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THE LONG ROAD TO VICTORY

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A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE
AND A CHRONOLOGICAL REGISTER
OF THE EVENTS OF
THE WAR IN EUROPE AND AFRICA
1939-1945
WITH A LEADING ARTICLE

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RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH

THE LONG ROAD TO VICTORY

ON September 1, 1939, German armour crossed the Polish frontier and German aeroplanes attacked Warsaw. Ten days earlier the signature of a Russo-German non-aggression pact had proclaimed the imminence of war and the Germans had now completed their preparations for its outbreak. They had perfected a new method of warfare, later to be known as *Blitzkrieg*, by a development of the tactics which had finally overcome the static defence systems of the last war. They now put into execution their plan for overrunning Poland in a mechanized offensive of hitherto unknown mobility. The air arm led the way, attacking the enemy's centres of communication, scattering his columns on their way to their concentration points and blinding him by rendering his airfields unserviceable. Tanks formed the spearhead of the ground attack. They were followed by convoys of motor transport conveying infantry and guns. Thrusting into Poland from north, west, and south, these forces converged on Warsaw before the Polish High Command could establish control over the troops dispersed along the country's frontiers.

The campaign developed at a pace which amazed the world. Within a fortnight all western Poland was lost and the Polish army, so far as it was still in being, had withdrawn behind Warsaw, already closely invested. On September 17 the implications of the Russo-German pact began to be revealed. Russian troops entered Poland from the east and a few days later the stricken country suffered its fourth partition. By the middle of October organized resistance in Poland had been crushed. Thereafter, for more than 18 months, the war in the east was to be conducted mainly under diplomatic forms.

FALL OF FRANCE

In the opening days of the war a British Expeditionary Force which eventually amounted to 10 divisions crossed the Channel. Lord Gort was in command. The Armies took up their positions on their prepared lines. The world waited. Nothing happened. Both sides armed, the Germans more rapidly because their war industries were in full operation. Germany matured her plans; Britain and France faced an unreal present and a

menacing future; and America talked of a "phoney" war. The weakest point in the German front was the long line of sea communications with Narvik and the North Swedish iron fields. It was secured against British sea power by the German use of sheltered Norwegian waters. In February the British, impatient of this abuse of Norwegian neutrality, broke in to rescue British prisoners from a German ship. On April 9 Germany decided that neutrality had served its purpose and invaded Denmark and Norway. The Danes yielded; the Norwegians fought on and an Anglo-French Army went to their aid. Imperfectly trained, inadequately munitioned, and lacking air cover, it was forced to retire on its bases, from which it was later withdrawn. During this brief campaign the Germans revealed two more of their secret weapons, the one military, the other political. The almost simultaneous seizure of all the key points in southern and western Norway was made possible by the employment of parachute troops, and the formation of the country's puppet government after its conquest was entrusted to a Norwegian traitor, one Quisling, who "by merit raised to that bad eminence," was to give his name to the whole contemptible breed of which he was the first notorious example.

The unhappy issue of the Norwegian campaign had immediate and decisive political repercussions in Britain. At the close of a debate in the House of Commons a division was challenged. The strong opposition vote decided Mr. Chamberlain to resign. After consulting the Opposition leaders the retiring Prime Minister advised the King to send for Mr. Churchill. Labour, which had hitherto held aloof from office, entered the new Government representative of all parties in the State. Its core was a small war Cabinet with Mr. Churchill as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. Mr. Churchill took office on May 10, a day of momentous events in Europe. Happily for Britain the hour had produced the man.

THE MIRACLE OF DUNKIRK

On the same day the Germans opened the campaign intended, according to Hitler, to settle the course of history for 1,000 years. Holland and Belgium were invaded simultaneously on what appeared to be an expanded version of the old Schlieffen plan. The allies hastened to the support of Germany's victims—the British to fill the gap between the Belgians

and the French, the French to act as the link between the Belgians and the Dutch. The Germans did not interfere with these movements. Their main blow was to be struck elsewhere. Realizing that motorized forces need not be held up by difficult country, they traversed the Ardennes, crossed the Meuse between Sedan and Namur, and sent armoured divisions, with effective air support, on their race to the Channel ports. In the closing days of May the Germans secured both Boulogne and Calais, and split the allied forces in two. The position of the British in the north was now critical. Holland had capitulated on May 15, and Belgium on May 28. The seaway to England was accessible only through Dunkirk. Through this narrow gap there were safely evacuated in less than a week some 330,000 men, nearly two-thirds of them British. But all their equipment was lost.

While these events were moving towards their climax the French Prime Minister, M. Reynaud, sought to remedy an almost desperate situation by making two appointments, of which one proved futile and the other disastrous. Dismissing General Gamelin, he entrusted the French command to General Weygand, who had been Foch's Chief of Staff and was regarded as the heir to his tradition. To strengthen his Cabinet he recalled Marshal Pétain from his Madrid Embassy and gave him the post of Vice-Premier.

Unable to stem the German rush to the coast, Weygand reformed his armies behind the Somme and the Aisne and a small British Expeditionary Force was landed in their support. It was too late, and on June 14 the Germans entered Paris, which had been declared an open city. From Bordeaux, whither it had withdrawn, the French Cabinet requested the British Government to release it from its obligation not to make a separate peace. To this the British Government—the Coalition Ministry which Mr. Churchill had formed a month before—was prepared to consent if the French fleet first sailed to safety in British ports. But the British proposal went farther. It offered the union of the two States in a common citizenship if France would fight on. The French Cabinet rejected this proposal, M. Reynaud, who had favoured it, resigned, and the octogenarian Pétain took his place to become the central figure in the most humiliating episode in French history.

Pétain's first act was to ask the Germans for terms, and on June 22 an armistice was signed at Compiègne. It divided France into two zones, the one occupied, the other unoccupied, which were roughly equal in area but were so designed as to give the Germans every military and economic advantage. The Germans occupied the whole of northern France down to the Loire valley as well as the entire Atlantic coast to the Spanish frontier. The facilities for submarine warfare thus provided were promptly strengthened by the occupation of the Channel Islands. Two days later the armistice with Italy—Mussolini had found it opportune to declare war when the Germans forced the Somme barrier—drew France's teeth in the Mediterranean by binding her to demilitarize Toulon, her African ports, and a considerable stretch of her African territory.

It remained for Pétain to complete the destruction of the Third Republic. President Lebrun transferred his constitutional powers to Pétain, who at once proclaimed himself Chief of the French State. As such he formed a Government in which his evil genius, Pierre Laval, was given the key post of Foreign Minister and thus placed in charge of future negotiations with the Germans.

But though France had fallen, there were still Frenchmen. Before the armistice was signed General de Gaulle had issued his first call for continued resistance. When all seemed lost he crossed to London, where on June 28 the British Government recognized him as Leader of the Free French. Before August was out most of French Equatorial Africa had rallied to his standard, the Cross of Lorraine, but late in September his movement received a check through his failure to gain Dakar. Nearly five years were to elapse before the patriot and soldier who had organized new French forces in England and in the French colonies and had fostered the resistance movement in Metropolitan France was to re-enter Paris as the living symbol of his country's resurgence.

PRELUDE TO RUSSIAN WAR

After the conquest of Poland the aim of Russian policy, with a view of German intentions that events were to confirm in full, was to control the buffer zone lying between the new German lines and Russian territory proper. Her first step was the absorption of the three Baltic States under the form of mutual assistance pacts—Estonia before September was out, Latvia and Lithuania early in October. Only Finland proved recalcitrant and resisted by force the Russian claim to control both the land and the sea approaches to Leningrad. At first the Finnish resistance was brilliantly successful. Gradually, however, the main Finnish position, the so-called Mannerheim line guarding south-eastern Finland, was broken up by Russian artillery, and by mid March, 1940, there was again an apparent peace in eastern Europe.

It lasted until the following October, when Italian troops invaded Greece and soon showed themselves increasingly unable to make headway against their plucky and determined enemy. For the moment, the Germans were content to watch events in eastern Europe, but in the spring of 1941 they developed elaborate plans, political and military, which included aid to their embarrassed ally, Bulgaria and Rumania passed voluntarily into the German orbit—the latter after the loss of Bessarabia and the Bukovina to Russia—and Yugoslavia would have followed their example had her people not revolted against their Government. After a few tense days the Germans struck on April 6. Sweeping aside the main Yugoslav forces, they penetrated the Monastir gap, occupied Salonika, turned upon the Greek army which was driving the Italians out of Albania, and on April 27 announced, in words which symbolized the condition of Europe, that the swastika was floating over the Acropolis.

WAR IN THE AIR

The R.A.F. at once took the offensive with raids on the German naval bases and at the end of September the first serious air fight took place over Heligoland. But the clash of

arms in the air developed slowly, and for some months the R.A.F.'s main contacts with the enemy arose out of Coastal Command's cooperation with the Navy in keeping the seas clear. During this period, however, the leaflet war on Germany was giving R.A.F. bombers invaluable experience in night flying. Not till May, 1940, did German bombs dropped in Kent and on Middlesbrough give hints of what was to befall. The Battle of Britain opened on August 8. It lasted for a month and was then gradually merged in the Battle of London, familiarly known as the Blitz. The original aim of the *Luftwaffe* was to prepare the way for the invading German armies by depriving the R.A.F. of the airfields in south-eastern England from which its fighters could take off. This battle reached its height on August 15, when 182 German aircraft were destroyed in an attack on Croydon aerodrome. Damage was done to other fields and some were temporarily put out of service in attacks which reached their second climax on September 15 with 185 German aircraft destroyed, but the soil of England was kept inviolate by a few hundred young men flying machines inferior to the enemy's in numbers but superior in design. It was to these days that Mr. Churchill referred in his famous phrase: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

Defeated in its cooperation with the military, the *Luftwaffe* fell back on its second function—that of terrorizing civilians. The first daylight attack on central London took place on August 24, the first all-night attack two nights later. Early in September the Blitz began. At its height it was maintained for nearly 60 consecutive nights. Buckingham Palace was damaged on September 11, and on the same night an unexploded bomb, happily removed in time, threatened St. Paul's. The great incendiary attack on the City took place on the night of December 29, 1940, and the Blitz is considered to have ended with the attack of May 10, 1941, which destroyed the House of Commons and damaged the Abbey. Before this date the *Luftwaffe* had again changed its tactics. In its attempt to hamper British war production it had launched its attacks on Coventry, Birmingham, and Liverpool, and in the hope of neutralizing the British command of the sea it had bombed Plymouth, Southampton, and Portsmouth. Meanwhile the R.A.F., still gathering its strength, had begun the daylight sweeps over France and the night attacks on German cities which were later to exercise so profound an influence on the course of the war.

