implications of his suggestion. This was certainly true of his plans for economic development. In broad terms, some of his views were not that different from the modernizing liberals of the 1950s and 1960s, who sought to speed up the development of 'backward' regions, remaking them in America's image.[85] But FDR's vision had none of these later liberals' detailed agenda of how to proceed. Never one for grand, overarching theories, his conception of America's role in the modernizing process remained exceedingly vague – on occasion, it was even reduced to what FDR might himself do once he left the White House.

Africa was a case in point. After his fleeting visit in 1943, Roosevelt tended to view Africa merely as a large backward continent, which could easily be improved with a few New Deal-type programmes. In his opinion, its vast empty spaces also offered an ideal receptacle for an estimated three million people displaced by the war in Europe and Asia. 'I want

to make North Africa the granary of Europe', he declared on one occasion, 'just as it was in Roman days. We can pump desalinated water from the Mediterranean for irrigation and build air-conditioned cities in the desert. Technicians will be recruited from among the displaced persons.' During 1944 and 1945, FDR even envisioned himself directing some of these schemes in retirement, using all his skills at bold experimentation to help displaced persons and natives to develop their 'dark continent'.[86]

This tendency to develop hazy ideas in response to large problems was also evident in Roosevelt's periodic musings about Asia. Although he recognized that the underlying contours of the Asian map were bound to change in the near future, with China likely to emerge as a key player and European imperialism under threat, FDR had no deep insights into the current problems afflicting this region. When it came to India, for instance, he periodically badgered Churchill and the British, pressing them to provide a measure of self-government to the sub-continent, perhaps on the model of America's first central government, the Articles of Confederation. But he had few suggestions beyond this, except to suggest to Stalin at Tehran that the 'best solution' to the Indian problem 'would be to reform from the bottom, somewhat on the Soviet line'.[87]

That Churchill flew into a rage whenever Roosevelt mentioned India points to another problem with FDR's mental map: the clash between his own desires and the firmly held views of his key allies. On self-determination, Roosevelt's response to this dilemma was to use personal diplomacy to try to impress upon the Soviets, the British and the French that areas such as Poland, India and Indochina should have a measure of political independence after the war. But when this either antagonized his allies or fell on deaf ears, FDR increasingly tried to square the circle with legal formulations – trusteeships for Asia and the Declaration on Liberated Europe. While Roosevelt was still alive, these fudged the issue sufficiently to keep the Big Three allies together in their struggle against the Axis. But both proved of little value to FDR's successor as he struggled to confront the post-war world.

Legacy

As these examples suggest, the extent to which Franklin Roosevelt's mental map played a role in determining the exact solutions to these problems must not be overstated. Like any leader, FDR frequently had to temper his actual policy preferences when faced with domestic or external opposition – from the constraint of American isolationism prior to

Pearl Harbor to Stalin's determination to construct a closed sphere of influence in Eastern Europe after the war.

Yet Roosevelt's mental map did provide US policy with its basic orientation in this period. And, for all its errors and blind spots, it was a map that ultimately proved to be more attuned to the realities of the time than many of the competing conceptions that were then around. Indeed, unlike American isolationists, FDR recognized that the scale of the map was changing – that the world was becoming smaller and more interdependent, so that it was no longer possible to 'build a high wall around ourselves and forget the existence of the outside world'. Unlike those domestic critics who deemed Japan or the USSR to be the greatest menace, he kept his eye firmly on the Nazi threat and worked hard to hold a disparate coalition together long enough to defeat the Third Reich. And unlike those European leaders who clung onto their empires and minimized the importance of China, he realized that the war had brought profound changes to Asia.[88]

Ultimately, therefore, Roosevelt's mental map encouraged him to involve the United States in the world crisis, to push for the defeat of Germany at all costs and to work to undermine domestic isolationism. And on each of these counts FDR was generally successful. Of course, the world that emerged soon after his death turned out to be very different in so many respects from what he had envisaged – not just in Europe, where the United States quickly fell out with its Soviet ally and began to reconstruct its German enemy, but also in Asia, where America soon began to prop up European colonialism in areas such as Malaya and Indochina. Still, the threat of Nazism and Japanese militarism had been eradicated, American isolationism had been fundamentally weakened and the United States had emerged from the war as a superpower. By any standards, these were impressive achievements.

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3. This happened on at least three occasions: in July 1941 FDR sketched his view of what areas in the Atlantic should be patrolled by the US Navy; and in November 1943 and September 1944 he drew prospective occupation zones

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13. H.L. Stimson Diary, 7 November 1940, 31: 113, microfilm reel 6, Harmsworth Library, Oxford.
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31. D. Reynolds, *Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937–1941: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (London, 1981), 24–5.
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50. FDR, *Public Papers*, 5: 288.
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52. S. Welles, *The Time for Decision* (London, 1944), 70; W. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (New York, 1966), 341–6; C.J.H. Hayes, *Wartime Mission in Spain, 1942–1945* (New York, 1946), 11.
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