WAR AT SEA

On the first night of the war a German submarine sank the *Athena* and opened what became the Battle of the Atlantic. The conflict was intense and prolonged, but the Atlantic life-line was maintained. Though still neutral the United States showed its concern to maintain it. In September, 1940, the transfer of 50 American destroyers to the British flag in connexion with the lease of bases in the Atlantic and the Caribbean eased the strain on escort vessels, and in the following spring the American Lease-Lend Act—first fruits of President Roosevelt's re-election to a third term of office—ensured the flow of goods. In home waters large defensive minefields were laid and the new German device of the magnetic mine countered by "degaussing" apparatus. There was little surface fighting. After the invasion of Norway the Navy forced

its way to Narvik in two brilliant engagements. Later it covered the evacuation of the allied troops from Namsos and Narvik at the cost of the loss of the aircraft-carrier *Glorious*, and took its great and gallant share in the operations off Dunkirk. In the outer oceans three British cruisers sought and found the German battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* and with magnificent audacity forced her into the River Plate. When she came out she scuttled herself by Hitler's order. This was in December, 1939, and not till early in 1941 were German surface ships again active. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* broke out in February and were eventually driven to shelter in Brest, where they became targets for the R.A.F., and on the night of May 21 the *Bismarck* sailed out of Bergen. Three days later, when brought to action between Iceland and Greenland, she sank the *Hood* and damaged the *Prince of Wales*, but while making for a French Atlantic port she was attacked by aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm. Her rudder and propellers were damaged by air attack, and next day, May 27, the Navy closed its net on her and sent her to the bottom.

Meanwhile Italy's entry into the war in June, 1940, had transformed the naval situation in the Mediterranean. It was essential that the powerful French fleet should not fall into enemy hands. The French vessels at Alexandria were successfully neutralized, but the admiral commanding the powerful squadron at Mers el Kebir rejected the proposals made to him and on July 3 the British reluctantly opened fire. A French battleship was blown up, two more were driven ashore, a fourth with some destroyers escaped to Toulon. Four months later, on November 11, the command of the Eastern Mediterranean was secured when the Fleet Air Arm crippled the Italian fleet as it lay at anchor in Taranto harbour. Not till the end of the following March did the Italian fleet again put to sea. Ordered by the Germans to break British communications with Crete and Greece, it was brought to action off Cape Matapan and driven back to its home ports after serious losses. But the Germans had now taken over the Mediterranean war, and before launching their attack on Russia they safeguarded their southern flank by using air power against sea power. In the summer of 1941 British naval strength in the Eastern Mediterranean was weakening and Maltese heroism was already enduring the grim ordeal of an air siege.

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The last six months of 1940 were full of peril to Britain's position as an imperial Power. Italian armies in Africa threatened Egypt, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, and, with the Italian Navy still in being, British supplies and reinforcements had to be sent round the Cape. Actually the Italians achieved nothing beyond the occupation of British Somaliland. Early in December, three months after Marshal Graziani had begun his lumbering advance across the Egyptian desert, Sir Archibald Wavell struck back with the imperial forces under his command. The Italian Army broke and surrendered, and the offensive, whose original objective was Tobruk, swept on until on February 6, 1941, Australian troops entered Benghazi.

In mid-January British, Dominion, Indian, and East and West African forces advanced from the Sudan and Kenya into Eritrea, Abyssinia, and Somaliland and in four months

destroyed Italy's East African Empire. Keren, the Eritrean mountain fortress, fell on March 27. Thereafter events moved swiftly. On May 5, five years after Mussolini had proclaimed his Empire in the Piazza Venezia, Haile Selassie re-entered his capital, and a fortnight later the Italian Viceroy, the Duke of Aosta, was a prisoner in British hands. The last remnants of Italy's Ethiopian empire vanished with the surrender of Gondar on November 27, 1941.

Even before General Wavell launched his attack, British aid had been sent to Greece. In the spring of 1941 the German menace to the Balkans compelled further diversions of strength. A few days before the German onslaught on Yugoslavia the German Africa Corps under Rommel showed its strength in Africa and compelled the evacuation of Benghazi. A series of rearguard actions followed as General Wavell retreated, leaving a strong garrison in Tobruk to withstand a historic siege. The full scope of the German plan of campaign was now revealed. It proposed to combine the German forces in Libya and Greece as elements in a common offensive to secure command of the Eastern Mediterranean and safeguard the southern flank of the armies soon to be launched against Russia. Accordingly on May 20 strong German airborne forces were dropped in Crete. The attacks of German bombers had compelled withdrawal of the British fighters and the garrison had to fight without cover. The Navy, though sustaining heavy losses, prevented an invasion by sea but more troops were dropped from the air and after 11 days' heavy fighting all Crete passed into German hands.

The stage was now set for the attack on Russia. A few uneasy weeks slipped by during which German and Russian forces gathered all along the line from the Baltic to the Black Sea. It may well be that the resistance in Greece and Yugoslavia imposed a fatal delay upon the German concentration. Not till June 22 did Hitler, satisfied that he could better Napoleon's example, give the order to march on Moscow.

TIDE'S SLOW TURN

The German armies concentrated on the Russian front from the Baltic to Bessarabia, where Rumanian forces were in line with them, numbered over 160 divisions, about 20 of which were armoured. They were divided into three Army Groups, the northern under Field-Marshal von Leeb, the central under Field-Marshal von Bock, both north of the Pripet marshes, and the southern under Field-Marshal von Rundstedt. An army of five divisions cooperated with the Finns. Five air fleets, each comprising from 800 to 1,200 aircraft, cooperated with the armies. This great host numbered some 5,000,000 men, highly trained, fanatically confident, and admirably equipped for all eventualities—except the Russian winter. The Russians, though probably stronger numerically, had not completed their concentration when attacked. They met the onset with a defence in depth which, though it did not defeat the attack, checked its momentum and prevented any repetition of the German successes in Poland and France. They were far better found, especially in aircraft and tanks, than the Poles had been, and the Finnish campaign had taught them valuable lessons. It must be added that they fought much better than the French had done. Their

infantry, though often outflanked and overrun by German tanks, displayed the utmost determination, frequently breaking out of the rings of armour and mechanized infantry which the enemy had thrown around them. Above all they had no reluctance to strip their own countryside rather than allow its livestock and transport and its stores of grain to fall into the invaders' hands; they had the great advantage of possessing ample space in which to manoeuvre in retreat, and their commanders, with few exceptions, made all possible use of these assets.

In the north Leeb's forces overran the Baltic States, reaching the neighbourhood of Leningrad in September, while the Finns threatened it from the north. Blockaded, except during the winter, when supplies reached it over frozen Lake Ladoga, Leningrad bore famine, bombardment, and cold unflinchingly. In the centre Bock reached Smolensk on July 16 and held Russian counter-attacks during a 10 weeks' halt. Rundstedt's armies, after several victories, occupied Kiev (September 19), Odessa (October 16), and Kharkov (October 24), and broke into the Crimea (October 29) to beleaguer Sevastopol. The fall of Rostov (November 22) marked the eastward limit of this advance. A week later a Russian counter-stroke regained the city. Meanwhile the march on Moscow had begun on October 5. At first Bock's armies advanced rapidly. By November 1 they had taken Rzhev, Vyasma, Kaluga, and Orel, and at one point they were but 60 miles from their goal. Although government departments, foreign missions, and many non-combatants had been evacuated to Kuibyshev from the capital and the situation was described as "grave," Stalin stayed. The Red Army fought tenaciously; the impetus of the attack waned.

On November 16 Bock renewed the attack with 51 divisions, attempting to combine encirclement from north and south with a central thrust from Mozhaisk. After three weeks' furious fighting the Russians held their ground; and on December 7 the German High Command announced that all operations, "being impeded by intense cold," must be limited to securing safe winter quarters and suitable positions for a spring offensive. Aided by an exceptionally bitter winter which inflicted heavy losses on the invaders the Russians pressed them back from 25 to 60 miles on the whole central front. On December 19 Hitler announced that he had taken the place of Field-Marshal von Brauchitsch as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, that he would "follow his intuitions," and reserve to himself all essential decisions in the military sphere. The allies had every cause to approve the change.

During the rest of the winter the Germans stood on the defensive in fortified "hedgehogs," the most important of which repelled Russian attacks. They suffered greatly from the attacks of well-organized Russian partisans infuriated by their cruelties. But they yielded no essential ground; they had been reinforced by Hungarian and Italian contingents and from their own reserves, and awaited the drying of the ground for their offensive. In May they expelled the Russians from the Kerch Peninsula, but while they were thus engaged Marshal Timoshenko opened an offensive which nearly retook Kharkov (May 14-17), but was halted by Bock's counter-offensive across the Donetz (May 19-26). The Germans then turned on Sevastopol, which fell after a desperate defence (July 1). On June 26 they opened dangerous, but eventually

disastrous, offensives against Stalingrad and the Caucasian oilfields.

STALINGRAD AND AFTER

At first the offensives prospered. The Germans forced the Donetz and the Don lines, and reached Stalingrad, on the Volga, and Mozdok, in the northern Caucasus. But they were not strong enough for final victory on both fronts. In Stalingrad they encountered an epic resistance (September 5-November 18), and on November 19 began the Russians' relief offensive which cut the besieging army's communications and besieged it in turn. The German Caucasus army, weakened by the detachment of a force to relieve their Stalingrad forces, was driven back. The relieving force was defeated at Kotelnikovo (December 29). On January 31, 1943, 46,000 men, all that battle, hunger, and cold had left of over 200,000 encircled soldiers, surrendered, with their commander, Field-Marshal von Paulus, outside Stalingrad. The whole southern front gave way. The Germans had employed large numbers of Hungarian and Italian troops on supposedly quiet sectors on the flank of the great two-pronged salient which they had driven to the Volga and along the northern flank of the Caucasus. Lacking training and enthusiasm, these satellite forces were rapidly overpowered; and their defeat involved that of their German masters, who were now tardily discovering that the Russians, who, according to their Führer, had been beaten beyond hope of recovery, possessed almost inexhaustible reserves of men and an inexhaustible spirit. These defeats compelled the Germans to spend themselves in a vast series of rearguard actions fought always in bitter cold, often in snowstorms, against an enemy whose endurance of cold and hardship far exceeded their own. The "hedgehogs" began to succumb to well-planned Russian attacks. By mid-March the Russians were approaching the Dnieper, and, though the Germans temporarily regained Kharkov, the balance of the winter campaign was heavily against them. They suffered further losses on the central front, and on January 18 Leningrad was relieved. Yet they still planned another offensive, though their last year in Russia had cost them and their satellites over 2,000,000 dead and prisoners. On July 6 they attacked between Orel and Bielgorod, only to be fought to a standstill, with immense losses of men and armour. By July 12 the Russians opened a general counter-offensive regaining Orel, Kharkov, and Taganrog, with many other towns, by September 2.

FROM MALTA TO PERSIA

With the loss of Crete, our situation in the Mediterranean had worsened, in spite of Middle Eastern successes. In Iraq, where the ex-Premier Rashid Ali and pro-Axis officers had seized power in April, 1941, had opposed our right of military passage guaranteed us by treaty, and attacked our aerodrome at Habbaniya, an expeditionary force had restored order and the lawful Government by June 1. The Vichy French authorities in Syria had allowed Germans flying to Iraq to use Syrian airfields. Imperial, Dominion, and Free French troops entered Syria on June 8 and compelled the surrender of the garrison on July 14. In Persia German agents were active and increased in numbers after Hitler's attack on Russia. The Shah neglected allied warnings until on August 25 Imperial troops invaded southern, and Soviet forces northern Persia, meeting only a token resistance,

which ceased on August 28. The Shah did not abide by his undertakings and was deposed. Persia became an ally and opened a new line of communications with Russia by road and rail. Nevertheless the fact that the enemy now held both the Mediterranean "narrows" between Sicily and Malta and between Crete and Cyrenaica under threat of air attack cramped our Mediterranean operations. Rommel, the German commander in Libya, received reinforcements and supplies from Italy and Greece. Our reinforcements and supplies reached Egypt round the Cape of Good Hope, and were exposed to U-boat attack far longer than Axis transports crossing the Sicilian Channel. So when we advanced into Libya in November we found the German armour and equipment superior to ours, and though we relieved Tobruk and drove the enemy from Benghazi he regained it in January, 1942. Even when the United States was brought into the struggle by the Japanese attack of December 7, 1941, and the German and Italian declarations of war, many months passed before it entered the Mediterranean war in strength. Meanwhile, on May 26 Rommel opened a new offensive, which after alternations of fortune took Tobruk (June 21) and thrust our Eighth Army back to El Alamein, 80 miles west of Alexandria. Here General Auchinleck repulsed Rommel's attack in July. In October his successor, General Alexander, having been reinforced by British infantry and American Sherman tanks ordered General Montgomery, the Commander of the Eighth Army, to attack, and after a fortnight's battle the counter-stroke drove the enemy headlong from Egypt with the loss of two-thirds of his army.

The church bells ringing to celebrate the victory carried a message of deliverance. For over a year our naval position in the Mediterranean had been precarious. At one period we had but three cruisers available there, and every battleship had been lost or damaged. Continuously bombed Malta was also threatened with famine. Admiral Vian's remarkable battle against an immensely stronger Italian fleet (March 22, 1942) in defence of the Malta convoy gave the heroic garrison and population of the island relief at a most anxious moment.

BRITAIN AND THE LIFE-LINE

The situation in the Atlantic remained serious. The entry of the United States into the war was followed by an intensified U-boat campaign, which extended to the West Indies, and inflicted great losses on allied shipping. Brazil joined the allies in August, 1942.

The Germans carried combined operations by strong groups of submarines—the "wolf-pack system"—to a high degree of efficiency. German aircraft ranged far into the Atlantic; E-boats harassed vessels in the narrow seas. The journeys to Murmansk of the Arctic convoys carrying the arms and supplies which did much to support Russian resistance, notably during the period of the removal of industrial machinery from western Russia to the Urals, involved terrible hardships and heavy losses. On February 12 the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Prinz Eugen slipped out of Brest and, detected only near the Straits of Dover and covered by swarms of land-based aircraft escaped to German waters. The struggle against the U-boats continued throughout the year. Early in 1943 the Germans were still believed to be producing U-boats at a rate much exceed-

ing their losses. Hitler's appointment late in January of Admiral Dönitz, a convinced adherent of unlimited submarine warfare, to be Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy gave evidence of the intention to increase the scale of these attacks. But three months later the number of monthly sinkings claimed by the enemy had fallen markedly, and in May it was clear that the campaign against these pests of the seas was taking a favourable turn. By mid-August, 1943, more U-boats were being sunk than merchant ships. New methods of attack, increased provision of escort craft, escort carriers, and long-range aeroplanes, and the immense output of shipping in the United States brought this relief.

BREACHING THE DAMS

In the air British attacks on Germany grew more formidable monthly. Stages in its development during 1942 were marked by the daylight attack on Augsburg in April, the first raid of over 1,000 bombers on Germany on the night of May 30, and the participation in the attack of the enterprising American air forces which were soon to equal and later surpass the R.A.F. in numbers. August 17 saw the first all-American bombing raid from this country. On January 27, 1943, the Americans opened the series of large-scale daylight attacks with the heaviest bombers that contributed so greatly to the decline of German war production. "Round-the-clock" bombing by the R.A.F. began in the exceptionally fine February of 1943. The breaching of the Möhne and Eder dams on May 16 was a masterpiece of brave and accurate bombing. To these attacks, in which new tactical methods and more destructive bombs were being employed, the Germans, their *Luftwaffe* mostly committed to the Russian war or shoring up Italian resistance, found no adequate reply. "Hit-and-run" dashes at English coast towns and the "Baedeker raids" on historical monuments in the spring of 1942 were poor reprisals for the wrecked factories of the Ruhr. During this phase land operations in western Europe were confined to raids on the French and Norwegian coasts—the most important and costly of which was the mainly Canadian reconnaissance raid on Dieppe (August 19, 1942). Throughout it powerful forces were being built up in Great Britain for foreign service, while the Home Guard relieved the Regular Army of much of its burden of defence. The American troops who landed in Northern Ireland in January, 1942, were forerunners of a great army.

It was in Africa, however, that the United States struck its first heavy blow against the Axis. Our attack at El Alamein had been planned in conjunction with a great Anglo-American descent on French North Africa, from which we could strike at what Mr. Churchill called "the underbelly" of the Nazi monster. On November 8 the allied expedition landed. After a brief resistance the French troops in Morocco and Algeria surrendered to the allied Commander, General Eisenhower, and the capitulation was signed by Admiral Darlan, whose subsequent assassination terminated the controversies aroused by the allied acceptance of his useful change of front. The enemy promptly landed troops in Tunisia and sent reinforcements to Rommel's retreating army. The Eighth Army reached Tripoli (January 23) after a memorable pursuit of 1,350 miles. By then heavy and indecisive fighting had begun in Tunisia. It lasted until May 7, when the allied armies, including excel-

lent French troops, closed with General von Arnim's army, captured Tunis and Bizerta, and on May 13 took the surrender of the famous Afrika Korps. Nearly 250,000 prisoners, three-fifths of them Germans, fell into their hands.

The allies now prepared to invade Italy, which was suffering grievously from their naval and aerial attacks and had been defeated morally since El Alamein. On July 10 strong allied forces landed on the Sicilian coast and made good their footing. Italian resistance was weak, and although the German troops fought stoutly they had all evacuated Sicily by August 17. This disaster overthrew Mussolini, who was abandoned by most of his party and was imprisoned but was afterwards rescued by the Germans. His successor, Marshal Badoglio, while assuring them that he would continue the war, entered into secret negotiations with the allied High Command. After various difficulties an Italian envoy signed the armistice terms at Syracuse on September 3 on condition that they should not be published until the night of September 8-9 when the allies were about to land near Naples.

LIBERATION

In accordance with the armistice terms the Italian fleet, still a substantial force of five battleships and seven cruisers with attendant destroyers, put to sea and shaped course for Malta. It was attacked by German aircraft and the battleship Roma was sunk by a direct bomb. The other ships reached Valletta on September 11. The command of the sea had now passed to the allies and Sardinia and Corsica were recovered by October 1, but land operations proved more hazardous. The day after the armistice was announced allied troops landed in Salerno Bay. The Germans, whom Italy's collapse had not taken by surprise, seized control, and concentrating rapidly almost drove the invaders into the sea. Supported, however, by fire from warships the allies held on until, after a critical week, the advance of the Eighth Army from the south relieved the pressure. Naples was occupied on October 1 and the enemy fell back to the line of the Volturno, where, over 80 years earlier, Garibaldi had been checked in his victorious advance. During a severe winter the river was crossed, but allied progress was held up before Cassino and a successful landing at Anzio early in 1944 only created a second deadlock. It was broken on May 11 when the allies opened an attack which carried them through the Liri valley. A junction with the Anzio troops followed and on June 4 Rome was freed.

The Germans rallied their unbroken forces near Lake Trasimene, and, though the advance continued, its speed was reduced. Siena and Leghorn were liberated in July, Florence in August, and early in September the allies forced the so-called Gothic line in the Northern Apennines. But Bologna was still covered. All through the winter the allies pushed gradually forward, Ravenna falling in December, but it was not until April 10 that the final blow was struck. The Eighth Army on the Adriatic front opened the attack, the Fifth Army made its thrust a few days later, and on April 21 the allies entered Bologna.

The defence now collapsed. The Germans surrendered in tens of thousands, while partisan bands, their action coordinated by General Cadorna, seized the industrial cities of the north. Two days after the fall of Bologna the victorious allies had reached the

Po. No serious opposition was offered at its crossings, and through the closing days of April the advance swept on. Genoa, Turin, Milan, Brescia, Verona, already freed by the partisans, were entered, and Mussolini's life ended with the final overthrow of his régime. Partisans shot him on April 28, the day before two German officers signed the allies' terms of unconditional surrender. On May 2, in accordance with their provisions, nearly 1,000,000 men, including Fascist Republicans, laid down their arms.

FRANCE AND BELGIUM

British and American forces led by General Montgomery landed on June 6, 1944, in the Seine Bay—a region which had known many landings from England in earlier centuries. The operation, postponed for 24 hours, took place during a short break in the weather of what turned out to be the stormiest June on record. Happily some such contingency had been foreseen. All the world knew that large and splendidly equipped forces were gathering in England, but the great secret had been well kept. British engineers had designed and produced an artificial harbour, capable of transport across the Channel there to provide, within a breakwater formed by caissons and sunken ships, an area of calm water containing all facilities for landing men, guns, and stores. The enterprise was known as "Mulberry"; it bore fruit in due course.

For weeks past persistent air attacks had been made "on military objectives in Northern France" with the object of breaking down all the bridges across the Seine and the Loire and of creating a vast box in which the German forces, their communications cut, could be brought to action and destroyed. This object was largely attained, but the vague official formula also contained its secret. The Germans had produced a jet-propelled, unpiloted aeroplane carrying about a ton of explosives to be launched against southern England in general and London in particular from concrete platforms in northern France. Before D Day over 100 of these platforms had been discovered and destroyed, not without loss. Then the Germans produced a pre-fabricated ramp which could be assembled quickly and camouflaged thoroughly. A week after D Day the first flying-bomb, promptly nick-named "doodle-bug," fell on British soil. For 80 summer days and nights before the victory in Normandy enabled the bombing sites to be cleared Londoners were familiar with the roar of the approaching bomb, the sudden silence and the crash on impact. In all 2,300 bombs out of 8,000 launched eluded pursuit machines, A.A. guns, and barrage balloons and reached the London area. The cost to both life and property was high. Some 5,500 men, women, and children were killed and over 16,000 seriously injured—the great majority in the London area. On the material side, both churches and hospitals suffered heavily, but the worst damage was to hundreds of thousands of small houses.

BATTERING THE HINGE

The plan of invasion gave the British Caen and the Americans Cherbourg as the first main objectives. Moving rapidly across the neck of the Cotentin peninsula the Americans entered Cherbourg on the 20th day after their landing. Caen proved a harder nut to crack. It was not taken until July 9, and even then the Germans maintained themselves on the farther side of the river on which it lies.

General Montgomery's plan, drawn up long before the landing, was to keep the enemy's greatest strength fighting hard in the Caen area while the Americans broke through in the Cotentin peninsula and wheeled right round to the Seine. For a full month after Cherbourg was taken the British and the Canadians battered at the hinge while the Americans prepared for their decisive stroke. Late in July they broke through the German lines into Brittany, and, leaving the German garrisons in the Atlantic ports to be dealt with later, swung round inland behind the enemy. The Germans retaliated by a strong westward thrust to cut the American armies in two. It failed, and the Normandy pocket began to form. On August 8, anniversary of a black day for the German Army, the British and Canadians smashed the hinge and drove towards Falaise, the Americans moving up north to join them. By August 12 such of the German Army as had escaped the trap was hurrying towards the Seine, but the Americans reached it first and crossed it above and below Paris. The city, where the French *maquis* had risen in revolt, was entered on July 25, while the Germans, thanks to a stand at Elboeuf, were moving their disorganized forces across the lower Seine. Meanwhile great events were taking shape in southern France. On August 15 allied troops landed near Cannes. Toulon and Marseilles quickly fell, and the liberators, preceded and supported everywhere by the men of the *maquis*, pushed up to Rhône valley and drove the Germans towards and through the Belfort gap. By the end of August most of France was free, save the Biscayan ports and Alsace-Lorraine.

But the end was not yet. At the beginning of September the British crossed first the Seine and then the Somme, liberated Brussels on September 3, and on the following day entered Antwerp, whose great harbour, thanks to the Belgian resistance movement, was secured intact, though as yet inaccessible from the sea. During these same days of expanding victory the Americans, under Generals Hodges and Patton, crossed the Marne and raced for the Meuse and the Moselle. But supplies could no longer keep up with the tanks, and the Germans had begun to rally. One final effort was made to break through into northern Germany. On September 17 large allied airborne forces were dropped in northern Holland to seize the crossings of the Maas and the lower Rhine. Arnhem was the key point, and for an anxious week the struggle raged about its bridge. It could not be held, and on the night of September 25 such elements of the British airborne division as were still on the river's northern bank were brought across it to safety. After suffering 1,000,000 casualties the Germans had at length stabilized their line.

RUSSIAN TRIUMPHS

During the winter of 1943-44 the Russians made steady progress on every sector of their front. Before November was over they had liberated Kiev and many other cities, and had crossed the Dnieper on a wide front. They continued to gain ground in the Ukraine and elsewhere after the New Year, and the Germans on several occasions incurred disastrous losses by failing to retreat in time; indeed, their whole conduct of operations on this front suggests that their intuitive Führer had vetoed any rational scheme for a general shortening of a line which they had not enough troops to hold. By March 31 the Russians had

isolated the Crimea and entered Rumania. In April they invaded the Crimea, capturing Sevastopol on May 9. The summer saw fresh Soviet successes, a victory over the Finns in June, successful thrusts into Poland and the Baltic Republics, and advances to the Carpathian foothills. A gallant rising in Warsaw by the Polish "Home Army" in expectation of a Russian advance failed when the Russians received a check and the insurgents surrendered (October 1). The Russians were also held in East Prussia, but they had cleared the Germans from all but a coastal strip in the *Baltikum* by November.

The satellites made haste to change sides, Rumania late in August, Bulgaria, after an absurd three days during which she was at war with Germans and Russians, in September. Their armies were placed at the Russians' disposition, and were employed against the enemy in Hungary and Yugoslavia. The Finns made peace in September, and when the Germans refused to evacuate their territory helped the Russians to expel them. Russian and Norwegian troops entered Arctic Norway. The end of the year saw a lull on the Baltic-Polish front while the Russians prepared for the invasion of Germany. But in the Danube basin the Russians and their allies, after liberating Belgrade and all Transylvania, fought their way up the Danube, secured the support of a large section of Hungarians, and captured Budapest on February 13. British forces, cooperating with Marshal Tito's Yugoslav patriots, harassed the Germans retreating along the Adriatic coast. British troops landed in Greece in October. The future of the Greek monarchy and the disposal of political power proved decisive issues. Party jealousies and deep-rooted suspicions and the hysteria caused by famine and oppression exploded in a brief, ferocious civil war, in which our troops were unhappily involved.

WEST OF THE RHINE

In the west the allies, faced by German troops of high quality, still holding most of the Siegfried zone and ably led, made slower progress, often through floods and mud. The laborious clearing of the Scheldt approaches was completed in mid-November, and Antwerp was soon opened to traffic. Further south their capture of Aachen and their liberation of Metz and Strasbourg marked further stages on their way to the Rhine. In mid-December, however, a heavy German offensive in the Ardennes region checked their advance towards Cologne, and threatened to disrupt their front by a 40-mile penetration.

Field-Marshal Montgomery's skilful dispositions and General Patton's counter-stroke from the south defeated the attack, and in February began the penultimate allied offensive in the west. It was entirely successful. Trier, Krefeld, Cologne, and Coblenz were in American hands by March 17, and the unexpected seizure of Remagen bridge gave the American Ninth Army a solid foothold across the Rhine.

BY SEA AND AIR

Before chronicling the last stage of the war by land its final developments by sea and air must be recorded. Few blockade-runners reached German-occupied ports with rubber and strategic minerals from Japan. The U-boats suffered heavily during the winter of 1943-44; during several months the number sunk exceeded that of their victims, and their attacks on allied shipping in the

Channel during the period of invasion met with scanty success. But in December, 1944, new types appeared fitted with devices enabling them to remain submerged for long periods, and thenceforward their activity was more marked, though it was largely counter-balanced by the loss of bases, such as Danzig, and the bombing of shipyards. Interference by German surface ships with our Arctic convoys was discouraged by the destruction of the *Scharnhorst* by Admiral Fraser's squadron off the North Cape on December 26, 1943. The *Tirpitz*, also stationed in Norway, was disabled for long periods by British midget submarines and naval aircraft, and was finally sunk by R.A.F. in November. Of the few German warships that remained seaworthy most were sunk by air attack during the final offensive.

In the air allied strategic bombing reached an intensity in 1944 which told heavily on German arms production and gradually destroyed the enemy's synthetic oil factories on which he was entirely dependent after losing the Rumanian and Polish oilfields. The use of 10-ton bombs by the R.A.F. in March, when the United States 8th Air Force alone dropped 65,000 tons of bombs on the Reich; the "non-stop" bombing by day and night of certain targets, the swarms of aircraft operating literally in thousands from bases extending from Great Britain to Italy made the last months of the war memorable. Jet aeroplanes brought into use by the enemy in the previous autumn were too few and came too late to affect the issue for all their speed. His V 2 rockets killed and injured more than 9,000 people in southern England, mostly in London, from September 8 to the fall of the last on March 27, but did virtually no military damage.

THE FINAL ASSAULT

In mid-January the Russians surged forward in Poland. By mid-March they had surrounded Breslau, broken into Brandenburg, and isolated a great part of the enemy's eastern armies in pockets with the Baltic at their backs. On March 23 allied forces under Field-Marshal Montgomery began to cross the Rhine between Rees and Wesel on a 30-mile front, while 40,000 airborne troops landed in the enemy's rear. Four days later the allies were crossing the Rhine at nearly 20 points and their armoured vanguards were thrusting deep into the Reich. The fall of Vienna, of Bratislava, Breslau, Königsberg, Danzig, and Stettin to the Russians, their junctions with the Americans on the Elbe, the tale of how, breaching every defence, they closed in furious house-to-house battles with the defenders of Berlin are fresh in all memories. So, on the west, are the British capture of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck, the sweep of American armies through central Germany to the Elbe, the surrenders in the Ruhr pocket, General Patton's swift capture of Nuremberg and Munich, the Nazi holy cities, the fall of Ulm to the French, and the American march on Prague.

Himmler's offer to make peace with the western allies and not with Russia—which was promptly rejected—the death of Hitler, the fall of Berlin, and Dönitz's futile attempt to resist in the east while surrendering in the west foreshadowed the end. On May 5 the German forces in Holland, Denmark, and north-west and southern Germany surrendered. The final general surrender came yesterday. So perished the monstrous régime of the Third Reich under the accumulated hatred provoked by its crimes.

THE WAR IN EUROPE AND AFRICA

A REGISTER OF EVENTS, 1939-1945

1939

September

1. Germany invaded Poland.
3. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. German fleet off Wilhelmshaven photographed from R.A.F. bomber.
4. Small advanced parties of B.E.F. arrived in France. German fleet attacked by R.A.F.
9. Battle for Warsaw began.
10. Main force of B.E.F. began to arrive at Cherbourg.
13. Vistula crossed by Germans at Annopol.
14. Germans entered Gdynia.
15. Przemyśl captured by Germans.
17. Russian troops entered Poland. Aircraft carrier Courageous sunk.
24. All-day air raid on Warsaw.
27. Warsaw surrendered.
28. Poland partitioned by Russia and Germany.

October

10. Empire air-training scheme announced.
14. Royal Oak sunk by U-boat in Scapa Flow.
16. First German air raid on British Isles (Firth of Forth); Naval casualties.

November

4. United States Neutrality Act passed.
13. First bombs on British soil (Shetlands); no damage.
18. German magnetic mines sown from air.
28. Russia denounced non-aggression pact with Finland.
30. Finland invaded.

December

13. Battle of River Plate; Admiral Graf Spee scuttled on 17th.

1940

February

16. Altmark prisoners released by Cossack in Norwegian waters.

March

12. Finland signed Peace with Russia.
16. First British civilian killed by German bomb (Orkney).

April

9. Denmark and Norway invaded by Germany.
10. Battle of Narvik; first V.C. award of war.
11. British troops landed in Norway.
13. Second battle of Narvik.

May

9. First bombs on British mainland (near Canterbury).
10. Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg invaded by Germany; first use of glider-borne troops (by Germans); British forces entered Belgium. Mr. Chamberlain resigned; Mr. Winston Churchill became Prime Minister. British troops landed in Iceland.
11. Germans crossed Albert Canal by undestroyed bridge. First British bombs on German mainland.

May, 1940

12. R.A.F. bombed Maastricht bridges.
14. Rotterdam heavily bombed by Germans. Formation of Home Guard ("Local Defence Volunteers") announced.
15. Dutch capitulation signed at 11 a.m. French front penetrated.
16. General Giraud captured by Germans.
23. Boulogne evacuated by British.
24. First British industrial town attacked by German Air Force (Middlesbrough).
- 24-27. British brigade held Calais against two German divisions.
28. Belgian army capitulated at 4 a.m. Narvik captured by Germans.

June

3. Dunkirk evacuation completed; 211,532 fit men, 13,053 casualties, and 112,546 allied troops embarked at Dunkirk and the beaches. First bombs on Paris.
5. Germans launched new offensive on the Somme and the Aisne.
8. Aircraft carrier Glorious sunk.
9. Norwegians ordered to cease hostilities.
10. Italy declared war on Great Britain and France as from 11th. Evacuation of Norway announced.
11. French forces retired across Marne.
14. Germans entered Paris. Canadian Infantry brigade landed at Brest.
16. Germans pierced Maginot Line. British offer of Anglo-French union rejected.
17. Marshal Pétain formed Government, and announced that France had asked for terms. Evacuation of B.E.F. from France completed.
22. France signed armistice with Germany; with Italy on 24th.
27. Germans reached Spanish frontier.
28. General de Gaulle recognized by British Government as leader of all Free Frenchmen.
30. Channel Islands occupied by German troops.

July

3. British attacked French capital ships at Oran and Mers-el-Kebir.
4. Italians crossed Sudan border.
5. Vichy Government broke off relations with Great Britain.
8. British attacked Richelieu at Dakar.

August

4. Italians invaded British Somaliland.
8. "Battle of Britain" began.
15. Croydon aerodrome bombed. 182 aeroplanes brought down over Britain.
17. British forces evacuated Somaliland.
24. First air raid on Central London.
25. First R.A.F. raid on Berlin.
26. First all-night raid on London.

September

7. Three months' air attack on London began.
11. Air raid on London; Buckingham Palace damaged, unexploded bomb near St. Paul's.
13. Italian invasion of Egypt began.

September, 1940

15. 185 aeroplanes shot down over Great Britain.
23. George Cross and Medal instituted. General de Gaulle and British warships arrived at Dakar; attempt to land abandoned on 25th.
27. Axis pact (Germany, Italy, Japan).

October

28. Greece invaded by Italy.
29. British troops landed on Greek territory.

November

11. First large Italian air raid on Great Britain. Fleet Air Arm attacked Italian warships at Taranto.
14. Heavy air-raid on Coventry. This was the first mass raid on a British provincial town.

December

9. British opened offensive in Western Desert; Sidi Barrani captured on 11th, Sollum and Fort Capuzzo on 17th.
29. Heavy incendiary raid on City of London. Guildhall and eight Wren churches destroyed.

1941

January

5. Bardia captured by Imperial Forces.
10. Russo-German pact renewed.
18. Dive-bombing attacks on Malta began.
19. Kassala (Sudan) re-occupied by British.
22. Tobruk entered by Australians.
30. Derna captured by Imperial Forces.

February

1. Agordat captured by British.
3. Cyrene occupied by British.
6. Benghazi occupied by Australians.
15. Kismayu occupied by African troops.
26. Mogadishu (Italian Somaliland) occupied by African troops.

March

4. British raid on Lofoten Islands.
9. Italian offensive in Albania.
11. Lend-Lease Bill signed by President Roosevelt.
16. Berbera re-occupied by British.
21. Jarabub captured by British.
24. British Somaliland regained.
27. Revolt in Yugoslavia. Keren captured by British and Indian forces.
28. Battle of Cape Matapan began.

April

3. Benghazi evacuated by British. Pro-Axis *coup d'état* in Iraq.
5. Addis Ababa occupied by Imperial Forces.
6. Greece and Yugoslavia invaded by Germans.
8. Massawa occupied by British forces.
9. Salonika occupied by Germans.
10. British forces in action in Greece.
12. First extensive daylight raids by R.A.F.
13. Belgrade occupied by Germans.
26. Egyptian frontier, at Sollum, crossed by Axis forces.
27. Germans entered Athens.

May

1. Evacuation of Imperial Forces from Greece completed.
10. Rudolf Hess landed in Scotland by parachute after flight from Germany. Heavy air attack on London; House of Commons destroyed.

May, 1941

15. Sollum recaptured by British.
19. Duke of Aosta's forces surrendered at Amba Alagi.
- 19-31. Battle for Crete.
24. H.M.S. Hood sunk by Bismarck.
27. Bismarck sunk.

June

1. Evacuation of British and Greek forces from Crete completed.
8. Syria entered by British and French forces.
22. Russia attacked by Germany.

July

12. Anglo-Russian mutual assistance treaty signed.
14. Allied forces occupied Syria.
21. First German air-raid on Moscow.

August

7. First Russian air-raid on Berlin.
11. Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt, meeting on board U.S.S. Augusta, agreed on Atlantic Charter.
25. British and Russian forces entered Persia. Raid on Spitsbergen by British, Canadian and Norwegian forces.

September

17. R.A.F. wing in Russia in action.
19. Kiev occupied by Germans.
25. Germans attacked Crimea. French National Committee formed.
- 26-27. Eighth Army formed.

October

5. Battle for Moscow (lasted until December 6).
12. Briansk evacuated by Russians.
16. Odessa evacuated by Russians.
19. State of siege proclaimed in Moscow.
24. Kharkov captured by Germans.
29. Germans began to cross Perikop Isthmus into Crimea.

November

1. Simferopol captured by Germans.
14. U.S. Neutrality Act amended. H.M.S. Ark Royal, torpedoed by U-boat, foundered while in tow.
16. Colonel Keyes led raid on Rommel's H.Q. at Beda Littoria.
18. British offensive in Libya began.
21. Big tank battle S. of Sidi Rezegh (lasted until December 6).
22. Rostov occupied by Germans.
23. Bardia occupied by New Zealand forces.
25. New attack on Moscow. H.M.S. Barham sunk off Sollum.
26. Russian advance of 70 miles in Ukraine announced.
27. Italians at Gondar surrendered.
28. Russians re-occupied Rostov.

December

7. Great Britain declared war on Finland, Hungary and Rumania.
8. *Great Britain and United States of America declared war on Japan after attack on British and United States bases in Pacific.*
9. Siege of Tobruk raised.
11. Germany and Italy declared war on United States of America.
16. Germans in retreat on Eastern Front.
17. German retreat from Gazala.

December, 1941

24. Benghazi recaptured by British.
26. Second British raid on Lofoten Islands.
27. British raid on Vaagsö and Maaloy, off Norway.
29. Russians re-occupied Kerch and Feodosia.

1942

January

1. 26 Nations' pact signed in Washington.
2. Bardia recaptured by British.
12. Sollum recaptured by British.
17. Halfaya recaptured by British.
19. Mozhaik recaptured by Russians.
21. Second German counter-offensive in N. Africa began.
26. American troops landed in Northern Ireland.
29. Benghazi captured by Axis forces.

February

4. Derna evacuated by British.
- 11-12. Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Prinz Eugen escaped from Brest and sailed up Channel.
27. Raid on French coast at Bruneval.

March

1. Russians launched offensive in Kerch Peninsula.
28. St. Nazaire raid.

April

16. George Cross awarded to Malta.
17. Augsburg raided by R.A.F. in daylight.
21. General Giraud escaped from Germany.
24. First of series of "reprisal" raids on historical monuments (Exeter).

May

16. Kerch captured by Germans.
26. Twenty-year Anglo-Soviet Treaty signed in London. Axis offensive opened in Libya.

June

- 6-8. Heavy German attack on Free French at Bir Hakeim.
13. "Knightsbridge" evacuated by Guards Brigade after heavy tank battles.
21. Tobruk captured by Germans.
24. Germans advanced 50 miles across Egyptian frontier.
29. Mersa Matruh captured by Germans.

July

1. Germans reached El Alamein. Germans captured Sevastopol.
4. U.S.A.A.F. took part in their first air offensive against Germans.
27. Rostov evacuated by Russians.

August

1. Gen. Montgomery took over command of Eighth Army.
5. Voroshilovsk captured by Germans.
9. Krasnodar and Maikop captured by Germans.
11. Aircraft-carrier H.M.S. Eagle sunk in Mediterranean.
17. First all-American bombing raid on European front.
19. Nine-hour raid on Dieppe.
24. Germans crossed Don in force at Kletskaya.
28. Russians opened offensive in Leningrad area.

September, 1942

5. Germans entered streets of Stalingrad.
23. Russians launched counter-offensive north-west of Stalingrad.

October

4. Small British raid on Sark.
8. British prisoners taken at Dieppe put in chains; British retaliate as from 10th; Germans unshackled on December 12.
23. Battle of El Alamein began. First full-scale employment of British paratroops.

November

3. Axis forces retreat westwards in Egypt.
8. United States and British Forces landed in French North Africa.
11. French forces in Algeria and Morocco capitulated. Axis forces entered Vichy France, and, from Sicily and Sardinia, began to arrive in Tunisia.
12. Axis forces driven out of Egypt. German attacks renewed at Stalingrad.
13. Tobruk and Gazala captured by Eighth Army.
17. Derna and Makili occupied by Eighth Army.
19. Russian offensive in Stalingrad area.
20. Benghazi occupied by British.
27. Germans entered Toulon; French fleet scuttled.

December

13. Agheila evacuated by Axis forces.
29. Kotelnikovo captured by Russians.

1943

January

1. Velikiye Luki captured by Russians.
3. Mozdok and Malgovek captured by Russians.
4. Nalchik captured by Russians.
11. Kutelnikovo captured by Russians.
13. General Leclerc's Chad force occupied Murzuk and Sebha (Fezzan).
14. President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill met at Casablanca; "unconditional surrender" of Axis Powers demanded.
15. Eighth Army attacked at Buerat.
18. Siege of Leningrad raised.
20. Proletarskaya captured by Russians.
21. Voroshilovsk captured by Russians. Homs and Tarhuna captured by Eighth Army.
22. Salsk captured by Russians.
23. Tripoli entered by Eighth Army.
25. Voronezh captured by Russians.
27. United States heavy bombers made first raid on Germany (Wilhelmshaven).
29. Tunisian border crossed by Eighth Army.
30. First daylight raids on Berlin by R.A.F. Field-Marshal Paulus and 16 generals captured at Stalingrad.
31. Zuara captured by Eighth Army.

February

2. Remaining German forces at Stalingrad capitulated.
6. General Eisenhower appointed to command North African theatre of operations.
8. Kursk captured by Russians.
12. Krasnodar captured by Russians.
14. Rostov and Voroshilovgrad captured by Russians.
16. Kharkov captured by Russians.
25. R.A.F. began "round-the-clock" bombing.

March, 1943

1. First of saturation raids on Berlin.
3. Rzhev occupied by Russians.
12. Vyasma captured by Russians.
15. Kharkov evacuated by Russians.
21. Eighth Army attacked Mareth Line.
- Byelgorod captured by Russians.
30. Gabes occupied by Eighth Army.

April

7. Offensive opened by First Army in Northern Tunisia.
10. Sfax occupied by Eighth Army.
12. Sousse occupied by Eighth Army.
26. Longstop Hill captured by First Army.

May

3. Mateur captured by U.S. forces.
6. Massicault captured by First Army.
7. Tunis and Bizerta captured by Allied forces.
13. Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered.
16. Möhne and Eder dams breached by R.A.F.

June

11. Pantellaria surrendered.
12. Lampedusa surrendered.

July

6. Germans launched offensive in Russia.
10. Sicily invaded by Allied forces.
12. Russian counter-attack launched.
19. First allied raid on Rome.
25. Mussolini resigned and arrested. Later he was rescued by German parachute troops.
26. Fascist Party dissolved.

August

2. Hamburg, as a result of systematic bombing by R.A.F., which began on July 24, had suffered the most serious damage of any industrial city of the world, at a cost of 87 British aircraft.
4. Orel captured by Russians.
5. Bielgorod captured by Russians.
15. Taormina captured by Eighth Army.
17. Resistance in Sicily ended.
23. Kharkov captured by Russians.
26. French Committee of National Liberation recognized by Allies.
30. Capture of Taganrog by Russians announced.

September

3. Italian armistice signed. British and Canadian troops landed in Italy.
8. Italy surrendered to Allies.
9. Allied forces landed at Salerno.
10. Italian fleet reached Malta. Rome occupied by German troops. Salerno occupied by Fifth Army.
16. Novorossisk captured by Russians.
17. Capture of Bransk by Russians announced.
19. Evacuation of Sardinia by Germans announced.
25. Capture of Smolensk by Russians announced.
29. Full armistice terms signed by Italy.

October

1. Naples occupied by Fifth Army.
4. Corsica liberated.
7. Dnieper crossed by Russians.
12. Agreement with Portugal for use of Azores announced.
- 12-13. Attack on Volturno River opened.
13. Italy declared war on Germany.

October, 1943

14. Italy accepted as co-belligerent in war against Germany.
23. Melitopol captured by Russians.
25. Capture of Dnepropetrovsk and Dneprozerzhinsk by Russians announced.

November

1. Germans' land retreat from Crimea cut off.
4. Eighth Army captured Isernia and linked up with Fifth Army at Castelpetroso.
5. Vaicau bombed.
6. Kiev captured by Russians.
18. R.A.F. Bomber Command began "Battle of Berlin," which continued until March 24, 1944.
23. 8th Army crossed R. Sangro in strength.
28. Teheran Conference (Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill).

December

- 4-6. Cairo Conference (President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill, President of Turkey).
10. Capture of Znamenka by Russians announced.
14. Capture of Cherkasy by Russians announced.
19. Four war criminals hanged at Kharkov.
24. Appointment of Allied invasion chiefs announced. Russians opened major offensive W. of Kiev.
26. Scharnhorst sunk off North Cape.
28. Ortona captured by Eighth Army.
31. Zhitomir recaptured by Russians.

1944

January

4. Battle for Cassino began.
8. Kirovograd captured by Russians.
15. Gen. Eisenhower assumed duties as C-in-C. Allied Expeditionary Force.
20. Capture of Novogorod by Russians announced. Minturno captured by Fifth Army.
22. Amphibious landings by Allies S. of Rome. Nettuno and Anzio occupied on 24th.
27. Complete lifting of Leningrad blockade announced.

February

1. Kingisepp (Leningrad front) captured by Russians.
3. Germans opened offensive against Anzio beach-head.
8. Nikopol captured by Russians.
15. Cassino Abbey bombarded by Allies.
18. Staraya Russa captured by Russians.
22. Krivoi Rog captured by Russians. First coordinated air attack on Germany from bases in U.K. and Italy.

March

4. Russians opened offensive on 1st Ukrainian front.
6. Russians opened offensive on 3rd Ukrainian front. First heavy attack by U.S. bombers on Berlin.
10. Russians opened offensive on 2nd Ukrainian front.
13. Kherson captured by Russians.
15. Heavy air and artillery bombardment of Cassino by Allies.

March, 1944

24. By this date Bomber Command, R.A.F., had dropped 44,845 tons on Berlin.
28. Nikolaiev captured by Russians.
30. Cernauti captured by Russians.
31. Russians entered Rumania.

April

10. Odessa captured by Russians.
13. Simferopol (capital of Crimea) captured by Russians.
15. Tarnopol captured by Russians.
18. Balaklava captured by Russians.

May

9. Sevastopol captured by Russians.
11. Fifth and Eighth Armies opened offensive, crossing Rapido and Garigliano rivers.
15. French troops cut Gustav line in Italy.
18. Cassino captured by British forces, Monastery Hill by Polish troops.
22. British and American forces opened offensive from Anzio. Hitler line cut by Canadians.
25. Patrols of Fifth Army linked up with Anzio beach-head forces, after advance of 60 miles.

June

4. Rome occupied by Allied troops.
- 5-6. Allied air-borne troops made landing behind German line in Normandy.
6. D DAY.—Allied troops landed in France between base of Cherbourg Peninsula and Caen.
8. Bayeux liberated.
10. Russians opened offensive on Karelian front.
12. Mr. Churchill visited the beach-head in Normandy.
13. Flying bomb attacks on Britain began.
19. Elba captured by French forces. Perugia captured by Eighth Army.
20. Viipuri captured by Russians.
23. Russian offensive opened on central front.
26. Vitebsk captured by Russians.
27. Cherbourg liberated by U.S. forces.
28. Mogilev captured by Russians. Castagneto captured by Fifth Army, Monticiano by U.S. forces.

July

3. Siena captured by French forces. Minsk captured by Russians.
9. Caen captured by British and Canadian forces.
12. Russians advanced 21 miles on Baltic front.
13. Vilna captured by Russians.
14. Pinsk and Volkovysk captured by Russians.
16. Arezzo occupied by Eighth Army troops. Grodno captured by Russians.
18. British and Canadian troops attacked and broke through area east of the Orne and south-east of Caen. Ancona captured by Polish forces.
19. Leghorn captured by U.S. forces.
20. Attempted assassination of Hitler and staff by German officers.
23. Pskov captured by Russians.
24. Lublin captured by Russians.
26. Lvov and Dvinsk captured by Russians.
27. U.S. forces W. of St. Lô broke through German lines.
28. Przemysl, Yaroslavl, and Brest Litovsk captured by Russians.
31. Avranches occupied by U.S. forces.

August, 1944

1. Warsaw liberation by Polish Home Army began (ended October 2). American troops entered Brittany.
3. Rennes occupied by U.S. forces.
4. Purge of German army announced.
7. R.A.F. attacked German line south of Caen prior to full-scale offensive by Canadian forces.
9. St. Malo and Le Mans captured by U.S. forces.
11. Florence evacuated by Germans.
12. Germans began retreat from Normandy.
14. Canadians opened major attack on approaches to Falaise.
15. Allied troops landed in France from Mediterranean.
17. Falaise captured by Canadian Forces.
20. Gen. Montgomery issued last orders as Commander of Allied land forces. Toulon entered by French troops. Toulouse captured by F.F.I.
21. U.S. forces crossed Seine in force.
25. Paris liberated. Rumania declared war on Germany.
29. Constanza captured by Russians.
30. Ploesti captured by Russians. Rouen captured by Canadian forces.
31. Bucharest entered by Russians.

September

1. Gen. Eisenhower assumed direct control of all Allied Armies in France. Dieppe captured by Canadian forces.
2. German Gothic line in Italy broken by Eighth Army.
3. Brussels liberated by British. Lyons liberated. Pesaro captured by Polish forces.
4. Cease fire in Finland following preliminary armistice with Russia. Antwerp captured by British.
5. Russia declared war on Bulgaria.
8. Bulgaria declared war on Germany. Russians crossed Rumanian-Bulgarian frontier. Liège captured by U.S. forces; Ostend by Canadians. German rocket attacks on England began, the first falling at Chiswick.
9. Hostilities between Russia and Bulgaria ceased.
11. German frontier crossed by U.S. troops north of Trier.
12. Le Havre captured by British.
13. Armistice signed between Russia, Great Britain and the United States and Rumania.
15. Siegfried line breached by U.S. forces.
17. British 1st Airborne Division landed in Holland; withdrawn from Arnhem on September 25-26.
19. Brest captured by U.S. forces.
20. British forces reached the Rhine (River Waal) at Nijmegen.
22. Boulogne surrendered to Canadian forces. Tallinn (capital of Estonia) captured by Russians. Capture of Rimini by Eighth Army announced.
30. Calais surrendered to Canadian forces.

October

3. Dyke at West Kapelle on island of Walcheren breached by R.A.F. Truce at Dunkirk to allow civilians to leave town.
4. Allied forces landed on Greek mainland entered Patras.

October, 1944

9. Canadian and British forces landed in rear of Germans south of the mouth of Scheldt. Russian forces reached Baltic coast near Libau.
- 9-19. Mr. Churchill (with Mr. Eden) visited Moscow for talks with Marshal Stalin.
11. Cluj (capital of Transylvania) captured by Russians.
13. Riga (capital of Latvia) captured by Russians.
14. Athens entered by British.
15. Death of Field-Marshal Rommel announced. Petsamo captured by Russians. Hungarian request for Russians.
18. Russians crossed East Prussian border and occupied Eydtkuhnen.
20. Belgrade occupied by Russians.
21. German Commander of Aachen signed unconditional surrender.
22. Russians in Finland reached Norwegian frontier.
23. Recognition by Allies of General de Gaulle's administration as Provisional Government announced.
26. British forces crossed Scheldt and landed on Beveland peninsula.
28. Armistice signed between Bulgaria and the Allies.
31. British forces reached the Maas.

November

1. British landed on Walcheren Island.
2. Belgium cleared of Germans; they re-entered on December 16. Belgium finally liberated February 4, 1945.
3. Flushing captured by British.
6. Liberation of Monastir by Yugoslav forces announced.
12. Tirpitz sunk in Tromsø fjord by R.A.F.
20. Belfort captured by French.
22. Mulhouse captured by French. Metz captured by U.S. forces.
24. Strasbourg captured by Allies.
28. Antwerp port re-opened to traffic.

December

4. Enemy bridgehead west of the Maas eliminated by British forces.
5. Arnhem-Nijmegen sector flooded by Germans.
9. Russian forces reached Danube N. of Budapest.
16. Germans opened counter-offensive in the Ardennes.
17. Field-Marshal Montgomery appointed to command American 1st and 9th Armies in addition to British 2nd and Canadian 1st Armies.
22. Deepest penetration of German counter-offensive—Laroche (40 miles).
26. U.S. airborne troops in Bastogne relieved.
27. Germans driven out of Celles and Ciney.
30. Hungary declared war on Germany.
31. Rochefort recaptured by Allies. New offensive opened by U.S. forces between Bastogne and St. Hubert.

1945

January

11. Laroche re-captured by British and U.S. forces.
14. Radom (Central Poland) captured by Russians.

January, 1945

16. British forces launched attack from Sittard, in Holland, against German salient E of the Maas.
17. Warsaw entered by Russians.
18. Lodz and Cracow captured by Russians.
19. Tilsit captured by Russians.
20. Armistice with Hungary signed in Moscow. Tannenberg captured by Russians. French forces opened attack in Vosges.
21. Allenstein and Insterburg captured by Russians.
23. Bromberg captured by Russians.
24. Gleiwitz (Silesia) captured by Russians.
26. By this date German forces in Ardennes had been forced back to German frontier.
27. Memel captured by Russians, liberating Lithuania.
28. German Pomerania invaded.
31. Russians broke into province of Brandenburg.

February

1. Russians 50 miles from centre of Berlin. Thom captured by Russians.
2. Colmar captured by French forces.
4. Belgium liberated.
- 4-11. Crimea Conference (Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt, Marshal Stalin).
6. Russians forced the Oder S.E. of Breslau.
8. British and Canadian forces opened offensive S.E. of Nijmegen; Cleve and Gennep captured on 12th.
11. Russians forced the Oder N.W. of Breslau.
12. Prüm captured by U.S. forces.
13. Budapest completely occupied by Russians. Reichswald forest cleared by Canadian forces.
15. Breslau surrounded by Russian forces.
16. Rohrbach captured by U.S. forces.
19. Goch captured by Scottish and Canadian forces.
23. U.S. forces opened attack from direction of Aachen towards Rhine at Düsseldorf. Poznan captured by Russians.
25. Düren and Julich captured by U.S. forces.
28. Neu Stettin captured by Russian forces.

March

1. München-Gladbach captured by U.S. forces.
2. Trier and Krefeld captured by U.S. forces.
6. Cologne captured by U.S. forces.
7. Rhine crossed at Remagen by U.S. forces.
8. British and Canadian forces launched attack on German bridgehead at Xanten.
9. Stolp (on Danzig-Stettin coast road) captured by Russians. Xanten captured by British forces.
11. German bridgehead at Wesel eliminated.
12. American forces launched new attack from Remagen bridgehead. Küstrin (on E. bank of Oder opposite Berlin) captured by Russian forces.
14. First use of 10-ton bombs by R.A.F.
17. Coblenz captured by U.S. forces. Brandenburg (E. Prussia) captured by Russians.
18. Biggest daylight air attack on Berlin.
19. Worms and Saarbrücken captured by U.S. forces.
21. Ludwigshaven entered by U.S. forces.

March, 1945

23. Allied forces under Field-Marshal Montgomery began Rhine crossings between Rees and Wesel; 40,000 airborne troops landed in two hours.
24. Darmstadt captured by U.S. forces.
27. Last rocket fell at Orpington. In all 1,050 reached England.
28. Gdynia captured by Russians. Last air-raid warning sounded in London.
29. Mannheim captured by U.S. forces.
30. Danzig and Küstrin captured by Russians. Dutch frontier crossed by Canadian First Army

April

1. Germans in Ruhr area trapped; by the 19th twenty-one divisions destroyed.
3. Hamm and Cassel captured by U.S. forces.
4. Bratislava (capital of Slovakia) captured by Russians. French forces entered Karlsruhe.
5. Minden reached by British forces.
9. Königsberg (capital of E. Prussia) captured by Russians. Allied offensive opened in Italy. Pocket battleship Admiral Scheer sunk by R.A.F.
10. Hanover captured by U.S. forces.
11. Essen captured by U.S. forces.
12. President Roosevelt died.
13. Vienna liberated by Russians.
14. Canadian forces in Holland reached North Sea and captured Leeuwarden. French forces began land and sea attack on Germans in Bordeaux area after U.S. air attack.
16. Nuremberg entered by U.S. forces; organized resistance ended on 20th. Lutzow, last German battleship, sunk by R.A.F.
20. Civilian casualties in the U.K. due to enemy action from outbreak of war, 146,760.
21. Bologna captured by Allies. Dessau entered by U.S. forces. Berlin suburbs reached by Russians.
22. Stuttgart captured by French forces.
23. River Po reached by Allies. Black-out restrictions removed in Great Britain.
24. Himmler offered to surrender German Reich to Governments of Great Britain and United States.

April, 1945

26. Russian and American forces linked up on the Elbe near Torgau. Verona captured by Fifth Army. Bremen surrendered to British. Milan liberated by Italian partisans. Marshal Pétain arrested at frontier.
Total civilian casualties in London region by enemy attacks 80,307.
27. Genoa captured by American forces.
28. Mussolini executed by Italian partisans in Milan.
29. Unconditional surrender of German armies in Italy signed at Caserta. Hostilities ceased 12 noon (G.M.T.), May 2.
Munich entered by U.S. forces. Venice entered by British. British forces crossed Elbe S.E. of Hamburg. R.A.F. bombers dropped their first load of food in German-occupied Holland.
30. Turin entered by U.S. forces. Fire Guard orders cancelled.

May

1. Death of Hitler in Berlin announced by Germans. Grand Admiral Dönitz appointed himself as successor.
New Zealand troops of Eighth Army entered Monfalcone and linked up with Marshal Tito's forces.
2. Berlin surrendered to Russians at 3 p.m. British and Russian forces linked up in Wismar area on the Baltic. Trieste captured by New Zealand troops.
3. Hamburg captured by British.
4. German First and Nineteenth Armies surrendered to American forces. American Fifth Army crossed Brenner Pass and linked up with Seventh Army.
5. All German forces in Holland, N.W. Germany, and Denmark, including Heligoland and Frisian Islands surrendered as from 8 a.m. (B.D.S.T.).
7. Act of unconditional surrender of German armed forces signed at Rheims at 2.41 a.m., and ratified in Berlin on May 9.
8. VE Day in British Isles. Oslo liberated.
9. Channel Islands liberated. Victory Day celebrated in Moscow.
12. Unconditional surrender of Germans in Crete.

June

5. German surrender entered into force at 16.40 hours.

VICTORY

The war with Germany is ended. To-day—"VE Day"—victory will be formally proclaimed. The task to which Great Britain and France set their hands nearly six years ago, in furtherance of which nearly all the peace-loving nations of the world have successively enrolled themselves, has been faithfully accomplished. The official announcement will be made at 3 o'clock by the PRIME MINISTER and the KING will broadcast to his peoples at 9. Yesterday COUNT SCHWERIN VON KROSIGK, speaking with the scarcely more than titular dignity of German Foreign Minister, but as the best mouthpiece still remaining to the fallen Government, acknowledged to the world the unconditional surrender of his country. This was the climax to the series of piecemeal submissions. One by one the commanders of the defeated German armies, each for the remnants of the fighting formations that his orders can still reach, have yielded to their conquerors; first fell the army of Italy, then the forces opposing the British and Canadians in the north-west and those fighting the Americans in Bavaria, and at last the garrison of Norway and the broken divisions still desperately holding the field in the east. With the signature of a Soviet delegate to the formal act of surrender made yesterday by GENERAL JODL to GENERAL EISENHOWER, finality is reached. Except where German detachments are still offering sporadic and unauthorized resistance, the guns have ceased to fire anywhere in Europe, and silence has fallen in the stricken lands where the din of war thundered so recently. Of the tremendous panoply with which HITLER and his followers set out to conquer the world nothing is left. The ships, the aircraft, the tanks, the guns, and the untold multitudes of fighting men—all have been destroyed or have been placed at the absolute disposal of the conquerors. The very German State itself, which commanded this vast array of material power, is dissolved in the moment of defeat; and there is no authority left in the land save that which the allied commanders can supply.

So passes to its just doom of ignominy and ruin the most monstrous dominion that pride, cruelty, and the lust of power have ever sought to impose upon the suffering millions of the nations. The pledge is fulfilled which the PRIME MINISTER gave to the world in the day when all seemed lost for liberty: the curse of HITLER is lifted from the brows of mankind. As was the enormity of the

design for the subjugation of a continent, so is the apocalyptic completeness of the overthrow. Never in the history of war has the entire fighting strength of a great military State been more decisively ground into fragments and overwhelmed in the uttermost catastrophe of defeat. Of the hosts that once seemed innumerable and invincible, millions have left their bones on the lost fields from Stalingrad to Caen; millions more have been herded into captivity; and the survivors, cut off and surrounded in pockets of hopeless resistance, as helpless in their own country as in the lands they have invaded, have been saved from destruction only by surrender. In a score of the great cities of Germany scarcely a building stands intact; the Russian armies have swept like an avenging hurricane over the shattered avenues and palaces of Berlin. In the factories where, through the length and breadth of the Reich, all the resources of a rich and populous nation were harnessed, even in time of peace, to the making of engines of destruction, the wheels of industry have stopped. The fields are left untilled by the liberation of the foreign slaves upon whose labour German agriculture had come to depend. Famine and pestilence lower over Germany; only by the efforts of her conquerors can she hope to escape or moderate their ravages. More terrible in the perspective of the human story even than the material ruin is the universal execration that the years of the domination have earned for the German name. The Third Reich goes down to destruction unmourned, even by those nations which in the time of its prosperity were content to appear its friends.

It is with the slave empires of the ancient east, and not with any polity of the European tradition, that the National-Socialist despotism must be compared; yet it was more barbarous than these because less primitive, because it was a deliberate attempt to destroy the work of centuries of advance, in which humanity had struggled towards finer forms of political and spiritual life. "The soul of savagery is slavery." The epigram is true, though it is but a negative expression of a truth that may be stated in positive terms: the soul of civilization is liberty. The civilization that has been reared in Europe on the double foundation of classical thought and Christian faith and thence propagated round the world is centred upon a belief in the inalienable dignity and rights of every human

soul. It was these rights and this dignity that National Socialism set itself to obliterate. It was a conscious and calculated conspiracy. The thousand years of supremacy, which HITLER prophesied in all seriousness for the Third Reich, were to be secured by the use of overwhelming mechanical force, first to destroy and then to deprive of any possibility of revival, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of worship, and all the fundamental rights of man, as the inheritors of European culture have learned to treasure them. That was the dedication of German power to the service of barbarism, and that was the evil against which Great Britain and France, as principal heirs and champions of the tradition of liberty in Europe, took up the challenge.

The British people went to war for the second time in a generation with a stern and sombre resolve. The exalted mood of 1914 was not recaptured. Exaltation of a different order was to come afterwards, and in a darker hour. An instinctive loathing there was of arrogance, brutality, and bad faith, but most of all perhaps in those first days there was the grim determination, rooted in the traditions of this great though tolerant people, to stand firm at last against a menace which, though its full definition was yet to come, was plainly real and growing. And in this act of simple faith and quiet duty there was a complete answer to the claims and boastings of the enemy. The German rulers justified the servitude they had imposed upon their own people as the means to securing a unified nation; in contrast to the fanatical devotion they had succeeded in evoking they mocked the anarchy of class and party faction, which they presented as the prevailing attributes of peoples bred to parliamentary self-government and economic liberty. Later, as their malign grip was extended over one after another of the lands surrounding them, they developed their doctrine into a grandiose claim to restore the lost unity of Europe, under German leadership, by the power of the sword. The means remained the same; for in the service of the German war machine the conquered populations were reduced to a slavery unexampled since the pre-Christian ages. Some specious colour seemed to be given to the German tales of the superiority of the "new order" when France fell, as much riven by internal doubts and divisions as broken by the overwhelming numbers and armament of the *Wehrmacht*, until through years of suffering the French people were to atone for their moment of weakness with that shining resilience under misfortune which has done so much to win for historic France her place in the

admiration and affection of civilized mankind. Meanwhile the British Commonwealth was left to hold the ramparts of freedom alone in the face of a continent enslaved and bestridden by the enemy.

The British people rose to the full stature of their ancient greatness only after the tragic glory of Dunkirk. The great disaster deprived them of all their meagre land armament and left them apparently helpless to meet the assault of the most terrible engine of war ever constructed; but the issues had become plain, and in the new certainty was a new strength. A vaunting enemy and a sceptical world were to be shown that there resides a power of united action in a free nation far surpassing anything that dictatorship can impose upon its subjects. The unchecked play of party controversy in a community mature in the practice of self-government is possible only because there is ultimate agreement on the supreme ends that all party programmes attempt, by their conflicting means, to serve. It is the demonstration, not the contradiction, of the final harmony on which the life itself of a nation reposes. Under the guidance of the leader called to authority in the hour of crisis the British people became aware of the hidden sources of their strength. It was MR. CHURCHILL who told them that, because of the tolerance and variety that they had fostered for centuries, they were "the most united of all the nations"; and they proceeded by their actions to prove that his words were true. The instant and unquestioning self-dedication with which men and women alike, at the summons of Parliament, placed their lives and their property at the disposal of their leaders, who themselves represented all parties in the State working as one, vindicated a native self-discipline and gave substance to the proud hope that this was to be "their finest hour." It saved this island and, by so doing, won the war. The conflict was joined between the unity of the spirit, which inspires free men to the defence of a universal cause, and the regimented uniformity that is enlisted to enforce the will of despots; and the outcome through many perils and escapes was henceforth never in doubt.

The clear vision of MR. CHURCHILL'S leadership soon enabled men to perceive that this unity of free men was itself a strategic force. The common impulse of patriotism among all parties in the State, sweeping the millions into the services and the Home Guard, the Merchant Navy, the factories and civil defence, was reflected upon a wider scene. Already the great Dominions, by the spontaneous identification of themselves with the cause of the mother country, now reaffirmed in the moment of greatest danger, had shown the

capacity of five sovereign nations to think and act at a supreme crisis as a single people. The forces of resistance were not so narrowly confined as the enemy supposed. Against HITLER'S Europe could be set Canada, Africa, India, Australasia, and all the oceans of the world. This island might be submerged beneath the flood; but the forces of freedom, linked by the steel chain of sea-power, would surely live on. Moreover, while the forlorn hope of a few British airmen snatched victory from the massed squadrons of the *Luftwaffe*, and later while the civil population in the towns endured uncomplaining a nightly rain of bombs, Britain was left in no doubt that the lonely struggle was being watched with sympathy by powerful friends across the Atlantic, already eager to render material aid in the conflict, and becoming gradually conscious that the cause of resistance to German tyranny was in the fullest sense their own. The patient guidance of American opinion, until the people, convinced in their hearts that the United States belonged by vocation and duty to the united brotherhood of nations fighting for freedom, were stung to battle by treacherous attack in the east and by the defiant provocation of the Nazi boasters, was the supreme service rendered to his age by the great President whose untimely loss casts a shadow over to-day's celebrations. We may rejoice that FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT lived to see, shining clear on the horizon, the lights of the victory for which he laid down his life.

If MR. ROOSEVELT was the inspired interpreter of the ideals of the United Nations, it fell to MR. CHURCHILL to play the principal part in determining the grand strategy of the alliance. His was the high imaginative vision that insisted, even when England lay isolated before the imminent threat of invasion, upon preparing a design of war that should afford full scope for the existing unity of the Empire, and for the larger unity of world Powers of which he foresaw it must become the nucleus before victory was achieved. A strategy concentrated upon the safety of the British Isles would have lost the war. But it needed courage of the rarest order to act upon that opinion when action meant diverting to the Middle East the only armoured formation available to meet the expected descent upon the Channel coasts. With a mind steeped in military history, the PRIME MINISTER committed his country to the pursuit of its traditional strategy, to maintain the Empire's lines of communications round the globe, to contain the enemy within the ring of sea-power, and to challenge him on land at the extreme limits of his dominion until his strength should begin to exhaust itself. Thus would time be

won to mobilize the reserves of the imperial Commonwealth, and to range in the line for the decisive stroke the forces of all other nations that would rally to the standard of liberty.

The old strategy proved its virtue in the old way. Like a greater autocrat before him, HITLER attempted to escape from the constriction of sea-power by breaking out to the east, and so committed himself to a grapple with a people so numerous and so indomitable that even his vast armies would bleed to death. When his Japanese ally, with ruthlessness and faithlessness to match his own, embarked four months later upon an ambitious scheme of conquest, which seemed to look towards a junction of the triumphant despotisms of Europe and Asia on the frontiers of India or the shores of the Persian Gulf, blows fell that shook the foundations of the Commonwealth system in the Far East. But the advent of the new ally was of far greater significance than the entry of the new enemy. "The new world, with all its power and might," to use MR. CHURCHILL'S prophetic phrase of 1940, "stepped forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old."

Thenceforth the story of the war is that of the development of an ever closer unity among the allied nations, while on the enemy's side the system of uniformity through repression was rendered hard and brittle by constantly progressive degrees of brutality and enslavement. Comradeship in the field led on to unified command and common counsel among the heads of allied States. The defensive phase of the war was passed. The enemy plunged against the bands which contained him, but they held. Then with the great victories of El Alamein and Stalingrad the process of compression began. For 1,400 miles the German hosts were borne backwards across the plains of Russia and Poland into the streets of their own capital. Their comrades in the south were driven along the coast of Africa; at its western extremity the American armies entered the field, and both together pressed on over the sea to Sicily, Calabria, Rome, striking down the Fascist despotism as they went, and finally in these latter days to the passes of the Alps. Most decisive of all came the great expedition, patiently prepared and consummately executed, to storm the Channel coast, to liberate France, to force the passage of the Rhine, and to pour armed men in overwhelming power into the heart of Germany, there to meet the Russian ally on the banks of the Elbe.

The victory has been won by the joint action of many peoples, and only by continued unity in war and peace can its fruits

be garnered and guarded. Unity in war is still the paramount obligation. The aggressive and domineering brutality of self-centred militarism has still to be shattered in the Far East. From now on the western Powers will be able to concentrate overwhelming force against an enemy beginning to reel under the blows already delivered. The full work of peace cannot be taken up until the bloodthirsty pretensions of Japan have been checked for ever. No doubt the nations that have submitted themselves to a common discipline for the purposes of war against a common enemy, like the British parties that in their smaller sphere set the example of restraint five years ago, will each turn again one day to the development of its distinctive life and its distinctive political tradition. It is natural and it is right that this should be so. But these same nations have to keep the memory of the lesson they have learned in the hard school of war, that the ideals that unite them are nearer to their hearts and more vital to their safety than the opinions or the habits or the interests that divide. For many months now the efforts of statesmanship and diplomacy have been devoted to the means of perpetuating the brotherhood of nations that has won the war, so that it may henceforth stand sentinel over the forces of destruction and death now overcome. It is of good augury that the news of victory in the west comes while the delegates of the nations are already assembled at San Francisco charged with the duty of founding a central institution of world unity. Only if that supreme political expression of the idea towards which the allied nations have been fighting their way

through six of the most terrible years of history can be built firm and true, powerful and permanent, will humanity have some recompense for the millions of precious lives that have been spent in hunting down the beast of prey.

Finally, on a day that will stand as a solemn date in history, it is not possible to celebrate so great a deliverance without the sense that a larger design has been fulfilled than is comprehended in the calculations of strategy. Now that the danger is passed, it may be acknowledged that there was a time when, had the enemy's mastery of the art of war matched the immense superiority of his material power, no human valour or effort could have thwarted his deadly purpose. In the last resort that which has sustained resistance when all seemed lost, not only in England but in all the enslaved lands, is the faith that in the order of the universe the just cause, provided that the last measure of devotion and sacrifice be offered to it, will not be allowed to fail. It is right to affirm to-day that that faith stands justified. The noblest of English Kings, who had come as near as our generation to final submersion beneath the barbarian flood, wrote after his victory: "I say, as do all Christian men, that it is a divine purpose that rules, and not fate." In the same spirit KING ALFRED'S remote descendant, GEORGE the SIXTH, goes to St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday to render thanks on behalf of all his peoples to the only giver of victory. *Non nobis, Domine.* "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise: for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake."