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**THE SECOND WORLD WAR AS A NATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Editor: Sidney Aster

**THE CANADIAN COMMITTEE  
FOR THE  
HISTORY OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**



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The Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, Ottawa, 1981



“War is **strong** life; it is life **in extremis**.”

Williams James, **The Moral Equivalent of War**



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# THE SECOND WORLD WAR AS A NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

CHAP NO.		PAGE NO.
	Introduction SIDNEY ASTER	1
1	War as a National Experience THEODORE ROPP	5
2	The Second World War as a National Experience: Canada C.P. STACEY	17
3	A curious Lack of Proportion: Canadian Business and the War ROBERT BOTHWELL	25
4	Britain and the Politics of Social Patriotism PAUL ADDISON	39
5	Politics and the War: Aspects of the Canadian National Experience JOHN ENGLISH	53
6	The Yugoslav National Experience PHYLLIS AUTY	67
7	Politics and Culture: The French Canadians and the Second World War RICHARD JONES	81
8	Solidarity at Home and Abroad: The Norwegian Experience of World War Two OLAV RISTE	91
9	Coping With a War: The Experience of the Canadian Department of External Affairs DON PAGE	105
10	The Limits of Tradition: American Leadership in World War Two Reconsidered MAURICE MATLOFF	125

<b>CHAP NO.</b>		<b>PAGE NO.</b>
11	Alliance Politics and Atomic Collaboration, 1941-1943 BRIAN L. VILLA	137
12	The RCN and RCAF in the Battle of the Atlantic W.A.B DOUGLAS	159
13	French Nationalism at Home and Abroad: An Interpretive Essay ANDRE MARTEL	171
14	Mobilizing English Canada for War: The Bureau of Public Information, the Wartime Information Board and a View of the Nation During the Second World War WILLIAM R. YOUNG	189
	Notes on Contributors	205
	Suggestions for Further Reading	207

## INTRODUCTION

As the Second World War recedes in time and further into history, the obsession with that conflict alarmingly intensifies. Popular accounts, particularly of military operations and weaponry, multiply to satisfy a growing market. Historians, now joined by investigative journalists, claw at the mountains of documentation that, ironically enough constitute some of the more enduring battle debris. The media continue to cut and recut, or discover new film in a determined attempt to feed the curiosity of a generation with fewer surviving veterans and increasingly distorted perceptions of global war.

What motivates this intense interest? A partial answer is contained in this book, which examines the Second World War as a national experience. The underlying assumption here is that the second total war of the twentieth century will not ultimately be measured by the statistics of destruction, impressive as they are. Physical recovery from that devastation, so evident in 1945, is virtually complete thirty-five years later. Reconstruction among the major participants introduced an "age of affluence" sooner than anticipated, although more fragile than expected. The roots of present day concern, it is suggested, are better sought after among the less tangible, more elusive after-effects of the war, such as psychological and sociological upheavals, and collectivism in the political and economic fields. In short, it is the nature of the national experience itself that is the lasting fruit, or poison, of 1945.

There is another reason why this book may shed some light on current preoccupations. The 1939-1945 War was a collective encounter of epic proportions. It was more than the sum of actions and memories of each participant. It was a shared experience, of national conflict, fought over an international battlefield. Mass involvement was matched by a massive communal commitment. Whether this was intended, as Winston Churchill declared in September 1939, as "a war to establish and revive the stature of man" is debatable. Rhetoric was a necessary substitute for the mundane reality of 1939 diplomacy. But the 1945 mood reflected the Churchillian objective. At war's end few adopted the 1918 view that the war to end war had been fought: yet many could not shy away from some vision of a brave new world.

International developments since then have made a mockery of even the cynic's level of expectation. More dangerously perhaps, a tendency to romanticize the Second World War, accompanied by recent fears of relative material deprivation in the western world have complicated the appreciation of the wartime experience. Events since 1945 have deepened the obsession with the war. Current anxieties and the conspicuous absence of nationwide purpose are contrasted with the compelling unity of a country in arms. The "spirit of Dunkirk" or one of its many equivalents has become a routine invocation of the beleaguered politician. Only the protagonists have changed. Inflation and the energy crisis have taken the place of Hitler and fascism. The enemy within appears more capable of victory than the traditional enemy abroad. Where indeed is the "people's peace" which was to have followed the "people's war"?

The character of the diverse experiences of the Second World War, therefore, are both relevant and suggestive. After surveying the historical background 'in his introductory essay, Theodore Ropp comments that there is a twentieth century tendency towards "dehumanizing,

resegmenting and thus denationalizing was as a collective experience." The acuity of this observation would appear to apply more to future, than past world wars. For continued investigation, as represented by the contributors to this book, tends to suggest the contrary.

There is abundant evidence, taking for example the involvement of such different countries as Britain, Canada, Yugoslavia, Norway, the United States and France, that the 1939-1945 War generally elicited an integrative, consensus building response. Patriotism, solidarity, community, stability and purpose were more often the rule than the exception. This is not to deny the existence of fractiousness and disaffection, and the incidence of resistance or civil war. Rather it is to point out a paradox of the wartime experience and the selectivity of the post-war communal memory.

Under the impact of the Second World War, British society took on a new look. Extremes of policies, values and priorities gave way to a broad measure of agreement which cut across the former social and political divisions. Nor was the Canadian road to 1945 an altogether dissimilar journey. During the war Canadian society matured, its industrial structure expanded and diversified, and its international status rose. In contrast, Norway of course collapsed under the German assault and the nation's loyalties were tragically split. Yet, in the area of foreign affairs, the Norwegian government in exile formulated a far-sighted "Atlantic policy": a clear anticipation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In the United States the area of civil-military relations provided a similar case in point. Patterns of co-operation necessary for victory were only developed under the pressure of war; even though in the end the war proved too complex for soldiers and politicians called upon to consider the conditions of peace and the post-war settlement. With regard to France, it is useful to recall that despite defeat, occupation, and social and political repression, the continued existence of an independent French empire afforded a focal point attuned to the needs of eventual French liberation and reconstruction. And finally, Yugoslavia poses the intriguing question as to how a young, multi-national state survived fragmentation and civil war and still emerged as a united entity in the post-war world? Why did the numerous national experiences coalesce into a post-war Yugoslavism? The nature of the Second World War as an integrative, consensus building force provides much of the answer.

In the last analysis, all wars begin as propaganda and end as myth. At the time the entire apparatus of the mass media and the instruments of government mind-bending are structured to suppress or embellish. In retrospect, the politician, the historian and the public focusing on the Second World War have tended to follow this pattern of propaganda and myth. Certain aspects of wartime life are relegated to the dustbins of history. Others are elevated to the level of legend. And some have yet to be discovered. It is only by looking again at the 1939-1945 War as a national experience that the balance between myth, illusion and reality can be restored.

Various considerations - venue, availability and circumstance - have dictated the choice of contributors to this book. In this instance Canada was selected for intensive examination. It is not the most pressing example, or indeed the most complex. The Canadian experience of the war had two basic characteristics. Wartime destruction was never seen on the Canadian landscape; losses were limited to vessels at sea, and manpower and material in distant theatres of action. Nor, except for occasional threats to coastal security, were the majority of Canadians ever remotely worried about invasion and occupation. Nevertheless, the dynamics of war affected every aspect of Canadian life, many of which are examined here. Each country

that was involved in the Second World War ideally merits such analysis. These collected essays, therefore, are a contribution to the subject and an incentive for others to work in that direction.

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31 March 1980



## CHAPTER ONE

### WAR AS A NATIONAL EXPERIENCE <sup>1</sup>

Theodore Ropp

Though every French and English schoolboy knows about those national experiences of 1337-1453 which were later seen as the Hundred Years War, I will start with those which, beginning in 1775 or 1789, had more directly set the expectations against which the experiences of 1939-45 were to be measured. 1792's Chant de Guerre pour l'Armée du Rhin was still in Europe's consciousness in 1939. So were such eponymous adjectives as Bonapartist and Napoleonic. That Webster's Biographical Dictionary (1971) gave Napoleon more space than any other person - and twice as much as Jesus - also suggests how his successful personalization of peoples' expectations of revolution and war had produced particularly difficult problems of theory and methodology, while easing those of style during the very century in which an increasingly self-conscious guild of military historians was grappling with the problems of seeing war, not as the traditionally epic sport of kings, but as an equally epic collective experience.

Revolutions and wars raise basic human problems: those of free will and determinism, individual and collective heroism and evil. The national, democratic, and industrial revolutions have increased the scale of their historical crises, while historians of these crises have gradually adopted a realism which stresses the destructiveness of Ben Shahn's "Liberation, 1945," rather than the Romantic glory of Eugene Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People to the Barricades, July 28," 1830. While the realistic style did not become dominant until after the Great War, apocalyptic views of war and revolution date from the French Revolution, and soon became connected with the industrial revolution and science fiction. And that American social science classic - William James's The Moral Equivalent of War - which saw the central issue as one of turning the individual and collective heroism and sacrifice demanded by war into more constructive channels, was published in 1910.

During most of this era revolutions and wars seemed to be related, cyclical historical experiences. In 1964 Quincy Wright noted a "political cycle of from forty to sixty years . . . in democratic countries, . . . the periodicity of general wars during epochs dominated by an expanding economy and a balance of power system, the tendency to postpone a new war until there has been time to recover economically.... waning resistance to a new war as social memory fades... with the passage of a generation," and opposing theories "that a major war is the fundamental cause of economic crises," and "that long economic fluctuations are the main cause of wars and revolutions."<sup>2</sup> And the resulting models of historical change were all related to those cycles of tension and rest, action and reaction, which Carl von Clausewitz and many other theorists had seen as characteristic of the "participation of the people" in the revolutions and wars of the French Revolutionary era.

Both experiences were seen as cathartic, reaching climaxes which, in Aristotelian tragedy, relieve the tensions of the actions. And Karl Marx had already turned G.W.F. Hegel's model of crises into one in which the deus ex machina of the industrial revolution would resolve society's contradictions before the Swiss historian Jakob Burckhardt defined historical

crises as conjunctures of changes in the state, religion, or culture which speed up the historical process. Like Marx, Burckhardt saw the industrial revolution as closely connected with an expanding economy, "the predominance and popularization of science," and a changing balance of power. By keeping the wars of their era short, Bismarckian statesmen had preserved the "illusion" of a balance of power. But German success had made "the military the model of all public life, . . . (and the military state would) become one great factory" before the passions which would drive Europeans into "long voluntary subjection under individual Führers and usurpers" were discharged.<sup>3</sup> Burckhardt's "explosive" theories of crises more directly influenced his young colleague Friedrich Nietzsche than was the case with Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. But W.K. Hancock was echoing those theories when he remarked in 1961 that of "The explosion at Hiroshima was cataclysmic. It shattered the continuity of history. "<sup>4</sup>

To these theoretical problems Clausewitz would have added that of chance, or historical surprise. That the first cycle of democratic and national revolutions and wars were fought in areas little affected by an industrial revolution which was just taking off in England clearly affected Clausewitz's own view of war as a national experience. Similarly surprising was the fact that the total wars of the mid-nineteenth century (the American and Taiping Rebellions and the Lopez War) were all offstage and unNapoleonic. Wright also noticed the theoretical problem of the "mere" passage of time. National expectations of World War Two were greatly influenced by the lack of time to reflect on World War One as a national experience.

World War One was also to heighten historians' interest in those increasingly instrumentalist social sciences which, in John Dewey's words, were to "face the great social and moral defects ... from which humanity suffers ... as a method of understanding and rectifying specific social ills."<sup>5</sup> Historians who admitted with William Tecumseh Sherman that "War is hell", were almost inevitably involved in the historicist charge that military historians glorify war and justify its continuation. Napoleonic social scientific history combines an epic style with those details of levying, training, arming, clothing, feeding, and marching which traditional epics ignore, or symbolize by the armorers' din before the battle. Xenophon, Arrian, and Camoëns had kept their Anabases going by recounting adventures along the way. But neither style will do for an epic in which Penelope is Rosie the Riveter and in constant touch with Odysseus under tyrants who, Burckhardt feared, might "completely ignore law, prosperity, profitable labor and industry, credit, etc.,... (and) rule with absolute brutality. "<sup>6</sup>

But World War Two's historians can still combine the Crusade in Europe and the social scientific protective reaction styles of writing. Not every democratic or national revolution had yet become William Butler Yeats's "rough beast, its hour come round at last," slouching "towards Bethlehem to be born." "Mere anarchy" had not yet been "loosed upon the world" by the frustrated passions of the Easter Rising. Nor did "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."<sup>7</sup> But if 1939's expectations reflected quite different experiences with earlier national, democratic, and industrial wars and revolutions, their chronological story had been somewhat simplified by those historical accidents which had made Napoleon an eponymous and epic hero, Bismarck a royalist Bonaparte, and the Prussian General Staff a collective Napoleon.

That chronology usually begins with the Comte de Guibert's rhetorical question of 1772. "What if a people arises in Europe, vigorous in spirit, in resources, and in government,...combining a national militia, a fixed plan of aggrandizement, and ... a cheap



war-making system, which subsists on its victories and is not reduced to laying down its arms by financial calculations? We should see this people subjugating its neighbors and overwhelming our weak constitutions like the north wind bending reeds." Guibert died in 1790. By 1804, when his widow published his collected works, France's Consul for Life had already made the Republic's citizens "proud of the name of their country and . . . superior to the kings they were accustomed to vanquish."<sup>8</sup> For those swept up by his institutionalized levee en masse the experience might bring both glory and, for the first time on this scale, social advancement. The survivors were to combine the comradeship of Heinrich Heine's "Two Grenadiers" with the memories of the song which had sent them to Russia in the first place. Thirty-five of every hundred Frenchmen polled in 1969 thought Napoleon the greatest Frenchman ever, to five for Louis XIV, and three each for Charlemagne and Joan of Arc. Charles de Gaulle was not in the poll. A television producer remarked that while claiming that Napoleon's code was his most admirable and his wars his least admirable achievement, what "Frenchmen really like about Napoleon is the glory, all that grandeur."<sup>9</sup>

The Romantic view of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic experience presented few problems for traditional military historians. Leopold von Ranke's "new history", which reconstructed events from the documents, rather than from the national myths which the Romantics were so busily exploiting, was ideal for recovering the naked truth of such well-documented campaigns, battles, and heroes. Jomini found Napoleon's strategy compatible with that of Frederick the Great. Thomas Carlyle's lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship (1838-41) ranged from Odin and Mohammed to Napoleon. Theologically opposed to the "dead, steam-engine universe" of the determinists, Carlyle did not even want his "Captains of Industry" to decide "battles . . . transacted by mechanism; with the slightest possible development of human individuality or spontaneity; men now even die, and kill one another, in an artificial manner."<sup>10</sup> In Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace (1862-69) both the Grand Army and Napoleon faced the issue of free will and determinism by slogging towards a Romantic goal which neither saw very clearly. Tolstoy also dealt with war's periods of tension and rest and with the expectations and delusions of the court, the nobility, and occasionally the people. But his "flood of nations" was a Romantic, Burckhardtian crisis, which he carried to the end, with a First Epilogue which suggested the results for the people.

The "day of glory" arrived for Prussia while Tolstoy was writing his epic. Railways clearly contributed to Prussia's victories in 1866 and 1871. But since Germany and France had been roughly equal in resources in 1870, historians stressed the Prussians' superiority in training, mobilizing, moving, and commanding Napoleonic mass armies. The euphoria of victory and the traumas of defeat and revolution led German and French soldiers to reemphasize national passions and morale. Modern war, to Ferdinand Foch in 1903, was even more Napoleonic, "more and more national in its origins and ends, more and more powerful in its means, more and more impassioned," with "an ever increasing predominance of the human factor."<sup>11</sup> New weapons were not neglected. But when Tolstoy died in 1910, national passions were being even more deliberately heightened by those "loud cries" and "shining objects" which had heightened them for centuries.

So Prussia's more-than-Napoleonic victories of 1866 and 1870 only confirmed expectations of what would happen in the next great war. Whole shelves of war books such as the novels of Benito Perez Galdos - produced during the longest general peace in modern European history dealt with brave men and decisive battles, great captains and great statesmen, and with their new exploits overseas. Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage (1895) dealt with

individual heroism in the face of a collective enemy, who occasionally ducks, dodges, or charges out of the smoke, while the Youth's attention is focused on mechanically serving his weapon. Euclides da Cunha's Rebellion in the Backlands (1902) was a Brazilian professional soldier's account of an even newer kind of national experience. But such works made little impression on authors dealing with traditional military and political issues in a traditional way and style, ways which were reinforced by that view of war as a test of national fitness which accompanied the Social Darwinism of a still self-consciously successful and expanding European civilization.

But the new social sciences were raising some new questions about the relations of the industrial revolution to society and war. Who were the people who were increasingly participating in this great affair of state? What was the role of violence in an expanding civilization which was becoming more industrialized, urban, and less violent at its center? Did military discipline make better factory workers? Did military research result in better civilian goods? Did higher standards of living and/or the growing solidarity of factory workers produce people less willing and able to wage war? By 1897 Herbert Spencer could feel that industrialization was producing people with "a growing personal independence, . . . a smaller faith in governments, and a more qualified patriotism," except in Germany, where a combination of upper class controls and popular nationalism had forced a regression "toward the militant social type."<sup>12</sup> But Foch felt that of "The means for a nation to obtain wealth and satisfy its cravings is ... war.... Every German (now) has a share in the profits,... in the firm, and in victory. This is now what is meant by a people's war."<sup>13</sup>

With Foch and Thucydides, William James agreed that war had been purely piratical. But its ideals of courage and self-sacrifice were now so ingrained that they were more socially valuable than any "substitutes" from "the glory and shame that come to nations as well as individuals from the ups and downs of politics and ... trade." James quoted H.G. Wells's First and Last Things (1908) on "'Progress in military apparatus'" and "'civil conveniences,'" comparing dreadnoughts with "house appliances . . . little better than they were fifty years ago," before ending his Moral Equivalent of War (1910) by remarking that "It would be simply preposterous if the only force that could work . . . honor and ... efficiency into English and American natures should be the fear of being killed by the Germans or the Japanese."<sup>14</sup>

In 1898 the Jewish-Polish-Russian banker Ivan S. Bloch tried to see The Future of War in its Technical, Economic, and Political Relations. As an economist arguing from massive statistical evidence, Bloch saw the industrial revolution's newest fire weapons producing military deadlock, economic crisis, and political revolution. Bloch's work allegedly persuaded Nicholas II to call the First Hague Peace Conference. The same concerns led a 1911 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace conference in Berne to set up the first international effort to study war "scientifically, and as far as possible, without prejudice either for or against war." Its three commissions were to study the Economic and Historical Causes and Effects of War, Armaments in Time of Peace, and the Unifying Influences in International Life. Its first volume, Gaston Bodart's Losses of Life in Modern Wars and Vernon L. Kellogg's Military Selection and Race Deterioration (1916), edited by a Copenhagen Professor of Political Science and Statistics, Harald Westergaard, was also the first volume of the more than one hundred in a massive Economic and Social History of the World War (-1940), to be edited by the Canadian-American "new" historian, James T. Shotwell.

The surprises of the Great War sharpened some old problems of historical theory,

methodology, and style, if only because whole teams of historians, official and unofficial, had to mine even higher mountains or records. Technology, as Bloch had predicted, created a military stalemate, but not economic collapse and political revolution as soon as, or in the order, or of the kinds which he had expected. Industrial development had been speeded up, and parliamentary democracies had survived. But two types of revolutionary dictatorships had appeared, while people's attitudes toward war and their leaders seemed to have changed profoundly. The high commands on both sides were assailed by other soldiers, such as the Italian artilleryman Giulio Douhet, who had been court-martialed for his criticisms in 1915, before being recalled to service to head the Central Aeronautical Service in 1918. By 1921 he was predicting that the "disintegration of nations" indirectly done in the last war by attrition, blockade, and subversion could now "be accomplished directly by ... aerial forces." J.F.C. Fuller, B.H. Liddell Hart, Charles de Gaulle and others saw the tank-plane Blitzkrieg team restoring ground mobility. To Fuller "the four fundamental lessons" of the war "were that the business of industrialised war demanded ... (1) political authority; (2) economic self-sufficiency; (3) national discipline; and (4) machine weapons. Further still, ... these lessons must be applied during peacetime in order to be ready for war."<sup>15</sup>

Postwar soldiers and statesmen, according to their lights and resources, generally tried to apply these lessons, while many historians, according to their lights and resources, tried to help them. Many establishment historians became increasingly apologetic as criticism became increasingly virulent, once it became clear that sailors had not visualized the problems of blockade, commerce warfare, amphibious operations, fleet action, and machine weapons any better than soldiers had visualized their problems, and that political authorities' failures to meet the demand for machine weapons, economic self-sufficiency, and national discipline were as glaring as those of the soldiers. In official historians' references to wartime strikes, sabotage, draft evasion, black markets, peace demonstrations, profiteering, and other cases of "collective indiscipline" - the French term for the 1917 mutinies - were as politically charged as references to the post-war disturbances among the war-weary Dominion forces who were waiting to return to "a land fit for heroes to return to." Many volumes in the Shotwell Economic and Social History were by official authors or from official documents. "Facts, statistical, historical and descriptive" were to "constitute nearly the whole of their content.... Describing the attitude of various socialistic bodies ... (or) of business classes toward peace and war, ... a protective policy, the control of monopoly, or the regulation of banking and currency" was not to imply the Carnegie Endowment's approval.<sup>16</sup> These were still current political issues.

Since the economic collapse which Bloch and others had foreseen was to have been financial, the First Commission's financial studies were among the best volumes. But a Second War began before these experiences had been compared in a single summary volume. Things were not much better with "The manner in which the energy of nations is stimulated or depressed by war" was related to "Loss of human life: ... influence upon population (birth-rate, relation between the sexes, ratio of the various ages, sanitary conditions)." Though Bodart's wartime Losses of Life in Modern Wars was published with the American biologist David Starr Jordan's Military Selection and Race Deterioration, these works were not followed up in an era of geopolitical worry over these very issues. Nor, though Jordan had written War and Waste (1914) and the First Commission had wanted to study war's effects on the world's supplies of food and raw materials, was there any work on ecological damage.<sup>17</sup>

The Second Commission was to deal with "Armaments in Time of Peace. Military and Naval Establishments. The Theory, Practice, and History of Modern Armaments." Some of its

questions - "the effect of recent inventions upon offensive and defensive war" - had been answered. Those on the arms trade, its financing, and arms races were now the responsibility of the League of Nations. But peacetime conscription, the proportion of "the total income of each nation" spent on arms, military pensions, "the industrial value of military education and training," and "the influence of changes in the occupations of a people upon the composition and efficiency of armies" were still methodologically or politically too hot to handle.<sup>18</sup> Even so, the subjects which the Berne Conference might have seen as part of war as a national experience were so multifarious that it is not surprising that one of the best works on The Deluge: British Society and the First World War, by Arthur Marwick, was not by a participant and did not appear until 1965.

In a nationalistic world preparing for the next war, there was little work on the Third Commission's "Unifying Influences in International Life." While the war had shown the need for economic self-sufficiency, the Berne Conference had already seen that "the economic life of individual countries has definitely ceased to be self-contained." What were the relationships between "the growth of population," "the insufficiency of the natural resources of individual countries," "the rising ... standard of living," "production by large units," "investment ... in less developed lands," "the interdependence of ... financial centres," the "extension of all means of communication," and "the progress of inventions" and of "various international unions and associations."<sup>19</sup> And the post-war peace had resanctioned the old imperial practice of uprooting, punishing, reeducating, or exterminating nations. One nation was nearly exterminated during the Great War. One epic which still survives is Franz Werfel's Forty Days of Musa Dagh (1933). Others, as Cyril Falls noted of Erich Maria Remarque's All Quiet on the Western Front (1929), were noisy antiwar tracts. Other, like Jules Romains's Men of Good Will (1932 ff.) went too many rounds with Tolstoy and Marcel Proust.

The Great War did turn historians' attentions to collective military, social, political, economic, and even technological experiences. But collective failures in each of these fields and the need to avoid those even greater military and political disasters which were lowering over the future focused attention on particular aspects, rather than on the whole, of each national experience. This was true even for such nations as Japan, Canada, and the United States, which had never participated, as modern nations, in a general war. Their assessments tended to focus on the reasons for their participation, or on what to do militarily in the next round, rather than on their total national experiences.

So the human effects of the war were best seen by those artists who, because the gap between expectation and reality was so great, created the greatest of war literatures. The common soldier, facing Ernst Jihger's Storm of Steel (1929), was their hero. Wilfred Owen did not write "about heroes," only because "English poetry is not yet fit to speak of them." Jaroslav Hasek's Good Soldier Schweik (1930) was an anti-hero because his nation was an unwilling participant. Falls's War Books: A Critical Guide (1930) shows that he could have summed up these works, but a Second War and hardening of the adjectives set in before his History of the Great War (1959) spent only ten of its 425 pages on "How They Fared at Home." So the summing up was left to a veteran of the Second War, to Paul Fussell's The Great War and Modern Memory (1975), to "Upstairs, Downstairs" reworking of folk memories, including that of Owen's "The Send-Off", and to the National Portrait Gallery's collective portrait of the British High Command with the individual ones of two slain poets, Isaac Rosenberg and Owen, the author of the war's most famous single line, "I am the enemy you killed, my friend."<sup>20</sup>

But at least four English writers, all journalists at one time or another, had the breadth and style to write about the Great War as a national experience. Falls never did. Winston Churchill was too personally involved as a leader. So was Beaverbrook, who finished only his personal history. But he had the right idea when, as self-appointed "Canadian Eye-Witness", he had gotten the government to support his grandiose collecting, reporting, and publishing activities.

It is the popular demand which is the strongest factor in producing stories and pictures of the war. And the demand is natural, for the texture of the war has become ingrained in the whole fabric of the national life, and the people are asking for news, not of some small, distant and almost alien army, but of themselves, and of events personal to their interest, comfort and happiness.<sup>21</sup>

The final journalist, Charles E.W. Bean, also persuaded his government to collect every possible document and photograph and to publish a twelve-volume Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18 (1921-42). Bean and his colleagues also knew what they were doing. In the Preface to Volume XI, Australia During the War, its author, Ernest Scott, wrote that "The subject ... seemed to call for ... treatment as a record of national experience. Here was a country which had never known war; which was suddenly under an obligation to wage war; and which thereby underwent certain unforeseen, acute, and often agonizing ordeals, together with the glory of heroic achievement and the pride of a victorious culmination."<sup>22</sup> Scott met still controversial subjects head-on. His Chapter III dealt with the Censorship, IV with the Enemy Within the Gates, an Outbreak of Turks at Broken Hill, and Buddhist priests of German origin. Book II dealt with Prime Minister William M. Hughes's two failed conscription referendums, Book III with a great railway strike, the I.W.W., murder, sabotage, forgery, great fires in Sydney for which twelve men were convicted, and the freeing of ten of them in 1920 after a long campaign by H.E. Boote, the editor of The Australian Worker.

Bean's battle accounts are as sober for Gallipoli, too quickly seen as an instant replay of the Iliad, as for Pozières, "a ridge more deeply sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth." And the Photographic Record of the War (Vol. XII, 1923) is a better record of one national experience than Laurence Stallings's widely acclaimed antiwar The First World War: A Photographic History (1933)<sup>23</sup> Bean's and the Australian War Memorial's success in encompassing Australia's national experience was partly the fortunate conjuncture of a new and highly conscious nation and a journalist as conscious of those facts as he was of the war's potential significance. Like Beaverbrook, Bean saw the need to bring that experience home to participants thousands of miles from the battle lines, and to supplement instant telegraphic and censored news with documentary and photographic records. And Australia's politically disruptive wartime debates had not been over whether she should be at war or the extent of her contribution, but over what economic, social, and manpower policies would best lead to victory.

The Second World War was prepared for, and largely fought by nations trying to avoid the "inelasticities" and "stupidities" of that first experience. Partly because of this, the Second World War more than lived up to expectations. There were surprises - the nonuse of gas and the use of flame against both soldiers and civilians - but such surprises were mostly of scale and national passions - the Holocaust and the Resistance. The powers of the machine and of the

deliberate use of science for war were strikingly demonstrated. These events raised few new questions of historical theory or methodology, except in the new field of psychohistory. But they again widened historians' vision of war as a national experience.

Since 1945 the big battalions of official and unofficial historians have successfully mined the stalls of military operational, Resistance, Holocaust, and Ultra Secret documents, while bypassing the less exciting pillars of social history. So some questions remain. What happens when two great wars are fought by the same generation? We know about the militiaman who answered the second call to duty, generally at a higher rank. But this war's captains of industry, labor, or agriculture were often veterans "frozen" into civilian jobs. What were their attitudes towards the old political issues of strategy, big business, manpower and labour conscription, profiteering, and those social services which were to compensate for military sacrifice, or toward a peace which promised to be far more Carthaginian than that criticized by John Maynard Keynes? How, in short, does a fairly recent try at modern war affect a second national experience?

This Second World War on the heels of the First also increased the numbers of national experiences available for comparison. Each nation interpreted its experiences in the light of its expectations. Many Americans saw the Second World War as a triumphal crusade of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Know-How. And if American participation in both wars is an exemplary study in military development, Vietnam's is just as much so for dependency theorists. Her occupiers gave Vietnam the framework of her political, educational, and Marxist institutions, and, to cite Guibert again, the core of "a national militia ... (and a) plan of aggrandizement." Her leaders combined these with their version of "a cheap war-making system, one which subsists on its victories and is not reduced to laying down its arms by financial calculations," to produce "great men (who) filled various state offices, because they were fit to fill any of them" and "citizens (who) were proud of the name of their country, and believed themselves superior to the kings they were accustomed to vanquish."

One of the surprises of the Second World War was to be the strength of various national Resistance movements. But how did full or token participation or neutrality in the First War affect these experiences? How did the even more widespread demonstrations of the allies' power, wealth, and cultural patterns for attaining them affect the developing states of Latin America or Sub Saharan Africa? Finally, as we have already noted, Great War historians had had little time to do much with the Third Berne Commission's "Unifying Influences in International Life". How did the wartime development of and prospects for international military and civilian staffs and institutions and the concomitant development of international trade, transportation, communications, and finance affect large and small, near and far, developed and developing nations?

Epics simplify and synthesize whole epochs of experience. "Time's wrong-way telescope," Keith Douglas wrote in "Simplify Me" before his death on June 9, 1944, may eventually do this for us.

Through that lens see if I seem  
substance or nothing ...  
deserving mention or charitable oblivion, ...  
leisurely arrived at ...

Remember me when I am dead  
and simplify me when I'm dead.<sup>24</sup>

While the more dramatic events of that Second War are too easily turned into horse operas, or people made too naked and too dead, its writers have tapped new themes in the meeting of alien cultures, in the closer connections of the home and fighting fronts, and in the Resistance. They have also sharpened their mechanical images. Owen's "Be slowly lifted up, thou long black arm, Great gun towering towards Heaven, about to curse" seems less effective than the artilleryman Barry Amiel's treatment of the same subject, perhaps because the range of the man in the tunic has since grown to some 8000 nautical miles.

Death is a matter of mathematics.  
It screeches down at you from dirtywhite nothingness....  
Or else it lies concealed  
In that fleecy, peaceful puff of cloud ahead,...  
And Death awaits you in a field-gray tunic....  
    With you the focal point,  
The centre of the problem. The A and B  
Or Smith and Jones of schoolboy textbooks.  
Ten out of ten means you are dead.<sup>25</sup>

Killed by "Chance's strange arithmetic" on November 4, 1918, Owen could not develop the theme of "Insensibility," of war's brutalization of everyone who, to survive, had

... made themselves immune  
To pity and whatever mourns in man  
Whatever mourns when many leave these shores; whatever shares  
The eternal reciprocity of tears."<sup>26</sup>

In commenting on this paper, the poet and critic Helen Bevington finds it "significant ... that no poetry to speak of has come out of the Korean War or the Vietnam War.... The reason often given is that by now war is too terrible to write about. One cannot write with any conviction that there is anything more to say.... the subject is now too large, too meaningless even in its horror. As a national experience it isn't fit for poetry." As Carlyle feared, mechanical weapons, the metronomic revolutionary justice of the guillotine in François Poulenc's "Dialogues of the Carmelites" (1957), and the mechanical sensors and communicators of George Orwell's Big Brother (1948), have made heroic followers as obsolete as heroic leaders. If we have come to the end of the Iliad, and of war as a collective epic, we may have to work backwards to the era of Froissart and Chaucer, and to societies, in André Corvisier's words, with "military social groups within but distinct from society as a whole. It took the national wars set off by the French Revolution to re-establish tighter, though temporary, links between armies and societies.... The nearly omnipresent militarization that we see in the Europe of 1914 came about only with the adoption of the idea of universal military service by societies that were no longer military in nature."<sup>27</sup> While I suspect that industrialization had greater and more constant effects on these links than Corvisier implies, I also suspect that that industrial revolution which had first tightened those links has more recently been, in the West, gradually dehumanizing, resegmenting, and thus denationalizing war as a collective experience.





## NOTES

- 1 This paper has already benefited greatly from the comments of W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, the authors of perhaps the best single work on the Second World War as a national experience, Jeffrey Gunsberg of the Virginia Military Institute, Fred Hadsell of the George C. Marshall Research Foundation, and Helen Bevington of Duke University as well as from less formal comments by students and colleagues.
- 2 A Study of War, abridged by Louise Leonard Wright, Chicago, 1964, p. 344.
- 3 Burckhardt's Reflections on History translated with an introduction by J. Hastings Nicholas as Force and Freedom, Boston, 1964, pp. 101, 39-41.
- 4 Four Studies of War and Peace in This Century, Cambridge, 1961, p. 1.
- 5 Reconstruction in Philosophy, 1920, New York, 1950, p. 107.
- 6 Nicholas, Force and Freedom, p. 43. "Epic:... The characters and the action are of heroic proportions,... the narrative is a complex synthesis of experiences from a whole epoch...; the hero embodies national, cultural, or religious ideals." Calvin S. Brown, ed., The Reader's Companion to World Literature, New York, 1956, pp. 151-152.
- 7 "The Second Coming," 1921, St. 2, 1.
- 8 Oeuvres Militaires de Guibert, 5 vols., Paris, 1803, Vol. I, pp. 16, 9.
- 9 New York Times, Sept. 2, 1969, p. 58.
- 10 Past and Present, 1843, Book IV, Ch. 4. French Revolution, 1837, Pt. 1, Book VII, Ch. 4. Crane Brinton remarks that this last work was "a grand metaphysical drama, ... historically accurate in detail, ... (which) wholly neglects economic and social issues, ... and is largely responsible for the ... (Anglophone) view of the French Revolution as a ... cataclysmic social revolution quite unlike anything else in European history." And Carlyle's Frederick the Great (1858-65) was "almost silent on his civil achievements." Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, New York, 1930, Vol. III, pp. 229-230.
- 11 Principles of War, trans. Hilaire Belloc, London, 1921, pp. 41, 47.
- 12 Principles of Sociology, New York, 1897, Vol. II, Ch. XXIII.
- 13 Principles of War, p. 36.
- 14 Leon Bramson and George W. Goethals, eds., War: Studies from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, New York, 1964, pp. 22-23, 30.
- 15 Machine Warfare, London, 1943, p. 35.
- 16 John Bates Clark, Introduction to Gaston Bodart, Losses of Life in Modern Wars, Oxford,

1916, pp. vii-viii.

17 Ibid., Appendix, pp. 2-3.

18 Ibid., pp. 4-5.

19 Ibid., pp. 5-6.

20 Dates are those of English translations. Quotations are from The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen, ed. C. Day Lewis, Memoir by Edmund Blunden, New York, 1964.

21 A.J.P. Taylor, Beaverbrook, New York, 1972, p. 88. Beaverbrook needed little help from his "wordsmith" Rudyard Kipling, in the two volumes of Canada in Flanders (1915-1917). Beaverbrook wrote them himself.

22 Canberra, 1936, p. vii.

23 Bean's unofficial summary volume, Anzac to Amiens was published in 1946. When his work was reprinted in 1962, Stallings, who had dedicated it to "The Camera Eye" complimented historians on their "candor" in revealing "more and more the ineptitude of the generals, the stupidities of the politicians." Introduction, unpagged. And if C. Day Lewis's matter-of-fact Aeneid can be unintentionally comic - "Three times he galloped, anti-clockwise, around his vigilant Enemy, shooting." - its style is often right for a war of so many hopes deferred or blasted. "Troy was beyond all hope of aid. I accepted defeat, picked up my father and made for the mountains." pp. 257, 59.

24 Collected Poems, 1941. Ed John Waller et al., London, 1966, p. 89.

25 Amiel, R.N. Currey remarks, "was not a professional poet." Poets of the 1939-1945 War, London, 1960, pp. 41-42.

26 Collected Poems, p. 38.

27 Armies and Societies in Europe, 1494-1789, trans. Abigail T. Siddall, Bloomington, 1979, p. 197. Charles de Gaulle's France and Her Army, trans. F.L. Dash, London, 1942, had stressed the steadily unifying forces of peacetime "universal suffrage, compulsory education, ... industrialization and city life, ... the press, ... political parties, trade unions, and sport" as equally important preconditions for 1914's "mass mobilization and ... the war of peoples." p. 90. Corvisier focuses on Western Europe, where conscription may be more easily seen as the critical factor in the militarization of society. In The Last Half-Century: Societal Changes and Politics' in America, Chicago, 1979, Morris Janowitz takes William James's view that some form of compulsory public service is essential to recreate a sense of social and civic unity in an increasingly segmented society and polity.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SECOND WORLD WAR AS A NATIONAL EXPERIENCE: CANADA

C.P. Stacey

The late General William Tecumseh Sherman remarked that "War is hell"; and he was undoubtedly right. That does not alter the importance or, unfortunately, the frequency of war as an historical phenomenon, or the significance of the marks which it leaves on the lives of nations. The great war in which Sherman played a leading part had consequences for his country whose effect is still felt over a century later.

It is an obvious truism that the same war may have quite different meanings for different combatants. After all, as a general thing somebody wins and somebody loses; but even where there is no clear winner or loser the two sides seldom see things in the same light. The funny little North American War of 1812 is a case in point. Everybody sees it differently. Good Americans are brought up - or at any rate used to be brought up - to think of it as a naval war in which their firbuilt frigates humbled the Mistress of the Seas. Good Canadians are quite sure it was a land war in which the aggressive intentions of our predatory neighbours were frustrated, mainly by the gallant Canadian Militia. But, of course, the happiest of the combatants of 1812 are the English, because they don't know the war happened; it is no part of their national mythology, as it is in North America.

In Canada, it is quite impossible to speak of the Second World War as a national experience without referring back to the earlier war of 1914-18. For Canadians the First World War was a stupendous and utterly unprecedented event. In the summer of 1914 it burst without warning on an isolated quasi-colonial society, and before it had run its four-year course it had in some degree affected every household in the country. The 60,000 dead represented the most terrible shock, but there were many others. The late Leslie Frost, who was Premier of the province of Ontario for many years, fought in that war and carried German shrapnel in him to the day of his death. He was fond of saying that in the extent of its impact upon Canadian society the First World War was a parallel to the Civil War in the United States, and I suspect that he was right. Canada had not been invaded, or occupied, or even bombed; but it had changed all the same. Politically, economically and socially it was a different place when the war was over. In some respects, the First War was more important to Canadians than the Second, simply because it was the First. In 1914-18 everything was new and extraordinary; 1939-45 inevitably seemed like a re-run. Many of the same problems arose and lessons learned under Sir Robert Borden contributed to somewhat easier solutions under Mackenzie King.

If a war often has different meanings for different parties to it, it is equally true that its significance may vary between different sections of the same community. And Canada is a pluralistic state. There is a basic division between the French-speaking Canadians who form nearly one-third of the community and the rest, and these two sections reacted quite differently to the two wars. In general, the English-speaking people of Canada felt bound to Great Britain by many and powerful ties. The French-speakers, on the contrary, had little emotional commitment to Britain, and (though this often surprises outsiders) little to France either. France and French Canada were separated not merely by the Atlantic Ocean, but also by memories of

France's abandonment of her children in 1763, the democratic and secularist French revolution of 1789, and the separation of church and state in France by the Third Republic. Respectable members of the Roman Catholic clergy in Quebec were heard to describe the war of 1914 as a judgment on France for her abandonment of God.<sup>1</sup>

In both wars the differing attitudes of the two sections were strikingly reflected in the statistics of voluntary enlistment in the forces. In the First War only some 2.4 per cent of the people of Quebec (even including its large English minority) volunteered for service, whereas in the predominantly British province of Ontario next door the figure was 7.5 per cent. The only province apart from Quebec that seemed markedly lukewarm about the war effort\* was Saskatchewan, an agricultural province whose population contained many immigrants from central and eastern Europe, including a fair number from the enemy states. Only about four per cent of her people volunteered. By the Second War, Saskatchewan's attitude had markedly changed; she produced in proportion far more recruits than in 1914-18, her effort (over eight per cent) almost approximating to the norm in the non-French provinces. But Quebec in 1939-45 still remained largely indifferent to the war. Only about four out of every hundred Quebecers volunteered, though in the rest of the country the figure was closer to ten.<sup>2</sup> In both wars, it may be said that crises which moved English-speaking Canada to great sacrifices moved French Canada only slightly.

In this connection it is useful to recall the only two occasions when Canadians have been sufficiently moved by events abroad to organize private military expeditions to take part in them. The first was in 1868, when a force of Pontifical Zouaves was raised in the province of Quebec to defend the temporal power of the Pope against Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel II. Needless to say, the Zouaves were all French Canadians. The second expedition was in 1937, when something over 1200 volunteers were found in Canada to fight for the Spanish republic. Of these men, who represented almost every other racial strain in the country, only some three dozen are said to have been French Canadians.<sup>3</sup> It would be dangerous to deduce too much from these episodes. After all, the two manifestations were not entirely spontaneous; the first was organized wholly by the Roman Catholic Church, the second very largely by the Communist party. Nevertheless, they probably suggest something about the problems besetting Canada's relations with the outside world. Perhaps another story will indicate a little more. In 1946 the Gallup pollsters asked Canadians, "What person living in any part of the world today do you admire most?" Winston Churchill headed the poll by a large margin, with 28 per cent of the votes. If Franklin Roosevelt had still been alive, he would have certainly come next. As it was, the Prime Minister of Canada, Mackenzie King, slipped in, but only eight percent of the people polled voted for him. And in third place, with six per cent, was the Pope.<sup>4</sup> The Pope of the moment was Pius XII, but no doubt any other incumbent would have done as well; and it cannot be doubted that most of the papal vote came from Quebec.

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\* In the Maritime Provinces the figures of volunteering were low, but this was clearly the result of the fact that the great wave of pre-war immigration from the British Isles had passed them by. Almost exactly half of the Canadian volunteers of 1914-18 were British-born.

Of the issues that divided French and English Canada in the two wars, the greatest was of course conscription. The introduction of compulsory service in 1917 came close to tearing the country apart. It was the memory of this division and its political consequences that frightened Canadian politicians most as the Second War loomed on the horizon. In March 1939 the two chief political parties found a formula which went a long way to keep the country united when war came six months later: a pledge against conscription for overseas service. But in 1944 mounting casualties led to an increasingly strident demand from English Canada that the trained conscripts being held in Canada supposedly for home defence should be sent overseas. Only a threat of mutiny in his Cabinet forced Mackenzie King to yield to the demand. It was obvious, however, that he had fought against compulsion as long as he dared French Canada, whose defection would have meant his political ruin, continued to stand by him; and the right in the country never became quite as serious as it had been a quarter of a century before.

Much has been said and written about the growth of national spirit and sentiment in Canada (unfortunately, one needs to add, in English Canada) in 1914-18. It was the fruit of effort and sacrifice. The creation in France of the fighting force called the Canadian Corps - within which the new spirit moved more strongly than among civilians - was the greatest thing Canada had ever done. And feats of arms at Second Ypres and Vimy and Passchendaele and Amiens had their parallels in the council chamber. In 1917 the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, found it expedient to call the Dominions, which were doing so much in the field, to British councils in the Imperial War Cabinet and Imperial War Conference; and at the end of the fighting it was simply impossible to exclude them from the Peace Conference or, as it turned out, from the League of Nations. They emerged from the war period with a new national status within what was coming to be called the British Commonwealth and, somewhat less clearly established, within the world community. Sir Robert Borden claimed, with considerable reason, that Canada had been the leader in these advances.

The momentum the war had lent to the movement toward total Dominion autonomy continued to operate after the war itself had passed into history. It was responsible for the celebrated pronouncement of the Imperial Conference of 1926 proclaiming the British Dominions equal in status with Great Britain, and for the Statute of Westminster which translated this into legal terms five years later. The word "independence" is not in that statute. Nevertheless, in historical retrospect it appears as a declaration, peaceful and multilateral, of Dominion independence. Everyone today regards Canada as an independent country; and if you seek for a date on which that independence was achieved, no other can be found than December 11, 1931 - the day on which the Statute of Westminster became law. It was thus as a country possessing complete legal independence that Canada went to war again in September 1939. That independence was reflected in her separate declaration of war, one week after the United Kingdom's. But the more important fact that she did go to war, following Britain as in 1914, reflected the continuing strength of ancient ties as well as (and probably more than) the reaction of a society of decent democrats against the things that Hitler stood for.

The Canada that fought the Third Reich was not, of course, quite the same country that had fought the Second. One statistic suggests the change that had taken place. In the First War, only about fifty-one per cent of the men enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force were Canadian-born; in the Second, the figure for the Canadian Army had risen to about eighty-five per cent.<sup>5</sup> One cannot help feeling that the army of 1914-18 was in the beginning to some extent a sort of colonial levy, the product of a society of immigrants camped on the soil rather than

rooted in it. It became a national army only under the influence of the shared experience of years of battle. The national spirit that grew up in it derived mainly from the older Canadians, the ones who had roots in the soil. But the men who came back, whatever their origins may have been, came back as committed Canadians. The army of 1939-45, the Canadian-born army, was rather different. It came from a maturing society, the society, incidentally, that had demanded and supported the advances in constitutional status that had taken place between the wars.

Pursuing this thought, one can compare the parts Canada played in the conferences at the conclusions of the two wars: the Peace Conference of Paris in 1919, and the San Francisco Conference of 1945 which established the United Nations.

The Paris Conference is in the textbooks. They tell us, quite truly, that the main concern of the Canadian representatives, Sir Robert Borden and his colleagues, was to use the conference to enhance the status of Canada. And this they did very successfully. No one, certainly no Canadian, can object to this. Canada, after all, had to establish herself as an international person before she could hope to exert much international influence. It is arguable that what little influence she had on the general Paris settlement was used on what most people today would consider the side of the angels.<sup>6</sup> But it was mainly on the basis of its meaning for Canadian status that the settlement was discussed in the Canadian press and Parliament; few people seem to have been much interested in any other aspect.

By 1945 that Canadian national status - for what it might be worth in a world dominated by the great powers - was well established and accepted. The country had a string of missions abroad and a foreign service of recognized competence. As the San Francisco conference approached Canada had some special local concerns to look out for. In particular, with domestic considerations in view - - and this as usual meant mainly Quebec - the Canadian government thought it important to ensure that a country like Canada, when not a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, would not be compelled to put its military forces at the Council's disposal without an opportunity of being heard at the Council board. After a good deal of difficulty, this concern was met by the inclusion in the United Nations Charter of Article 44. Apart from this, however, the Canadian delegation had much larger objects in view. It is clear that it considered that the future of mankind was likely to depend upon the successful formation of a world organization that would have as members both the United States and Soviet Russia, which were already emerging as the two super-powers of the post-war world.

To achieve this Canada was prepared both to make and to counsel sacrifices. The Canadians disliked important features of the plan which the Great Powers had made for the organization. They considered that the Great Powers were going to dominate the scheme far too much, and in particular they had no use for the Great Power veto in the Security Council. Nevertheless, at San Francisco the Canadians saw that the veto, and other concessions to Great Power dominance, were the price of Russian adherence to the organization. Herbert Evatt of Australia fought the veto and fought the Great Powers generally, noisily and aggressively; but he got no help from Canada. Referring to Evatt's campaign, Norman Robertson, the Canadian Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, reported to Ottawa, "It seems clear to us that, in this year of grace, there cannot be a World Organization established, with Russia a member, unless it provides for voting rights in the Security Council substantially as set forth in the Great Power memorandum.... Our view is that it is better to take the Organization that we can get

and... to refrain from further efforts to pry apart the difficult unity which the Great Powers have attained. This means foregoing the luxury of making any more perfectionist speeches...." Mackenzie King fully supported this attitude.<sup>7</sup>

Canada's influence at San Francisco was of course small, but such as it was it was exerted sanely and responsibly. The British delegation's report on the conference, which had hard words for Evatt, remarked that the Canadians, "one of the strongest and ablest teams at the conference", had "displayed a real solicitude for the welfare of the organization".<sup>8</sup> This seems to be fully supported by the record. This episode at the end of the Second World War was evidence of a growing maturity in the Canadian community. One need not go as far as claiming that it proved that Canadians had risen to the point where they automatically put the welfare of mankind at large ahead of their own local and special interests. There is a great deal of evidence that they had done no such thing. But it does seem to indicate that the makers of Canadian policy had at least appreciated that Canada was involved with mankind, and that enlightened self-interest required that the country should do whatever it could towards the creation of an organization that might prevent a third world war. It also suggests that they had learned enough about the realities of international relations to recognize hard facts when they saw them, and to be aware of the necessity of compromise. They were, in fact, becoming sophisticated.

If it is really true that Canadian society in 1945 was somewhat more mature than it had been a generation before, it is in order to speculate on the influences that brought this result about. It would be simple-minded to say that it was all caused by the Second World War. Very important that war certainly was; but we should see it as the culmination of a long process of development rather than as an isolated explosion of energy. The grim experience of the Depression of the 1930s certainly left a deep mark on the country. And a great number of the advances as well as the problems resulting from the Second World War are prefigured in the events of the First. To mention one obvious example, the Canadian industrial revolution of 1939-45, of which much is made in the books, was only a more sophisticated and larger version of what happened between 1914 and 1918. Enormous amounts of war material were made in Canada in those years, the gross value of iron and steel production leaping up from less than \$150 millions in 1910 to nearly \$500 millions in 1918. Variety was limited, but quantity was great. The production of iron and steel never fell to pre-war figures again, except momentarily in the depths of the Depression.<sup>9</sup> And along with industrialization went urbanization. The decade of the First War was the moment when urban population in Canada first moved ahead of rural.<sup>10</sup> Canadians since then have become increasingly a nation of town-dwellers. In this respect the Second War merely continued and accelerated a movement that was already in progress.

With regards to relations with the United States, we think of the era of the Second World War as the period when Canada's traditional British ties began to slacken off, and the American relationship became more and more important. The Ogdensburg Declaration of August 1940, brought about by the two countries' common fear of Hitler after the collapse of France, attracts the historian's attention as the point where these communities, which had twice fought each other and had frequently viewed each other with suspicion thereafter, became for the first time, in effect, formal military allies. Close economic cooperation in defense matters by the Hyde Park Agreement. Yet it is worth recalling was effected the following year that there were fairly important examples of Canadian-American military cooperation in the First War. Sir Robert Borden in 1918 made an arrangement with the Wilson administration in Washington that was a precise parallel to Hyde Park.<sup>11</sup> (though nobody seems to have

remembered it in 1941). And it is quite arguable that the moment when Canada, as Donald Creighton would put it, took the wrong turning and went off down the American road whoring after the strange gods of Wall Street and Washington, was not at Ogdensburg but five years earlier, in 1935, when for the first time in seventy years the country made a general trade agreement with the United States. That agreement was a product not of war but of depression.

On the whole, I still incline to the opinion that the First World War was the greatest event in Canadian history. But I am quite prepared to admit that the Second War was the second greatest. If the influences on national development which it exercised were largely extensions of those that can be identified in 1914-18, they were still vastly important. In both wars Canada, it must be said, was by comparison with many other countries extremely fortunate. Sir Charles Lucas wrote of her after the first one, "She earned what she reaped, but she reaped much. She gave greatly to the war and in turn the war gave much to her."<sup>12</sup> The same was true in 1939-45. It was a mixed experience. From that war, as from the earlier one, she emerged richer than she had been before, just as her neighbor the United States did. Close to a million volunteer servicemen and their families made great sacrifices for the cause, but the community as a whole waxed fat. Nearly 50,000 of the servicemen died, but the prudent people who stayed home were quite safe from enemy action. They suffered only relatively minor discomforts, such as mild rationing, difficult travel, some disruption of routine. Dreadful as it may seem, for a few years it actually became impossible to buy a new car. People worked very hard, and taxes were very heavy. But there were high wages and full employment, and the country got a permanent dividend in the form of a stronger and more diversified industrial structure. Economically the war was in the end almost an unalloyed blessing. Politically and spiritually not so much can be said. The effort of war is often a unifying force. In both 1914-18 and 1939-45 this was the case within English-speaking Canada, but between English and French, thanks to the conscription question the effect was not to unify but to divide. The damage was less in the Second War than in the First, but an old sore was re-opened with unfortunate results.

One development of the period might have been expected to tend to draw English and French-speaking Canadians closer together. A growing maturity in Canadian Attitudes towards the outside world has been mentioned. This, many would say, was reflected in a further growth of that sense of independent nationality which appeared during and after the First War. This found symbolic expression in a measure passed by the Canadian Parliament soon after the end of the Second. In January 1945 Mackenzie King told his Cabinet that he thought it was time to establish a status of Canadian citizenship,<sup>13</sup> something until then very nearly unknown to the law. Generally speaking, Canadians at that time were simply "British subjects", in common with other subjects of the King around the globe. The Canadian Citizenship Act became law in 1946. It proclaimed that "A Canadian citizen is a British subject", but the reverse proposition was not included. Canadian citizenship was now to be, in the words of the Secretary of State who introduced the bill, "the fundamental status upon which the rights and privileges of Canadians will depend"<sup>14</sup>. This may be called the logical culmination of the national policy that Mackenzie King had always pursued. It did not escape criticism in Parliament and elsewhere, but it was in tune with the general feelings and opinions of Canadians at that moment in history. The experience of two wars had certainly gone far to produce this result.

French Canada, of course, had always favored the national rather than what may be called the imperial or the colonial view of Canada's position with respect to Britain and the world; and in one sense the development of events may be said to have brought the English-speaking majority round to something very like the traditional French-Canadian opinion. This



might have provided a basis for a more perfect union between the country's two great sections. Unfortunately this has not yet come to pass. A new unity on external questions has not been enough to overcome the effect of the particularistic nationalism which, in Quebec as in other parts of the world, has been in the ascendant. The future of Canadian confederation, which English and French Canadians created 112 years ago, seems to hang in the balance today.

Things like the impact of a war on a particular society are impossible to measure with computers, and difficult to assess with precision by any means the historian has at his disposal. We look at statistics, we read newspaper editorials, we study the files of government departments, we reflect on personal experiences we or our friends may have had; and on the basis of such things we pontificate, as I have been pontificating here. But I find that as I grow older I put forward generalizations like those in this essay with less and less confidence. Who am I, I find myself saying to myself, to presume to explain one generation of humanity to another? I realize that if these subversive doctrines gained currency many historians would be on welfare. Nevertheless I feel disposed to end by disavowing any purpose to be even mildly dogmatic. The modest interpretations that I have offered here are nothing if not tentative, and if people disagree with them I shall neither be surprised nor complain.

## NOTES

- 1 Sir Wilfrid Laurier to Philippe Roy, 15 June 1916, in C.P. Stacey, ed., The Arts of War and Peace (Historical Documents of Canada, V, Toronto, 1972), pp.567-8.
- 2 Tables of Second World War in *ibid.*, p. 640, and C.P Stacey, Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, I (Toronto, 1977), p. 235, for First world War.
- 3 Leopold Lamontagne, “Habits gris et chemise rouge”, Canadian Historical Association Report, 1950; Victor Hoar with Mac Renolds, The Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion: Canadian Participation in the Spanish Civil war (n.p., 1969), pp.X, 35.
- 4 Public Opinion Quarterly, 1946.
- 5 C.P. Stacey, The Canadian Army, 1939-1945: An Official Historical Summary (Ottawa, 1948), p. 309.
- 6 Canada and the Age of Conflict, 1, pp. 250-54.
- 7 Telegrams of 10 and 12 June 1945, Department of External Affairs files 7V(s)-8 (top secret docket) and 7-V(s).
- 8 Joe Garner, The Commonwealth Office, 1925-68 (London, 1978), pp. 274-5.
- 9 M.C. Urquhart and K.A.H. Buckley, Historical Statistics of Canada (Cambridge and Toronto, 1965), p. 471.
- 10 Ibid., p. 14.
- 11 Canada and the Age of Conflict, I, pp. 232-3.
- 12 Sir Charles Lucas, ed., The Empire at War (5 vols., London, 1921-26), II, p. 294.
- 13 Cabinet Conclusions, January 23, 1945.
- 14 Hon. Paul Martin in House of Commons, 2 April 1946. The Canadian Citizenship Act is 10 George VI Chap 16 1946.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A CURIOUS LACK OF PROPORTION: CANADIAN BUSINESS AND THE WAR

Robert Bothwell

Old traditions die hard. One of the founding myths of the Canadian Liberal party proclaims it the party of the common man, the support of the lower middle class and the defender of the backwoods against the twin millstones of capital and labor. It was and is a potent myth, and never more so than during the long leadership of William Lyon Mackenzie King. King feared and abhorred the spectre of class conflict, and liked to picture himself as the great compromiser of economic and political differences - a role that he played with unusual skill for most of his forty years in politics.

King was not a universally beloved figure, but a contemplation of his career almost persuades the historian that he selected his enemies, personal and symbolic, with great care and uncanny skill. Among the personalities were numbered Arthur Meighen, the Bay Street prophet, and Lord Bennett, whose bloated features were lovingly reproduced by a generation of Liberal cartoonists as the epitome of Tory capitalism. Meighen and Bennett and their ilk represented for King and the Liberal party the forces of darkness against which good Liberals were locked in perpetual struggle, pitted against the infernal legions of Bay Street, Saint James Street and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange.

It came as a great shock to the forces of good and evil when they discovered that a malign fate had united them in a common war effort against Hitler. Mackenzie King was a reluctant convert to the policy of enlisting business aid for government. It was a deplorable necessity, rendered all the more difficult because the platoons of businessmen who came to work in Ottawa as "dollar-a-year-men" were most of them Tories and as such sworn enemies of the King government.

By the end of the war notions of proper Liberal-business relations had suffered a sea change. C.D. Howe, the Minister of Munitions and Supply, wrote of Ottawa's business helpers as "great Canadians" and contributed to a volume celebrating their achievements, *Canadian Strength*. The businessmen, in their turn, regarded their wartime service as a useful and prideful experience, proof positive that businessmen and business had done their patriotic duty and more between 1939 and 1945. And, they reluctantly conceded, it was under a Liberal Government. The only sour note was struck by Prime Minister King. After scrutinizing *Canadian Strength* one evening at home, he confided to his diary that there was "a curious lack of proportion" in describing Canadian businessmen as pillars of the nation. "It is rather surprising," King wrote, "that any colleague should indicate that from his point of view Canadian strength was composed primarily of the heads of large corporations who, though nominally receiving a dollar a year from the government, continued to draw their large salaries from corporations. Large salaries," King added, "which they were accustomed to receive".<sup>1</sup>

King saw large salaries, and the dollar-a-year men saw large productions; King fantasized about undue rewards, and they remembered full employment, overflowing order books and a quantum leap in industrial productivity. But King expressed a lingering resentment of business and it was heartily reciprocated. What galled him most was the obvious affection

that parts of his government and the business community cherished for one and other. "I only met King once," one war executive - ordinarily a corporation lawyer - later recalled. It was not an impressive occasion, for the Prime Minister, with his eye always on the future, wanted to talk about wills and perhaps secure some free legal advice. "I never had any use for the man," then or later, the executive concluded. But King would soon be gone, and his legacy, to his great distress, would be a party and a government linked with business by interest, experience and preference.

To begin at the beginning, in 1939, Canadian business was not organized for war. It was hardly organized for anything, but it had large aspirations. The approach of war had not gone unnoticed in Canada, and Canadian businessmen were eager, after a decade of depression, scenting a bonanza of war orders. As in 1914, London, not Ottawa, was the focus of their desires.

Ottawa approved. The government perched precariously on a political precipice, hardly daring to stir. There was no money to spend, and overt preparations for war sat badly with public opinion, especially in French Canada. While most members of the King cabinet might be reconciled to the inevitability of conflict, their constituents were not. Nor was the Canadian exchequer, which viewed war as a calamity beyond the country's financial capacity to endure. When war finally broke out, financial considerations remained upper most, producing what C.P. Stacey has aptly styled, "the Reign of the Dollar".<sup>2</sup>

The dollar reigned, unhappily and uneasily, on both sides of the Atlantic. Both governments shuffled uneasily passing responsibility back and forth between them. The Canadian government expected the British to take the lead in establishing a Canadian military supply system: as Mackenzie King informed a delegation of Canadian manufacturers in June 1939, British orders were highly desirable. And, as he might have added, the British had the know-how and plans for using it. But a few educational orders apart, the British were uncertain both of what they wanted, and of what they could afford. As one British supply official wrote, when the war was six weeks old, "there will have to be great expansion of our orders there, but at the moment it is difficult to give decisions" until Britain's own supply concerns were properly formulated.<sup>3</sup> The sterility of Canada's war production policy was, outside Ottawa, blamed on the government. Canadian business in relationship to war, for the first nine months of the conflict, was therefore less than fulfilling. Business grumbling, naturally pronounced, reached a crescendo at the turn of the year. It became fashionable to denounce Mackenzie King and the Liberals for their "do-little" attitude to the war effort. Typical was the resolution of the Ontario legislature, in January 1940, deploring King's failure "to prosecute Canada's duty in the war in the vigorous manner the people of Canada desire to see". Doubtless the authors of the resolution did not expect the consequences that followed: the dissolution of Parliament and King's stunning victory in the general election that followed. That King could be decisive about anything came as a severe shock.

There were several losers in the 1940 general election. First and foremost there was the Conservative party, which for the duration of the war could never summon from its own resources enough strength, or from its leadership enough wit, to displace the entrenched Liberals. But the elements that the Conservatives represented did not go away. The business community may not have thrilled to the oratory of Dr. Manion, the erstwhile Conservative leader, and in many cases had rejoiced in Manion's defeat; but it liked Mackenzie King no better. Under the circumstances it was fruitless to talk of a Conservative administration as a

feasible possibility, but it was not beyond business' political imagination to conceive of a coalition, or "national" government.

Proof of the need for political change, beyond what the electorate prescribed, was found in Canada's sluggish war production. That was still dependent on British orders, for the Canadian military hardly dared to transgress Treasury restrictions and order on its own. Even if it had, it would not have known what to order, where it could be produced, or how. The King government's War Supply Board did what it could - which was little enough, because the Board was hamstrung by internal disputes and obsolete financial procedures. British representatives in Ottawa wrung their hands at their inability to prise orders from the home government, while suspicions mounted among their Canadian hosts that there would be no new orders in Canada. As one of the British supply mission helpfully explained to a Canadian Senator, even Britain "could not maintain her munitions industry in full operation unless there was fighting on the western front. England," he added, "was filled up with shells, bombs and so on." <sup>4</sup>

The only initiative within the King government's control was to shake up the War Supply Board in April 1940. Its chairman was sent packing, and a new civilian department, Munitions and Supply, established under the direction of the Minister of Transport, C.D. Howe. Howe had a reputation for being "quick in making decisions"<sup>5</sup>, and decisions were what the public wanted. Howe could, and did, make decisions about reorganizing munitions purchasing. The hierarchy of the War Supply Board was abolished, and with it most of the Board's cumbersome financial regulations. Instead, Howe established a departmental Executive Committee (a procedure borrowed from corporate life rather than government) whose members, individually and collectively, were given extensive authority to straighten out Canada's production for war.<sup>6</sup>

Howe's appointment was not received with great enthusiasm outside Ottawa, and the succeeding months did not improve his standing. Canada's leading business newspaper, the Financial Post, was disappointed. What Canada needed was an "industrial statesman", not another politician. The commander-in-chief of Canada's industrial army, the Post told its readers, "should not be the political head of a department." While Howe might stay on as minister, what he and the country needed was "a Sir Joseph Flavelle" - the Toronto businessman who had run munitions production during the First World War. Flavelle was dead, regrettably, but surely there was someone waiting to fill his shoes. Whatever Howe's qualities, the Post decided, he was "No Superman."<sup>7</sup>

Howe's position improved during the summer, as Britain's deteriorated. The defeat of the allied armies in France, with the consequent loss of their equipment, transformed Britain's supply situation. To meet the new scarcity, Howe place orders wherever he could, relying on probability rather than certainty. Where production capacity was lacking, it would be created; where vital parts were deficient, they would be imported from the United States. The reign of the dollar was definitely over. In the months after June 1940 Howe and his agents had carte blanche to spend as they liked. As Howe reasoned, "we have no idea of the cost, but before the war is over everything will be needed so let's go ahead anyway. If we lose the war nothing will matter.... If we win the war the cost will still have been of no consequence and will have been forgotten."<sup>8</sup>

In the ensuing bustle, the British supply mission was quietly wound up and its functions transferred to Howe's department. The Americans also agreed to place their Canadian

war orders only with Howe. Overnight, Munitions and Supply became Canada's largest wholesale and retail enterprise. Henceforth there would be only one central supply agency, with one executive head: Howe.

Canada's late start in war production inevitably entailed difficulties for Howe and his administrators. There was no time to consider production programs in detail. No-one could hope to know when production would actually come on stream - merely that a commitment to production must be made, often orally, and ratified with government dollars. When the key decisions were made - in mid-June - details, blueprints and specifications for most of Canada's intended production were lacking and, as we shall see, production skills were scarcer still. Even where a previous agreement existed, as in the provision of aircraft for pilot training, the American minister reported that the British could not provide what they had promised. "Hundreds of planes... promised by Britain were not delivered," the American Minister reported at the beginning of August. The manufacture of training aircraft was added to Munitions and Supply's load.<sup>9</sup>

To meet the crisis, Howe's executive committee recommended the creation of crown corporations to fill gaps in Canada's supply and production. Crown money and authority would be needed to short-cut dangerous bottlenecks in meeting short-term crises in rubber, machine tools and silk. By the end of the summer there were five crown companies (two of them in secret) at work. Establishing such companies outside the regular civil service allowed decentralization of head offices, thereby relieving congestion in Ottawa, and permitted business recruits to government to work in a more familiar and congenial atmosphere than the bureaucracy would have furnished. But the executive committee added a warning. Private companies were inherently more efficient, in its opinion, than government bodies. "We believe," they informed Howe, "it is safe to say that under the auspices of private capital the time factor will be considerably reduced."<sup>10</sup> Howe did not disagree. The dominating consideration in determining the character and form of Canada's industrial war effort, therefore, was less the expansion of government than the assimilation of the practices of private industry to the war effort.

If the adoption of techniques borrowed from private enterprise added verve and drive to Canada's war production, so much the better, Howe reasoned. But it was not an unalloyed blessing. Canadian business was, after all, recovering from years of depression and under-production. Executive and technical skills were deficient, where they existed at all.

Howe started at the top. There, fortunately, there was no shortage, and by June 1940 Howe had made his initial selection of advisers. The most important were Munitions and Supply's executive committee, consisting of R.A.C. Henry, Henry Borden, Gordon Scott and E.P. Taylor. Henry, Borden and Scott were holdovers from the old War Supply Board, which had stifled their talents; Taylor was appointed later on Borden's advice. As a group, their connections stretched across the country, Henry is with Montreal business and the CNR (and the CNR obligingly furnished the backbone of Munitions' supply purchasing organization), Scott is with the Montreal financial community and the Quebec government, Borden and Taylor are with Toronto business and corporate law.

Relying on their advice, Howe began to stock his department and crown corporations with executives, accountants and lawyers from across the country. The selection was revealing. Borden, the department's counsel, naturally took a primary role in the selection of lawyers,

whose background not surprisingly reflected one or another facet of Borden's own heritage: Dalhousie Law School, Toronto business, or the conservative party. Borden's selections were good men who performed well; so well that they were not replaced until after the war when the suspicion dawned on the government that many of the local lawyers for Howe's departments were the backbone of the Conservative party.

Howe quickly learned one useful lesson in administration. Many of his recruits were used to the limelight, if not on the national scale than at least inside their own companies. Prima donnas by temperament, they preferred to establish a direct feudal relationship with their Minister, who rewarded them with extensive powers and titles. On every side directors-general bloomed and controllers preened themselves; more directors were downcast about their relative lack of status. For a few months, Ottawa became a miniature laboratory for Weberian experiments in creative bureaucracy. Howe went one better than most Ministers. On the side he kept a close eye on the civilian honors that a democratic society still permitted its government to dispense: these were handed out to the deserving in suitable periodic dollops. Relying on Howe's authority, the dollar-a-year men achieved an expansive administrative style. There were few, if any, who could contradict them, and they had a whole country at their disposal.

Liberal politicians were naturally disgruntled. Pierre Casgrain, the Secretary of State, took his grievances to Norman Lambert, the chief Liberal organizer, in the fall of 1940: "contracts in Que. from Munitions & Supply," the Minister averred, were "all going to English Tory firms." Howe might have observed that business in Quebec was made up of "English Tory firms", but that was a regrettable fact of life. In response to another Quebec Minister's complaints Howe was adamant: "even if they were supporters of Duplessis nothing can be done on that score."<sup>11</sup> In any case, complaints of discrimination faded quickly as war production expanded to include all available manufacturing capacity. Liberal or Conservative, businessmen had no cause for complaint: everything they had to offer, and more, was contracted to the war effort.

It proved, in the long run, politically advantageous to demonstrate to sceptical Tories that the Liberal government could run what one reporter described as "a graftless war." The absence of political preference and preferment cemented the loyalty of Howe's executives to the war effort and to their political leader; it helped them accept that their temporary masters were still civilian politicians and shook their allegiances, for war purposes out of their old partisan grooves. Once displaced they were never fully restored.<sup>12</sup>

Purity was all very well, but efficiency was another highly approved business value. Could Howe, a mere consulting engineer, hope to run such a complicated department as Munitions and Supply by himself? Many, especially in Toronto, thought not. Surely he would crack under the strain. The Financial post depicted Munitions and Supply as a thirty-ring circus with Howe as principal ringmaster. Fair words, and the phrase was appealing: with so much going on in Ottawa, so fast, it was difficult to imagine that one man could possibly master it all. So it proved, contracts lagged behind authorizations, and manufacturing specifications behind contracts. Comprehensive statistics trailed them all. The Minister, meanwhile, traveled every other week to new York and Washington to shore up crucial contracts and open communications with American finance and government. He was rewarded - but the rewards were slow. In what time remained, Howe's attention was perforce concentrated on a few key issues; the rest was left to subordinates.<sup>13</sup> That was good, if risky, management: but under the circumstances there was no alternative.

Starting up thirty new programs, "making the thunder roll and the lightning play," as one participant called it, was exhilarating. It was also expensive and necessarily time-consuming, as executives and technicians tumbled with their assigned tasks. Later, only the accomplishments would be recalled. At the time, however, it seemed that one fumble followed another in an apparently endless succession. Press reports from the fall of 1940 took a decidedly unfavorable tone, and they mirrored real difficulties, problems that could not be solved within the mental deadline that press and politicians allowed between the breaking of ground and the triumphant christening of the first ship, gun or tank. For most of the participants, it was a challenging and ultimately enlightening education in modern industrial strategy - one that would eventually work out. For a minority, it proved that the King government and Howe, its chosen instrument, were incapable of the proper direction of Canada's economic war effort.

The Timber Controller, H.R. MacMillan, voiced the minority opinion. A British Columbia lumber millionaire, MacMillan was accustomed to taking his own decisions; he knew from experience that they were mostly right. Howe, he believed, could not; nor could Mackenzie King and his ramshackle Liberal government. In searching out corroboration for his assessment of King and company, MacMillan lent a ready ear to critics of King's policies. Men such as Ontario's Premier Mitchell Hepburn soon found that they had an appreciative audience in Ottawa's Timber Controller. Returning from one trip to Toronto to seek enlightenment from Hepburn, MacMillan confidently predicted a short and wretched future for Mackenzie King. In so saying, MacMillan was probably uttering the common currency of business political attitudes - and anti-Liberal opinion outside of Ottawa.

MacMillan singled out his own department, Munitions and Supply, as the focus for his criticism of the government. Bungling and disorganized, staffed by the wrong people, wasting public funds, Munitions and Supply required a businesslike reorganization. With its faint echo of the "business government" propaganda of the National Government movement of the thirties, MacMillan's critique opened up a dangerous line of political attack on the government's position. If one of its major programs and one of its principal figures could be demolished or crippled by charges of "un-businesslike" activities, the government would be obliged to come to terms with its critics, and would lose its freedom of action in running economic policy.

MacMillan's activities reached a crescendo in the winter of 1940-1941. Howe was absent for most of December and January, attending to munition business in England, while the acting minister, Angus Macdonald, was preoccupied with his full-time job of running the navy. MacMillan was appointed chairman of a special commission, the Wartime Requirements Board, whose task was to investigate and rate the conduct of Canada's industrial war effort. While chairing the Board, MacMillan felt free to let the press in on what he was finding, and the result was a barrage of press criticism of the failures of Munitions and Supply's supposedly lagging production program. Meanwhile MacMillan embodied his findings in a report which he imagined would blast Howe out of the direction of Munitions and Supply, and propel himself into the job of head of production.

The affection of the press is at best a doubtful political asset. Those who bask in the warm light of favorable publicity risk alienating their less fortunate colleagues whose efforts go unnoticed or, worse yet, are criticized by comparison. Self-glorification, as MacMillan should have known, is next door to self-deception. There was little support from the other businessmen-turned-administrators inside Munitions and Supply. The glazed expressions on the faces of MacMillan's fellow controllers as they listened to his endless discourses masked real



concern and then outright anger. For them, MacMillan's criticisms bespoke the bystander rather than the responsible administrator. MacMillan, one of Howe's controllers wrote in February 1941, "soon found that he could not, by a wave of the hand, create ideal conditions in all things and grew dissatisfied, and had an alibi that he was only an adviser and not an executive."<sup>14</sup>

Isolated from his peers, daily incurring the wrath of the cabinet, MacMillan placed himself in an untenable position by the time Howe returned to take up the reins of his department. Howe was furious at MacMillan's conduct, and expressed himself on the subject at some length. But rather than seek a head-on confrontation with his errant subordinate, Howe chose to encircle him and further isolate him in the eyes of the cabinet and the press. Even MacMillan's most fervent Cabinet sponsor, J.L. Ilsley, had lost his enthusiasm and, one reporter claimed, had grown to dislike him "very much because he believes him to be a tory and a national government man."<sup>15</sup> Believing that his position was fundamentally sound, and that war production would appear in time to save the government's credibility, Howe publicly turned on MacMillan, tabling his report in the House of Commons while professing to believe that no loyal public servant could possibly have said the things attributed to MacMillan and remained in the employ of the crown. MacMillan had not resigned, ergo he could not possibly have been disloyal.

Speaking to Defence Minister Ralston, Howe observed that he now had MacMillan exactly where he wanted him. "You know why I published his report," Howe told his colleague. "I did it to ruin him and I think I did a pretty fair job of it."<sup>16</sup>

Macmillan's fall was spectacular. From an aspirant to the job of Canada's industrial czar, he descended quickly to building merchant ships from his new headquarters in Montreal, safely removed from the heady atmosphere of political Ottawa. Having learned through experience to appreciate Howe's political talents, MacMillan forgave and forgot. Howe, he told a Vancouver audience after the war, was an "organizing genius", nothing less than "the greatest organizer Canada has ever seen."<sup>17</sup> He did not mention that one of Howe's greatest feats of organization was organizing his own departure.

Unsurprisingly, given the sequence of events, MacMillan left by himself. His was the only serious challenge to the political direction of the war economy, and he made it alone. His failure is revealing. He failed to enlist any of his peers among the dollar-a-year men. Their respect and trust were already committed - to C.D. Howe. More knowledgeable in the ways of business than MacMillan, and more attuned than he was to the problems of starting up production where none had existed before, they rejected his sweeping claims that a good businessman could do the job better. To the mind of Howe's executives, such a person either did not exist, or could do no better than what they already had.

And just as MacMillan departed, production started to come on stream. By November 1941 Canada had produced 3,749 aircraft; in 1942 it would produce 3,811 more, and in 1943 would add another 4,133 to the total. MacMillan himself added to the total: tonnage of cargo vessels rose from 800, in 1942, to 1 1/2 million in 1943. It was, all told, a notable achievement, and it was reflected in the sums of capital employed in Canadian factories. In 1939, that totaled roughly \$3.65 billion; by 1943 it was \$6.3 billion - an injection of over \$2 1/2 billion in under four years. It was small wonder that Howe later decided that the Canadian economy needed little in the way of reconstruction after the war, at least not in the investment line.

The magnitude of Howe's program was its best political defence. There was so much, and the opposition knew so little. Disputes there were and would always be, within the precincts of Howe's department: but they were seldom taken outside for an airing. Even when they were, they were quickly squelched. And the Opposition was less tempted to take the initiative because so many of its own dwelt happily within the enemy citadel.

The official political opposition, deprived of its normal business alliances, found it best to hew to a "constructive" line in handling war production questions. Today's bureaucrat, after all, was yesterday's contributor - and tomorrow's. The presence of friends and party supporters among the dollar-a-year men encouraged Conservatives in Parliament to constitute themselves as government auxiliaries in the flight against defeatism and rumour-mongering. In May 1943 the leader of the Opposition, Gordon Graydon, even intimated to Howe that he would co-operate "to the fullest extent" in suppressing and contradicting unfounded rumours about Munitions and Supply's activities. For Howe, the transition from goat to sacred cow was smooth and swift.<sup>18</sup>

The positive reaction of the "dollar-a-year men" to their wartime service, therefore, helped to de-claw the opposition. It also reinforced the Liberal government. But the simple absence of overt conflict is not enough to explain what happened inside Canadian business nor do aggregate totals of investment and production reveal what was going on inside the industrial system. For that, we must become more specific.

The hot-house growth of Canadian industry did more than reproduce what had existed in 1939 on a grandiose scale. Visitors to Canadian factories at the beginning of the war remarked on the under-utilized and illequipped facilities, with their short runs of often shoddy products. There was no point in retooling, their hosts explained: there was no market that could justify the expenditure. Except for the automobile factories and the railway shops, there were few modern factories worthy of the name. "I reached the conclusion," one British inspector reported, "that existing machine tool facilities in Canada were definitely inferior to those in pre-war England. With the exception of the more prominent general engineering firms, all the equipment was of a greater age, not equal in relative condition, and the modern type of machine tool was conspicuous by its absence." Indeed, most of the facilities listed as engineering works proved on inspection to be only "slightly superior to the garage type of shop situated in the country districts."<sup>19</sup>

Reconversion to war production from such a base was often shockingly expensive, especially in the view of the British Treasury, which footed most of the initial bill, but it did have its bright side. Little that was obsolete had to be retained, for there was little to begin with. Archaic work habits were no problem, for there had recently been so little work done; and the hand-to-mouth conditions of the thirties bred ingenuity and adaptability in shop managers and their mechanics.

They needed to be adaptable. Canada was expected to produce weapons to British design, using British Specifications. Originally, British tools and materials would have been used as well, but because so few factories were established before the fall of France and the subsequent suspension of British deliveries, it was necessary to turn to the only other source of supply available: the United States. Howe's Citadel Merchandising crown corporation assumed the responsibility for ordering and assigning scarce machine tools for war factories. Once the tools arrived, local managers and engineers laboured to convert the American tools to fit British

lines, and to refashion British production specifications and schedules to meet new Canadian conditions.

Frictions often developed. In the CPR shops in Winnipeg, management was indignant at the behaviour of a British production expert who was so scrupulous of the use to which British "specs" were put that at the close of work every day he rolled up his documents and took them back to his hotel, where they were carefully stuffed under a mattress until duty called the next morning. Complaints about the concealment of specs gave way to complaints about the specs themselves. "In one Canadian plant," the *Financial Post* reported in June 1942, "an important war weapon is being produced in 30% of the man-hours required for its production in Britain." In another case, production time and cost were reduced by half. Of course, the *Post* piously concluded, "this represents no criticism of British industry."<sup>20</sup> At the very least, however, it bespoke a self-confidence verging on bumptiousness. Canadian industry had reached the dawn of emancipation, but with help from a friend.

Much of the improvement in Canadian production did not depend on local initiative, but on design and management techniques borrowed directly from American industry. Local initiative could not fill large orders. A case in point was Sorel Industries Limited, owned by the Simard Brothers. Sorel Industries received, before the outbreak of war, an educational contract from the British government for the production of one hundred twenty-five pounders and two hundred carriages. The British committed £ 1,000,000 to the enterprise, and the French armaments firm of Schneider-Creusot agreed to provide French-speaking technicians from its own factories. Everything went smoothly until the fall of France. The French technicians decided to return home, and the whole project (which had yet to produce a single gun) faced derailment. The Simards appealed to Ottawa for help. Howe immediately agreed to do whatever was necessary to salvage the plant, including a matching grant of \$5,000,000 the despatch of one of his own staff to become general manager, and an immediate increase in production targets from eight to seventy-five "equipments" per month. Sorel Industries advanced in a stroke from a virtual cottage industry (though at a high technical level) to a massproduction factory.

Howe's last condition was too ambitious for the resources of Sorel Industries. Before the end of 1940 the Simards were back in Ottawa asking for more help to relieve an intolerable strain on their overworked executives. Howe had established a control committee to oversee Sorel's affairs, including J. Edouard Simard, and the committee decided to appeal for outside help. What they wanted, a committee member afterwards wrote, was "competent managerial assistance". Their preferred source was Chrysler Corporation, whose American President as well as the President of Chrysler of Canada responded quickly and favourably. One of the Vice-Presidents of the American corporation was dispatched to Sorel and "given full charge with instructions to put the plant on a production basis as rapidly as possible."

The new manager, Ledyard Mitchell, undertook large operations like Sorel. Before long, "the factory began to function as a whole" and in the spring of 1941 the first complete twenty-five pounder rolled off the production line - almost two years after the start of construction. There was no problem with the production of guns - that was a matter of training and technique, with a bit of personnel management thrown in. But to produce seventy-five or more guns a month was an organizational problem, and one that could not be solved with Sorel's existing resources. The solution, Mitchell told his executives, was one that was tried and true in the automobile industry: sub-contracting.

Chrysler's existing sub-contracting practices were directly applied to the problem of producing guns. Sorel hired platoons of accountants and engineers to supervise its new programs and, after the usual teething troubles, the scheme worked smoothly. At its peak, Sorel's sub-contracting empire involved sixty or seventy firms, working smoothly under newly-trained executives left in place by the Chrysler management.<sup>21</sup>

What had worked at Sorel was duplicated throughout Canadian war industry. Howe speedily grasped what was at stake, as did his production chief, Harry Carmichael, who was himself a product of the automobile industry, a Vice-President of General Motors of Canada. Munitions and Supply now applied what Chrysler had learned to the whole of Canada. Adapting sub-contracting to a situation where any business establishment of any size was already producing for the government, Carmichael found a use for the scores of minor factories that the British had despairingly rated little better than garages back in 1939. Howe called it the "bits and pieces" program, explaining to a puzzled House of Commons that it worked on the principle of a jig-saw puzzle.<sup>22</sup>

Howe's appreciation of Carmichael soared. Originally imported to Munitions and Supply by H.R. MacMillan, Carmichael stayed on when MacMillan left. Howe used him to plug a painful gap in his production branch where one of his less successful appointees, W.F. Drysdale, had embroiled himself with his own staff and peers. The problem with Drysdale, Howe learned, was that his experience was that of a branch plant president: good at implementing but not initiating. Drysdale was packed off to a quieter job, and Carmichael took his place.<sup>23</sup>

Drysdale's case was not uncommon. Much of Canadian industry was foreign-owned, and foreign-managed. It provided jobs, but furnished scant opportunities for executives and central office employees. Often enough, designs and decisions were centralized at an alien head office from which it sometimes proved difficult to extract them. Even a company like Canadian Industries Limited, a technically proficient and prosperous firm, was hamstrung by its arrangements with its British and American parents, who forbade it to compete with them in export markets. The results were most apparent at the beginning of the war, when the relative underdevelopment of design and drafting proved a considerable handicap in the commencement of production. The existence of this initial handicap may partially explain the attention and concentration given crown companies like Research Enterprises Limited or Polymer. As one observer commented, without Research Enterprises, "the armament equipment and other productions would have been 'lopsided', where as its existence has enabled Canada to complete all the requirements for any equipment."<sup>24</sup> As a result, Canadian business developed scientific and engineering skills undreamt-of during the depression.

The incentives offered industry by government to co-operate in the war effort were largely "positive" - and business showed a distinct, natural and sensible preference for the carrot over the stick. The King government, and the Minister of Munitions and Supply, realized that public opinion demanded not merely the absence of political patronage and corruption, but the elimination of excess profit altogether. Aided by an exceptional staff of corporation lawyers, Henry Borden devised a system of contracts that managed to be flexible enough to allow for unforeseen disasters while siphoning away any profit of more than 10 per cent of cost. Howe's staff of accountants took care of the rest, scrutinizing and comparing the accounts and efficiency of factories from one end of the country to the other. Behind them lurked the minister's emergency powers to intervene in the management of any company that had failed,

for one reason or another, to meet Ottawa's expectations.<sup>25</sup>

Examples of coercion were well-publicized, but remained rare enough to serve as a salutary warning, rather than an oppressive burden. Howe preferred to confine his interventions in private companies to instances where there was real evidence of financial misconduct, or where continuity of operational management was endangered. The most spectacular example was the National Steel Car Company plant at Malton, Ontario. That company had accumulated a bad record in the eyes of the government, which regarded it as extravagant, inefficient and cursed with chronically bad labour relations.<sup>26</sup> The Malton plant became Victory Aircraft, and for the rest of the war it produced bombers directly for the government.

There can be little doubt that business came to enjoy and appreciate its absorption into a comprehensive government control of the economy. As we have seen, individuals working for the government in Ottawa soon shed most of the antigovernmental and anti-political prejudices that has characterized business political attitudes in the 1930s. The same could be said of the entities they represented, and the owners and managers they left behind them in the private sector. In order to guarantee production, it had become necessary to ensure supply; once supply was certain, transportation and power had to be secured. Above all, there was an assured market. Confronted with such an array of temptations, it is small wonder that Canadian businessmen, relieved of the ordinary worries of private enterprise, abandoned some of their mistrust of federal power - even to the extent of abandoning older allegiances to the provincial governments that had previously sheltered them. Even Sir James Dunn, the baron of Algoma Steel, was moved to write in August 1944 that he was "strongly in favour of continuing Steel Control when the war is over as far into the future as I can see."<sup>27</sup>

There were many who, in 1944 and 1945, would have agreed wholeheartedly with Dunn. The spectrum extended from the CCF on the respectable left all the way to the large corporations which dreaded the end of the war and craved the security the government gave them - "the security brigade" as Howe scornfully dubbed them. It was only with the aid of large incentives, backed by his remaining controls, that Howe propelled much of Canadian business outward, into the world of private enterprise where it ostensibly longed to be. That, it should be stressed, was a political decision, and one unsought by the forces of private enterprise who, on another part of the front, were mobilizing themselves for George Drew's climactic struggle against communism, socialism and the CCF.

Business was grateful - grateful enough to give the government no serious problems as the complicated machinery of war controls wound itself down during 1944 and 1945. It was not, however, so overwhelmed with admiration as to accept uncomplainingly the perpetuation of the King government in power.

Much of this essay has focused on the peculiar relationship between Canada's wartime business executives and their Minister, C.D. Howe. That relationship was, as legend and fact tell us, highly congenial and successful. Part of the success derived from shared attitudes and values - values that Howe, a good late Victorian Liberal free trader and free enterpriser, never seriously questioned in their abstract. That Howe and his "boys" talked the same language, in and out of the office, that they enjoyed fishing and golfing and playing cards together (however ineptly), these were distinct socializing advantages. They were advantages that were not shared by most other members of the cabinet and in particular they were missing from the Prime Minister's repertoire of social graces.

Congeniality, which may explain Howe's ready acceptance by his executives, is hardly a sufficient explanation for the respect his authority commanded. Nothing succeeded like success, of course, and success on the level of billions of dollars has a compelling logic all its own. But organizational and political factors cannot be ignored. Howe inherited Munitions and Supply (the act was drafted months before he ever dreamed of becoming its minister), but he defended both his department with great tenacity and great tactical political skill. E.P. Taylor, who worked with the Americans and for the British, had no hesitation in selecting Canada's war supply organization as tops. "The Canadian plan of a single supply department," he told a reporter, "having also the power to restrict production of civilian goods, is by long odds the best of all." A single department under a single Minister, largely independent of domestic political constraints, whether from colleagues or from opponents, permitted a concentration and alliance of political and economic power unique in Canada's history.<sup>28</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this essay to trace the post-war legacy of business's rapprochement with the Canadian state, except to note that there was remarkable continuity of personnel and policy for over a decade after the war. The legend or the reality of the "dollar-a-year men", Howe's boys as they proudly called themselves, influenced the next generation of Canadian businessmen. Old associations and old habits died hard - but not as hard as the legend that the Liberal party and Canadian business did not and could not mix. That rumour, Howe's boys knew, was greatly exaggerated.

## NOTES

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- 18 Graydon, memorandum, 18 May 1943, PAC, Gordon Graydon Papers, vol. 7, file D-310.
- 19 James Crone, "Canadian Reminiscences,"/ 1944/, PRO, AVIA/22/3170/ERD/ 7525.
- 20 Financial Post, 14 Mar. 1942: "Canada-U.S. Should Take Lead in Weapons". The Post's comments closely followed a visit to Canada by General A.G.L. McNaughton, with whom this was a favourite theme.

- 21 Crone, "Canadian Reminiscences", p. 60.
- 22 See Bothwell and Kilbourn, Howe, 155.
- 23 Howe to R.A.C. Henry, 22 Nov. 1941, HP, vol. 170, file 90(2).
- 24 Crone, "Canadian Reminiscences," p. 62.
- 25 Bothwell and Kilbourn, Howe, 176-8.
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- 28 Financial Post, 13 June, 1942: "The War and Business."



## CHAPTER FOUR

### BRITAIN AND THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL PATRIOTISM

Paul Addison

#### 1. War and Integration

For anyone discussing the history of modern Britain one essential habit is bifocal vision. For just as the brain co-ordinates the images of the left and right eyes, so historians have to combine in their analysis two dimensions of change in British society. The left eye reveals to us a country which has long been described as 'class-ridden', a convenient short-hand phrase for a society rejoicing in a rich diversity of distinctions of income, status, class and power. An unbroken line of commentary to this effect runs from Paine and Cobbett to contemporary sociology, and that line runs in a bold thread through the Second World War. Precisely how social divisions ought to be defined is, admittedly, a knotty problem, and one that will have to be left unravelled here. But most historians would agree that traditional social divisions were prominent in Britain between 1939 and 1945. Britain was, after all, the oldest and most stable of industrial societies, and it would have been astonishing had the social structure suddenly undergone massive change. There is abundant evidence to the contrary. At the height of the war effort in 1942 a survey of war industry by Mass-Observation, People in Production, demonstrated in graphic detail the gulf between management and the shop floor. Simultaneously the sociologist T.H. Pear was commenting on the social distance between the governors and the governed:

...this two-class division in English society means that public life is administered by people who, quite literally, know next to nothing at first hand of the life of the public, and are not even conscious of their own ignorance, and tacitly assume that they are typical English men and women.<sup>1</sup>

Taking for granted a strong measure of continuity, the majority of British historians nonetheless agree that during the war there occurred a modest but lasting shift in the centre of social and political gravity. This contention is to be found in the work of Richard Titmuss on social policy, A.H. Halsey on social structure, Arthur Marwick on social history, or Maurice Cowling and myself in the sphere of political change. It is enshrined in the final paragraph of A.Q.P. Taylor's English History 1914-1945. Lively dissenting arguments about the 'impact of war' have been advanced by Angus Calder and Henry Pelling, but to debate their viewpoints here would take the discussion too far afield. Most historians detect in the war years a modest levelling process which redistributed income and influence in favour of the working classes. No sooner do we glance at the period than we see looming up before us those two giant landmarks, the Beveridge report of 1942 and the Labour victory at the 1945 general election. There may be ingenious arguments which appear to divorce these events entirely from the war effort, or the pattern of welfare; but there are also ingenious conjurers who appear to saw the lady in half. Rather than debate the question, I shall take it as read for the remainder of this essay that the war was accompanied by a significant shift in the social and political balance.

The war, then, relates to the vast corpus of literature which focuses on inequality and all its related components of stratification. But as was remarked before, modern Britain has to be

observed through the right eye as well as the left. If the left eye reveals a country based on class, the right shows us a country based on community, stability, consensus, co-operation and unity - these too deserve their historians. Even more important than the division of Britain into classes or strata has been the capacity of all these groups to live together, work through common values and institutions, and, not least, to wage two great wars in partnership. On the negative side the strength of community in Britain was illustrated by the case of the Irish. Their alienation from the United Kingdom demonstrated indirectly the unity of the English, the Welsh and the Scots. The point at which Irish nationalism took off, during and after the First World War, was also the moment at which Welsh and Scottish nationalism fizzled out. On the positive side, the organised working class from the mid-nineteenth century onwards became firmly attached to trades unionism, parliamentary politics, and the monarchy: the significance of undercurrents of marxism or syndicalism is that they did indeed remain undercurrents.

There are many difficulties in pursuing the perspective of unity and stability. To begin with, the subject is still largely unexplored: the literature on the making of community is negligible beside the literature on the making of class. Secondly, the language involved is fraught with ambiguity and possibilities of misunderstanding. There is good reason to be careful in using terms such as 'community' or 'consensus'. They lend themselves readily to cynical manipulation by the public relations officers of totalitarian regimes. More innocently, they are employed by tender-minded commentators who cannot or will not understand the role of discipline and conflict in society. But such terms deserve to be given a tough-minded and historical application. Historians, for example, recognize that no community arises out of the amiability of human nature. Communities are in the first instance welded together. A repressive Whig aristocracy brought order and unity to Britain in the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth the police, the judges, the churches and the employers all played a part in the moulding of a respectful citizenry. And, as A.H. Halsey observed in his Reith lectures of 1977:

We also do well to remind ourselves of the integrating aspects of war. It is a paradox of external conflict that it promotes equality and fraternity within the nation. This is true especially of modern 'total' war. If all must be called upon to fight for their country, all must be brought to believe that they have a stake in it. Both World Wars brought renewed promise for the future. They reinforced patriotic sentiment.<sup>2</sup>

This essay takes its cue in part from Professor Halsey's notion of the integrating effects of war. But it is also an expansion of my own previous analysis of the growth of political consensus in wartime. The thrust of the argument is that war defused class anxieties and led to a greater measure of agreement between the parties over the long-term management of Britain. Between the wars the political nation was polarized by social fears, which were reinforced by rival ideologies. The effect of war, and of coalition politics, was to bring about a rapprochement, and to some degree a fusion of values, between Right and Left. The Conservatives assimilated new priorities in the realm of social welfare, the heat was taken out of the debate between capitalism and socialism, and Labour was permeated by Churchillian assumptions in defence and foreign policy. So while the party system was resumed in 1945 with all the old rhetorical vigour, it now rested on a new foundation of social patriotism common to all parties and more significant in the long run than the issues between them. This essay attempts to show how the new synthesis was brought about and to suggest why it survived for a generation after the war. And if as a political historian I focus on the political world, I shall try to relate politics to social and economic life.

## 2. Politics between the Wars

A good way to begin a discussion of the Second World War is by reference to the First. Kenneth Morgan, in his book Consensus and Disunity, has shown how the First World War consigned to the scrap-heap the pre-1914 controversies between Liberals and Unionists. Edwardian politics were superseded by wartime collectivism. The Lloyd George government of 1916-18 embraced members of all parties, trades union as well as business leaders, and the 'general will' for victory. By 1918 wartime unity had generated an equally far-reaching consensus over postwar reconstruction which included social reform at home and League of Nations principles abroad. Dr. Morgan judges that the Coalition, above all through Lloyd George himself, offered some kind of vision of social harmony and international conciliation which many young men and women entering politics in 1919 found neither ignoble, nor undeserving of support. The Coalition tried to seize the opportunity, fleeting though it was, to take advantage of the war years and to create a middle way for a nation at peace with itself and in fruitful collaboration with its allies.<sup>3</sup>

The experiment was, however, frustrated. The British rebelled against national unity and returned to sectional and party battles. And this time party politics reasserted themselves in the form of the class-based competition between Labour and Conservative.

Dr. Morgan leans heavily upon the term 'consensus'. Contemporary historians are usually thought to have an axe to grind (they usually do), and to speak of 'consensus' in Britain today (1979) is at once to be suspected of conspiring to break up the Labour party in favour of a new combination led by Mr. Steel and Mr. Jenkins. Yet the term has a descriptive value on which non-marxist scholars should be able to agree. By definition a plural society is one which contains a variety of parties, pressure-groups, and economic interests. Power is unequally distributed among them and the degree of consensus depends upon the extent of agreement among the most powerful groups. In determining the extent of agreement both the electorate and the government are vitally influential. Voters have the power if they wish to accelerate or retard conflict by their choice. For example, had they voted in large numbers during the 1930s for the communist and fascist parties, they would have been opting for something close to civil war. Government has an even more powerful role of arbitration. Normally British governments try to find compromises which satisfy as wide a range of interests as possible: but they may also set out deliberately to isolate and repress powerful groups, as Baldwin set out in May 1926 to defeat the TUC. 'Consensus' does not imply complete harmony either in society or the political world, for such a thing is impossible. Dr. Morgan knows full well that during the First World War militant shop stewards were flinging spanners into war industry, while in Parliament the Asquithian Liberals sounded a discord after 1916. But consensus does imply a will towards compromise, and a modus vivendi, at a number of levels in Britain: (1) between the Cabinet and the Opposition front bench; (2) between capital and labour; (3) between ethnic groups, or between the centre and the regions; (4) among voters, in the sense that the great majority are willing to sustain moderate party politics. While these four variables can be distinguished they are in practice interdependent: if one collapses, all come under strain.

By comparison with many European nations over the same period, Britain between the wars was a kind of Sleepy Hollow where Baldwin could dream of pastoral innocence. By the yardstick of its own history, however, Britain was divided. The source of the division was class, for politics ran along class lines for the first time since the 1840s. True, there were middle class socialists and working class Tories, but everyone knew that Labour were the party of the trades

unions and the Conservatives the party of the industrialists. But class itself did not provide the explanation for disunity. Classes can often live together in peaceful coexistence, as can great powers or indeed men and women. The polarization of politics was due to a number of factors which aggravated class relations. To examine these in full would require another essay. They were, in brief, the economic Depression which began in 1920 and snowballed into the Great Slump of 1929; and the concomitant rise of ideological debate between socialists and capitalists in Britain, and communists and fascists in western Europe. The depression created widespread social insecurities which affected the middle classes as well as manual workers; the rise of ideology played on and reflected these anxieties. All the time a vigorous unpolitical Britain was busy attending football matches and young farmers' dances, without a thought for great issues; but the political nation was torn and embittered. The Labour party, somehow exempting Baldwin, literally hated the National government of 1931 for its minor economies at the expense of the unemployed. Conservatives and old-fashioned Liberals feared the inflationary possibilities of Labour governments as much as the prospect of nationalization. In the course of the 1930s these internal fears were gradually projected on to the European scene. Attlee believed that Chamberlain sympathized with fascist dictators for class reasons. Chamberlain believed that Labour were playing the game of Soviet Russia and embroiling western Europe in civil war. In the Spanish Civil War the Conservatives were almost solidly in sympathy with the Nationalists, while Labour were equally solid for the Republicans. Here again were the emotions of the General Strike, out this time for export. The alienation of Labour from the conservatives was reflected in one of the most sensitive and crucial areas of national policy: defence. For most of the 1930s the two major parties were in outright disagreement over the fundamental question of national security. From 1933 to 1937 Labour firmly rejected rearmament and as late as April 1939 opposed conscription. For a nation unwittingly on the brink of the Battle of Britain, this division was a dangerous element of weakness.

The strength of the political system, on the other hand, lay in the stability of parliamentary politics. As long as parliamentary or pluralistic politics survived, so did a latent capacity for reconciliation. After 1931 there were several undercurrents making for a fresh synthesis. There were younger Conservatives like Walter Elliot, with a cross-bench mentality; revisionist Labour politicians like Herbert Morrison; and trade union leaders who preferred half a loaf to no bread. There was much talk at the end of the decade of cross-party combinations to secure a 'national' foreign policy. And there was the specific phenomenon which has been aptly termed 'middle opinion'. The phrase refers to a broad and loosely-knit series of groupings which for one reason or another advocated a mixed economy, social welfare measures, and an agreed line of resistance to Italy and Germany.

The most coherent prophets of middle opinion were John Maynard Keynes and Harold Macmillan: The General Theory appeared in 1936, and The Middle Way in 1938. The personnel of middle opinion consisted of a sprinkling of Liberal, Labour and Conservative backbenchers guided and inspired by the "progressive intelligentsia" Here again is a term requiring elucidation. Progressive intellectuals were in one sense like a box of liquorice all-sorts. Some were public-spirited doctors or social scientists rather than party animals. Some were classical Liberals like Gilbert Murray; some New Liberals like J.A. Hobson; some socialists like Harold Laski. But whatever their disagreements they all had two beliefs in common: first that capitalism required a greater measure of collectivist regulation, and second that fascism must be opposed. The deep divide of the 1930s was between progressives of all shades on the one hand and the National government on the other. This explains why, after the mid-1930s, socialists and communists began to take up the cause of middle opinion. In order to

unite progressives of all kinds behind a common foreign policy, they dropped for the time being their demands for socialism and prepared to settle for better social services and the nationalization of coal. It was these notions of moderate collectivism, planted in the 1930s, which were to push through the floorboards of the wartime Coalition.

### **3. Warfare and Welfare**

The British welfare state, founded by the Liberals prior to 1914, had subsequently been adopted and augmented by the Conservatives. During the Slump it acted as a giant but rather leaky umbrella which afforded some shelter to the bulk of the labour force. Yet welfare became in the 1930s a major political issue. The social services were increasingly criticized by a vocal welfare lobby, spearheaded by progressive intellectuals and appealing particularly to Labour MPs. The welfare lobby were not simple pragmatists asking for more. Rather they were demanding national minimum standards of income and nutrition, calculated according to the needs of physical efficiency. The Conservatives for their part were struggling at this point to control and contain public expenditure, while the civil service was dominated by the power of the Treasury, the headquarters of the battle for economy. The government, therefore, stoutly resisted the demands of the welfare lobby. In 1936 the nutritionist John Boyd Orr was summoned to meet Kingsley Wood, the Minister of Health. Kingsley Wood wanted to know why Boyd Orr was making such a fuss about poverty and malnutrition when neither of them any longer existed. The episode epitomizes the politics of welfare in the 1930s.

The effect of the Second World War was to depoliticize welfare by establishing common standards which all parties accepted. The conservatives found themselves hustled along, by pressures largely beyond their control, to a point where they felt bound to accept a quantum leap in welfare provision. They stumbled into a commitment to comprehensive social security benefits at levels they had previously ruled out. They espoused a costly National Health Service which the party would have confidently vetoed before the war. By 1945 the Conservative and Labour parties had virtually identical welfare policies, though it must be granted that there were still contrasts of shading and emphasis.

How and why did the Conservatives assimilate these new policies? In my book The Road to 1945, and an article summarizing its conclusions, I have already analyzed in some detail the pattern of domestic politics in wartime, so I shall try to cover this particular ground as briefly as possible. With the formation of the Churchill Coalition in May 1940, and the retirement soon afterwards of Neville Chamberlain, the Conservative party lost the initiative in domestic affairs, and lapsed into an incoherent and fairly passive force. The vacuum was filled not only by the Labour party, but by collectivists of a variety of hues: Reith, Keynes, Beveridge, Cripps. One of the consequences of this new order was the triumph of the welfare lobby.

From May 1940 to December 1942 the Churchill government struggled through the crisis of the war, beset by the perils of invasion, the blitz, and the Battle of the Atlantic. In obscure corners of Whitehall one or two Ministers were tunneling away at post-war problems, but the administration as a whole from Churchill downwards had no time for such matters. Yet throughout this period there was pressure on the government to announce a commitment to social reform as an integral part of its 'war aims'. This agitation owed something to the rank-and-file of the Labour party, who were anxious to use the party's bargaining power in the Coalition to extract concessions from the conservatives. But the campaign was initiated, and in

the main conducted by, the progressive intelligentsia. Prominent among the publicists demanding the promise of a 'new Britain' were J.B. Priestley, Julian Huxley, John Boyd Orr, E.H. Carr, Harold Laski, Ritchie Calder and Francis Williams. The arguments they advanced for linking social reform to the war effort are interesting but need not concern us here. The nub of the matter was a bid for power and influence by a band of collectivist intellectuals strongly entrenched in the universities, the press, and publishing. For a long time the campaign seemed to have no effect. Churchill was adamantly opposed to the reintroduction of domestic politics in the middle of the war, and brushed aside letters from Laski or editorials in the newspapers. but in the end Churchill was outflanked and outmanoeuvred by William Beveridge. Beveridge was to take all the proposals for welfare advocated by the progressive camp and incorporate them in his report. His impact on social policy in 1942 is comparable with the impact of Churchill on the conduct of the war in 1940.

Beveridge is sometimes inaccurately described as a lifelong Liberal. But as his biographer Jose Harris has demonstrated, Beveridge's outlook underwent longterm fluctuations. In the Slump he was an enthusiast for the National government, wage cuts, deflation, and the market economy. But with his nose for trends Beveridge by the late 1930s had begun to gravitate back towards collectivism. The war, with its machinery of economic controls, aroused his enthusiasm for planning, and he described his report as taking Britain 'half-way to Moscow'. Formally speaking the report was a government document. In reality it was the manifesto of Beveridge as the leader of progressive opinion. Having been put in charge of a lowgrade technical committee on social insurance, Beveridge had become fired by the ambition to make history. He proceeded to map out a comprehensive programme for a state-provided national minimum which encompassed all-in social insurance, family allowances, employment policy, and a National Health Service.

How far Beveridge should be credited with machiavellian foresight is difficult to judge. But his report on the day of publication proved to be the British equivalent of a coup d'état, and the coup was to prove irreversible. The forces of inertia were in an unusually feeble state: the Treasury eclipsed by the mechanisms of physical planning, the conservatives aware of their dependence on Labour and 'the people'. The report happened to appear at the turning-point of the British war effort when peace and victory first came into sight. In November the church bells rang out in celebration of the victory of El Alamein; in December the BBC and the press rang out their own bells in celebration of the Beveridge report. The Labour ministers insisted that Beveridge's proposals should be accepted as the basis of post-war planning, and from January 1943 social reconstruction was built into the administration as a priority second only to the requirements of the war effort. A government white paper of 1944 formally endorsed the Beveridge plan, which thus became the property of all three parties to the Coalition. The Conservatives accepted the New Deal with varying degrees of enthusiasm: a minority were vocally pro-Beveridge, a minority strongly but secretly opposed, and the middle ranks pragmatically absorbed the spirit of the age. The Beveridge report was so overwhelmingly popular that rejection of it would have entailed political suicide.

#### **4. The Question of Economic Planning**

It would be misleading to echo the old nursery rhyme by announcing that wherever the Coalition went, consensus was sure to follow. In economic policy the picture was more complex. The Second World War brought with it an apparatus of state controls which closely resembled that of a centralized socialist economy. Food supplies, raw materials, building,

investment, consumption and manpower were all regulated by Whitehall through a system of quantitative allocation. The Labour oligarchy of politicians and union leaders played a prominent part in the administration of controls, which also appealed on ideological grounds to the socialist instincts of the party. Within the Conservative party, controls were accepted as essential for the war effort, but from 1942 onwards there were signs of a backlash, and by 1945 Beaverbrook and others were waging a strong campaign against them. In the 1945 general election there was a confused debate over the issue which has been admirably summed up by McCallum and Readman:

The Conservatives attacked the controls mainly because they saw in them the instrument by which their opponents could carry out the planning policies which they regarded as pernicious. The Conservatives were determined to prevent measures which had been introduced for temporary use in an emergency, being retained permanently for other purposes....But the Labour party angrily declared that the Tories wanted to whip off controls at once, so that they could make a thundering profit out of the sale of scarce goods. 'The anti-controllers and anti-planners desire to sweep away public controls, simply in order to give the profiteering interests and the privileged rich an entirely free hand to plunder the rest of the nation as shamelessly as they did in the nineteen-twenties.'<sup>4</sup>

Historians of the period must certainly take account of the conflicting prejudices of the parties over controls. But campaign oratory and partisan statements can be very misleading. If we compare 1945 with 1918 it becomes apparent that in 1945 the parties shared three powerful common assumptions about economic management which had not been present in 1918. At the end of the First World War the Lloyd George government had decided to dismantle economic controls as swiftly as possible. This decision had been followed by a dramatic inflationary boom and an equally dramatic deflationary slump. During the Second World War both trade union leaders and industrialists on the one hand, and the leading Conservative and Labour ministers on the other, were determined to prevent a recurrence of this experience, and to plan for a transitional period during which controls would be retained. This commitment had been spelled out in the 1944 white paper on employment policy. Contrary to the allegations of the conservatives, the Labour party had no strategy for the translation of temporary wartime controls into permanent features of economic planning. There was in this respect a large gap in Labour thinking. After 1945, as Samuel H. Beer has demonstrated in Modern British Politics, the system of controls began to break up because in a plural or 'democratic' society quantitative planning was unworkable in peacetime. For their part the Conservatives were not, as Labour alleged, planning to abolish controls at a stroke. On the contrary, a number of surviving controls inherited by the incoming Conservative government of 1951 were retained: building controls continued until 1955 and coal rationing until 1958.

The second area of common ground lay outside party politics proper, in the 'corporate state' created by the war. Between the wars successive Conservative governments had operated a double standard in relation to industry, keeping close contact with industrialists but seeking to exclude the trade unions from consultation. After 1940 the trade union leaders were recruited to Whitehall. But it did not of course follow that now the employers were excluded. On the contrary, the war established a tripartite system in which the Federation of British Industries, the TUC and the civil service collaborated through a dense network of advisory committees. The archetypal body in this respect, set up by Ernest Bevin in May 1940, was the Joint Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Labour, with its seven industrialists nominated by

the British Employers' Confederation (the twin body of the FBI), and seven industrialists nominated by the TUC. In a sense, therefore, the battle between the parties in 1945 was very much a ritual conflict representing the historic clash of capital and labour in years gone by. Behind the rhetorical class war there loomed a new industrial constitution in which both parties had a vested interest. There were strong anti-capitalist sentiments in the Labour party of 1945. But from the point of view of Attlee's Cabinet, management of the economy depended heavily upon the co-operation of businessmen. While it lasted, the system of controls was administered largely by men drawn from the private sector. Investment, for example, was controlled by a Capital Issues Committee which consisted of seven bankers, stockbrokers and industrialists. The employees of a single firm, Unilever, filled ninety posts in the Ministry of Food. But quite apart from the formal structure of controls, Labour depended upon the voluntary co-operation of industrialists. Thus in 1948 the Federation of Industries successfully enjoined on its members a policy of dividend restraint which, matched by wage restraint on the part of the TUC, lasted until 1950. During the Second World War, co-operation was the primary ingredient of the relations between capital and labour, and the co-operation was maintained into the post-war world. Nor was this state of relative harmony confined to the higher regions of industrial and state bureaucracy. The war initiated greater co-operation at shop-floor level, and this too survived the outbreak of peace.

Finally, the third of the new elements of consensus introduced during the war: Keynesian economics. Kinglsey Wood's budget of 1941 was the first budget to be based on Keynesian techniques of income analysis. From 1941 to 1948 the Keynesian 'revolution' was not of great importance, for the economy was managed primarily through physical rather than financial and fiscal controls. But Keynes and his disciples had penetrated Whitehall and secured some recognition for their objectives in the employment white paper of 1944. Through this document the coalition committed itself and its component parties to "the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment after the war." The progress of Keynesianism into the bloodstream of politics was slow, and was only just beginning in 1945. But the war had brought about the first injection, and in the long run Keynesian doctrines were to prove beautifully adaptable to the minds of both revisionist Labour and moderate Conservative politicians. For Labour revisionists, Keynesianism promised to deliver many of the benefits of socialism - above all, full employment - while dispensing with the cumbersome and unpopular mechanism of nationalization. For Conservatives, it served as a prophylactic against socialism, as a means to expansion of profits in the private sector, and as a popular formula for government. For both sides Keynesianism promised a higher standard of living without the need to resort to class conflict. Like all economic doctrines it claimed a scientific base and was proclaimed in its heyday as a revealed truth which all men of goodwill must follow. Only in recent years have we been able to realize the extent to which Keynesianism was a precarious theory sustained by circumstances rather than its inherent validity.

## **5. The Patriotism of Labour**

At the beginning of this essay it was argued that the war brought about a partial fusion or exchange of values between Right and Left. The Conservatives absorbed new standards of social welfare; Labour, new attitudes in defence and foreign affairs. In pursuing the second half of this equation it is as well to observe that no party is a monolith, least of all the Labour party, which Harold Wilson has well described as a 'broad church'. Both during and after the Second World War there were left-wingers who rejected or at any rate deviated markedly from the political consensus defined here. But we are entitled for present purposes to identify the party



with the policies of the parliamentary leaders and the National Executive Committee.

The Second World War accelerated a reorientation of Labour attitudes towards defence and foreign affairs which began in the mid-1930s. The extent of the change can be simply illustrated. When the National government began to rearm in 1934, Labour opposed the decision, maintaining that all arguments ought to be pooled under the international control of the League of Nations. But after 1945 an inner ring of Attlee's Cabinet decided in secret to build an independent British nuclear deterrent. Admittedly this was a decision concealed from Parliament and party alike, but parallel changes of heart were openly expressed. In 1919 the Labour party had urged the immediate abolition of conscription, and still opposed it in 1939. In 1947 the party accepted a twelve-month period of conscription, later extended to two years. After six years of Labour government, Britain in 1951 had a higher per capita expenditure on defence than the United States.

How is the transition in Labour attitudes to be explained? It is often the case that ideas and assumptions are proved inadequate by the march of events. The early Labour party was deeply utopian in belief and its subsequent history was partly a study in the bankruptcy of rational idealism. The Slump exposed the bankruptcy of Ramsay MacDonald's analysis of domestic affairs. The Nazi revolution undermined Labour's theories of international relations, which rested broadly on the assumption that capitalism was the root of war and international conflict. This diagnosis derived originally from the radical critique of imperialism developed by Hobson and Brailsford before 1914, and the attack on secret diplomacy and the balance of power launched by the Union of Democratic Control during the First World War. According to the radical thesis, the causes of war were economic and lay in the competition between rival oligarchies for trade and investment: traditional diplomacy was the accomplice of plutocratic interests. The peoples of the world, on the other hand, were supposed to have a vested interest in peace and international co-operation. After 1931, as quasi-marxist ideas began to influence the party, the analysis was sharpened. Bevin, who is generally depicted as a hardheaded 'realist', told the Labour party conference in May 1939 that one of the greatest sources of international disorder had been the financial policy of the City of London. "I am anxious", he declared, "to prevent this movement fighting for the preservation of the Paris Bourse, the London Stock Exchange, the Amsterdam Exchange, and Wall Street."<sup>5</sup> In the 1930s the consequence of Labour's analysis was a highly paradoxical contrast between the foreign and defence policies of government and opposition. Labour urged the government to organize international cooperation to halt aggression through the machinery of the League of Nations: they claimed to be the party of world order. But simultaneously they resisted until late in the day plans for rearmament. The government, on the other hand, pressed on with rearmament but rejected the role of international policeman on the grounds that the League of Nations would either fail or precipitate a general war. Both parties aimed at international appeasement: but Labour espoused grandiose utopian methods of obtaining it, while the government opted for piecemeal pressure and negotiation.

The impact of the war on Labour's international outlook is the subject of Trevor Burridge's book, British Labour and Hitler's War. He argues that the war brought out in the main body of the Labour movement a latent realism or commitment to national interests and the balance of power. This was reinforced by the experience of Labour leaders in wartime government. The notion that Labour's role in the Coalition was confined to the home front is, he points out, incorrect. Labour ministers from 1943 onwards took part in the discussion and formulation of international policy and were well aware of the advice of the foreign Office and

the Chiefs of Staff. In September 1939 Labour was united by the belief that the enemy was not Germany or the German people, but Nazism, and this distinction remained 'a cardinal tenet of all official Labour pronouncements on the war until 1943, and was never relinquished by the Left wing.' But this residual optimism was purged by the ordeal of total war. By 1943 Attlee was confiding to Dalton that he had been mistaken about the Versailles Treaty: it had been too soft, not too hard on the Germans, and this time Germany must be stripped of her industry and rendered incapable of starting another war.

Disillusion with the German people was accompanied by a greater sense of realpolitik in world affairs. In the early 1930s Labour had preached against blocs, alliances and the theory of military deterrence. By the end of the decade Labour had so adapted its concept of the League as to convert it into a Churchillian grand alliance, armed to the teeth. The Second World War vindicated both the theory of the balance of power and the necessity of the use of force. The perpetuation of the wartime alliance was understood by 1945 as the only guarantee against the resurgence of Germany. From this position it was but a short step to the maintenance of the balance against the Soviet Union. In 1920 Bevin had been ready to organize the Councils of Action to prevent a war with Russia over Poland. In 1948 he was ready to organize NATO to defend western Europe against Russia. In the 1930s Aneurin Bevan had eloquently opposed rearmament. But in 1940 he wrote lyrically of the Battle of Britain fighter pilots in the pages of Tribune, and in 1948 was ready to challenge the Russian blockade of west Berlin by sending through a land force convoyed by tanks.

The Labour party between the wars, in spite of two brief periods of office, felt and behaved like outsiders in a country that belonged to someone else. The war did a great deal to overcome this sense of alienation. Faced with the prospect of Nazism, Labour recognized that they too had a profound vested interest in the maintenance of British society. Even Chamberlain's Britain, Orwell concluded, was worth fighting for. The active participation of intellectuals and trade unionists in the war effort put an end to a generation of frustration and stimulated a sense of patriotism. Two illustrations, one from the intelligentsia and one from industrial Britain, will serve to bear this judgment out.

One of the Labour party's rising young economists in the 1930s was Evan Durbin. The son of a Baptist minister, Durbin belonged to the radical nonconformist tradition, and his father had been a pacifist in the First World War. In 1942 Durbin wrote the following passage of candid self-criticism:

When I was a young man I did not realise the essential nature of courage and discipline. It appeared to me then that the military virtues were overrated and that the ordered drill of the barrack square was repulsive, and faintly absurd. I hated the harsh and melancholy note of the bugle. I thought personal liberty and the free mind (priceless possessions) were endangered by the strengthening of our armed forces and the growth of order.

But where should we be now if mine had been the prevailing opinion of the nation? What would have happened to my personal liberty if we had stripped ourselves of weapons and cultivated exclusively the graces of civilisation? The answer is obvious - cultured intellectuals and members of pacifist societies would have been scrubbing out latrines in concentration camps and the mass of the people would be labouring under an intolerable slavery.

We are still free because some of us are more sensible than myself. The pacifist continues to speak in pulpit and market-place because the strong ships of the Royal Navy patrol the Straits of Dover and our merchant seamen drown in the Atlantic approaches. The cultured intellectual is able to make his quiet (though necessary) contribution to winning the war in the offices of Whitehall because of handful of Air Force pilots are soaring into battle above the clouds of Kent and Sussex, Tobruk and Asmara, Malta and Cyprus.<sup>6</sup>

A glance at the writings of Strachey, Orwell or even Kingsley Martin would reveal a similar process of re-education.

One of the great symbols of the divided society of the pre-war years was the town of Jarrow, celebrated for the march of its unemployed workers to London in 1936. In February 1978 BBC TV presented a documentary, Kelly, which displays another aspect of the history of Tyneside. With the coming of rearmament the local shipyards were once again set to work, and among the ships they built was the warship Kelly, commanded by Lord Louis Mountbatten. The launching of the Kelly was a great event, a symbol of the renewal of Tyneside. In 1940 the Kelly in a heroic episode was almost sunk but managed to limp home to be greeted by cheering crowds on the banks of the Tyne. Mountbatten, therefore, became something of a Tyneside hero; and the legend of Jarrow is matched locally by the legend of the Kelly. The exploits of one particular warship are of course exceptional, but the episode demonstrates a connection between rearmament, full employment, and patriotism, which must surely have coloured the outlook of trade union leaders after, as well as during the Second World War.

## **6. The Post-War Legacy**

To a remarkable extent the wartime synthesis of patriotism and social reform survived into the peace and formed the basis of a post-war era of relative tranquility and agreement. There were storms over the nationalization of steel, Suez, and (within the Labour party), the H-Bomb. But there remained the strong bipartisan pillars of the welfare state, the managed economy, and NATO. If we inquire why the post-war consensus lasted so long, the answers are not far to seek. The Second World War, unlike the First, was followed by an era of full employment and economic growth which sustained good industrial relations and the politics of social compromise. Then again, the Second World War, unlike the First, was almost immediately followed by a second external crisis in Europe as the Cold War tightened its grip. The pressure for national unity was sustained by Stalin. Finally, there was a common conviction among political leaders that the inter-war years were a period of failure which must not be repeated: there must be no second Jarrow march and no second Munich, no more League utopianism and no more pacificism. The Slump and the recurrence of war were mighty shocks which enforced a more searching inquiry into the ills of the world than had been attempted after 1914.

The era of consensus is now past in Britain, replaced by an era of militant pressure-group politics in which governments themselves are forced to take tough and unpopular decisions which swell the volume of discontent. The Second World War, therefore, has become the subject of nostalgia, a nostalgia which focuses upon a warm spirit of community at a time when social differences were comical rather than tragic. The Second World War is a social myth in the true sense of a story which embodies a genuine collective experience. The generation which lived through the war years has always in mind the reference point of wartime

community. Thus both Michael Foot and Margaret Thatcher have sought to evoke, from their different angles, the spirit of 1940. There is, therefore, considerable point in the kind of anecdotal social history, spurned by sociologists, which dwells on Churchill's V-sign, 'Dad's Army', Vera Lynn and NAAFI canteens. For people of many different backgrounds, there are common memories encapsulated in many a hoary yarn. The British now live in a new set of conditions and it is of course impossible to put the clock back. In any case who would want to do so when the price would be another Hitler? But the myth of community in the Second World War is itself evidence in support of this essay. The social and political history of Britain is not merely about the competition of various groups for wealth and power. It is about the cohesion and stability of a community. The Second World War was a period of modest working class advance, consolidated by the post-war Labour government. But this advance was a part of a wider process which established for a generation a greater degree of social harmony and political consensus.

### NOTES

- 1 T.H. Pear English Social Differences (London, 1955), p 69. Pear quotes here from his own comments in 1942.
- 2 A.H. Halsey Change in British Society (London, 1978), p 152.
- 3 Kenneth O. Morgan Consensus and Disunity (London, 1979), p 375.
- 4 R.B. McCallum and Alison Readman The British General Election of 1945 (London, 1947), p 54.
- 5 Report of the 38th Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 29 May - 2 June 1939, p 243.
- 6 E.F.M. Durbin What Have We To Defend? (London, 1942), p 46-7.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### POLITICS AND THE WAR: ASPECTS OF THE CANADIAN NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

John English

The hanging of Benito Mussolini in a square in Milan brought Mackenzie King special satisfaction on an early spring evening in 1945. "Apart from Stalin," King proudly noted in his diary, "I (am) the only original left on either side." And, even in Stalin's case, "I have, of course, led my party longer...."<sup>1</sup> At one time King's endurance seemed as easily explained as Stalin's. While Stalin used force King, in Frank Scott's 1957 words, "skillfully avoided what was wrong/Without saying what was right,..." He "blunted us," never allowing our sides "to take shape". Lacking any higher goal than remaining in office, King shifted his party temporarily leftward and stole away the initiative that his CCF opponents had first and genuinely possessed. He endured, and through the thickets and land-mines of wartime politics, "...he led us back to where we were before."<sup>2</sup>

But in 1945 we were not where we had been before the war. A comparison of the pre-war and late wartime writings of Frank Scott illustrates the change well. In Canada Today, published in 1938, Scott describes a nation where the "political situation... is not stable," where the absence of "firm leadership from Ottawa leaves the sense of national unity voiceless and unorganized against the attacks of provincial autonomists," and, finally, where "A sense of direction is wanting, and none can predict whence it will come." Canada could not make any significant international contribution, Scott declared, because "Canadians must first make up their own minds as to what kind of society they want and how they propose to get it." In 1938 Scott himself possessed a vision of an alternative society, one whose contours he and other socialist intellectuals had described in Social Planning for Canada, but Scott knew few shared that vision which posited a fundamental restructuring of the existing economic system. Instead, as Scott admitted, between a "right wing" Dominion government and "the scattered forces of the political left" lay "a wide area of dissatisfied citizens now knowing where to turn." By 1943, however, Frank Scott and David Lewis saw these citizens turning, not towards their schemes of the 1930s but definitely to the left, towards support for a society that distributed its benefits more fairly. Ottawa could now give "firm leadership" and Canadian labour could thrive, Labour did, but the CCF declined. In their studies of labour and the CCF, Gad Horowitz and Walter Young while admitting the internal weaknesses of the CCF and labour, gave most credit for the CCF demise to the "smokescreen" with which King shrouded his politics and confused his opponents. Gerald Caplan, following Coldwell and Joliffe in 1945, blamed virulent anti-socialist propaganda for the defeat of the CCF.<sup>3</sup> Yet when later scholars, having the advantage of greater access to documents, finally pierced through the smokescreen of King's wartime politics, these interpretations have come to seem less convincing. King did, of course, use ambiguity most effectively, and he also consciously promoted welfare programmes with the aim of undercutting CCF support. But there is far more. Jack Granatstein has ably described various other impulses, apart from the CCF, including independent bureaucratic initiative, Cabinet rivalry, and general pressures of social change, that led the Liberals towards the welfare state and political success. In the end, Granatstein judges the reasons for King's victory in 1945 as "impossible to discover" although he cites a King letter saying that the victory was "little short of miraculous." Apparently not believing in miracles, Donald Creighton, like some wartime critics of the new social managers,<sup>4</sup> attributed pre-eminence in wartime decision-

making to the planners, "a new, superbly confident generation of federal civil servants" who for the 1945 federal election had "crammed" the "Liberal shop windows... with the most appealing display of attractive goods." Fair enough, but Creighton does not explain why all the party windows looked very much the same in 1945. In fact, the most recent research has tended to elevate the politician's part at the expense of the "planner." Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, for example, have shown how that most treasured icon of Keynesian influence, the 1945 White Paper on Employment and Income, reflected the politician's will as much as the bureaucrats, and they have also revealed how little success bureaucrats' schemes had when their political masters opposed them. Furthermore, William Young, in his excellent study of wartime information, has shown how a governmental agency popularly thought to be dominated by leftist intellectuals nevertheless served best the interests of the Liberal party. Young's emphasis on the importance of pre-war and wartime interest groups in the creation of fora where varying opinions could meet in wartime on common grounds is an important contribution to understanding the intellectual foundations of wartime politics.<sup>5</sup> Some international comparisons may also help.

Paul Addison's study of Britain's road to 1945 reveals that Labour and Conservative shop windows had also come to look much the same in Britain. Beneath the sound and fury of Tory and socialist rhetoric in 1945 lay a "new consensus" that was "positive and purposeful" and was committed to "pragmatic' reform in a mixed economy." Like Young, Addison believes that creating this consensus in Britain, the "Progressive Centre," which rejected socialism because it called for too much change and free enterprise because it wanted retrenchment, played a major part. The war years in Britain, Addison writes, "can be understood as a phase of genuine change in which a spirit of parsimony and caution gave way to a spirit of greater welfare and more confident management."<sup>6</sup> In Canada, too, this same new spirit gave that sense of direction whose deficiency Scott had lamented in 1938. Canada's road to 1945 was not the same, and along the way there were some forks Canadians did not take. Both King's critics and his admirers have tended to focus upon the final destination, the election of 1945, and upon how Canadians were led towards it. This essay proposes to explore why Canadians followed, and what choices they did not make.

The public opinion polls carried out by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion and the Wartime Information Board provide us with a richer and a more continuous image of what Canadians thought than the snapshots frozen in time that elections represent. Moreover, World War Two brought to Canada a social statistical zeal and skill lacking earlier, with the result that we know more about how Canadians lived and worked than we do for pre-war generations. That the quality of material life affects political choice in a modern democratic society is not a vulgar marxist assumption but rather, a well-established finding of social scientific research. And yet there is one important qualification a student of Canadian politics in wartime must make. If an election had been held on the issue of conscription, consensus on socio-economic issues would likely have been of almost minimal importance. The public opinion polls offer strong support for this common supposition. Mackenzie King escaped Laurier's and Borden's fates because he had won an election in 1940 and Maurice Duplessis lost one in 1939. His freedom was thus much greater, and his fate was much different.

In 1939, however, most Canadians agreed with King that their freedom was limited by the sad condition of the Canadian economy and its apparent inability to support an extensive war commitment.<sup>7</sup> Canada had not yet recovered the levels of production attained in 1928. Unemployment was probably about 600,000 or 20 per cent of the industrial work force, and the



iron and steel industry were operating at half capacity. As a nation we purchased, per capita, fewer goods and services than Americans and even Britons. That means we were neither so well-fed nor even so well-clothed as the other democracies, a fact not lost upon Canadian critics and, one imagines, many citizens.<sup>8</sup> The Depression, in Canada, as in the United States, had exaggerated regional economic differences and increased the degree of inequality in the society. Rural areas were hardest hit, and the west was affected more than the east. Nevertheless, the general election of 1940 did not witness significant voter shifts as the Liberals took 51.5 per cent of the popular vote and 181 seats. Only on the prairies and in British Columbia did the Liberals fail to capture the majority in the popular vote although even there they took most of the seats. As Jack Granatstein remarks, "Canada apparently had voted for stability, for a moderate war effort, for Mackenzie King."<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that the CCF made no gains, returning five of its eight members from Saskatchewan (with 29 per cent of the popular vote), and losing seats in British Columbia and Manitoba. Its popular vote actually fell from 9 per cent to 8 per cent of the total. Even A.A. Heaps' Winnipeg North seat held since 1925 fell before the Liberal assault. Except for British Columbia and Manitoba, the CCF had no significant presence in urban Canada. Its poor performance in Ontario (less than 6 per cent of the popular vote) probably indicated the harmful effects of its ambiguity towards the war. While Labour in Britain was benefiting from the association of Conservatives with appeasement and was soon to share the responsibilities of power, the CCF in Canada could not, it seemed, ever make the war their issue.

King nevertheless sensed that the economic disturbances which war would bring could benefit the CCF ultimately. Thus he supported unemployment insurance in January 1940 because he was "anxious to keep Liberalism in control in Canada (and) not let third parties wrest away from us our rightful place in the matter of social reform."<sup>10</sup> The Prime Minister remembered the leftward and populist swing of public opinion during the last war, and he recognized that wartime sacrifice would lead to demands for more equality within the society. There was, too, what scholars of government expenditure have called the displacement effect: wartime needs accustom citizens to higher taxes permitting higher rates and new expenditures after the war ends. This was appreciated early in the war by Canadian officials and led to openness to innovation that had been absent before 1939.<sup>11</sup> One saw this in the Dominion Provincial Conference of January 1941 where the limits of political possibility were clearly broadened even if politicians of the day did not immediately test them.

By that time, unemployment had almost disappeared. Only 40,000 remained on urban relief in December 1940, and in March 1941 the federal government ended its financial contributions to direct relief costs. With full employment came the inevitable strain on prices and in the six months following March 1941, the price index rose at a rate of 1.1 per cent per month, over three times the rate for the preceding twelve months. In the final months of 1941 the government, fearing a repetition of World War One's inflation and its consequences, adopted a universal price and wage ceiling. This was to be an extraordinarily effective device in the capable hands of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. After mid 1942, the price and cost of living indices changed very little until 1946. But in January 1942, the many newly employed Canadians did not know this.<sup>12</sup>

Canada's first public opinion poll asked in December 1941 what Canadians thought of the new price law. Over three-quarters approved. This was hardly surprising since 44 per cent thought they were "worse off" than a year ago and, only 27 per cent thought themselves "better off". Professional and white collar workers grumbled the most about their status and those in

the cities complained more than those in the country. Yet there was strong support throughout Canada for government intervention, for controls (76 per cent), for prohibition of strikes in war industries (78 per cent), for government allocation of civilian manpower (72 per cent), for conscription for overseas service (usually 60 per cent), and even for stricter limits on liquor purchase (60 per cent). But this solid support for an interventionist state had not yet congealed into a political revolt, for voter preferences expressed in a poll taken on February 7, 1942 showed almost exactly the same party standings as the 1940 general election.<sup>13</sup>

	1940	1942
Liberal	51	55
Conservative	31	30
CCF	8	10

What these first polls did reveal was a nation divided on the question of conscription, between francophone and anglophone. One found similar differences on such questions as financial assistance to Britain and liquor regulation, but on domestic questions there was a large degree of agreement. There is no doubt that the war was the paramount issue, and probably for this reason voters apparently had not changed their traditional voting preferences. The seriousness of the war had limited the potential for political change. Thus when the pollsters asked in June 1942 whether Canada should "win the war first and then think about the peace, or to start now thinking about the kind of peace we want after the war," 57.5 per cent answered "win the war first" and 39 per cent "plan peace now." Business leaders and "intellectual leaders", however, were much less disposed to postpone consideration of post-war problems.<sup>14</sup>

Using this information we can sketch a rough outline of Canadian voters between December 1941 and June 1942 when the York South by-election and the conscription plebiscite took place. Urban white collar, and anglophone, voters were probably the most discontented with government policy. This type of individual tends to be better educated and wealthier and, according to psychological studies, more policy oriented.<sup>15</sup> This group may have been the vanguard of the political revolt that followed in 1943. Both the foundation for such a political revolt (the sense of being "worse off") and political instruments (a more interventionist state) were present, yet no common image of political change yet existed. Perhaps Mackenzie King best expressed the confused image of the possibility of change in a 1941 diary comment: I can see that there has been some guiding power leading me to express the post-war endeavour in terms from the Book of Revelations. In the spring of 1941 Industry and Humanity was an exegesis of the Book of Revelations; two years later, it was the inspiration for Keynes' General Theory. Reform came down from the heavens to solid political ground.<sup>16</sup>

Between February and December 1942 the price and wage controls showed their effectiveness, and by the end of the year, so had the allied forces. The strength of the support for a larger state role in the organization of society remained and strengthened throughout the year. The best example, perhaps, is the support for prohibition which grew from 20 per cent in February 1942 to 29 per cent in September and 37 per cent in December. In contrast to the United States where traditional hostility to state regulation among all classes continued, 49 per cent of English Canadians agreed with the following statement in August 1942:

Since the war started, the government has taken a bigger and bigger share in the

control of business, industry, and agriculture. Some people say this control should continue after the war.

Interestingly, only 37 per cent of French Canadians agreed. In other aspects of governmental control, too, francophones showed greater suspicion of governmental action. In September 1942, the Gallup Poll revealed yet another difference when the CCF soared to 21 per cent in public support, deriving nearly all the support from English Canada. In 1943, CCF support reached its apogee moving to 23 per cent in February and 29 per cent in September. Never again was this level attained, and by June 1944 the party had fallen back to 21 per cent where it stayed - give or take two points - until the war ended.<sup>17</sup>

The CCF in 1943 obviously was ready to take advantage of the general trust in governmental intervention which cut across party lines. For example, even Conservatives agreed with the statement that all public utilities should be owned by the government.<sup>18</sup> The CCF's rise shows clearly and rather ironically that the conscription plebiscite had cleansed the party of its major blemish, its ambiguous stand on the war. The post-war world had become paramount in the minds of Canadians, and if many Canadians had forgotten the CCF's position on the war in 1939, they had not forgotten the depression. These Canadians, the Wartime Information Board reported, faced the future with a feeling "akin to dread." They were also quite sceptical about the government's promises that they would prevent this frightening future.<sup>19</sup>

The CCF in 1943 thus broke through most of the traditional barriers it had faced. Party allegiance became weaker, no doubt in part because of the geographical mobility the war caused. Most important to the CCF leaders was the dramatic increase in support among the urban industrial working class. This was most dramatically evident in the Ontario general election of August 4, 1943 where CCF supporters swept most working class constituencies. In most others, the party ran third, often a poor third. Polls indicated that the provincial support for the CCF and the other parties in Ontario was almost exactly the same as federal support for the parties. In the Ontario election, the CCF received 32.4 per cent of the vote. A month later its national support was measured at 29 per cent. The other area of significant CCF support was of course western Canada where in September 1943, 41 per cent expressed support for the CCF as opposed to 23 per cent for both other parties.<sup>21</sup>

Quite apart from these election results, what surely encouraged Canadian socialists was the extent to which party supporters recognized the party platform. In polls, CCF supporters consistently supported nationalization, government intervention, and labour's claims enthusiastically. When significant groups were asked which political party would treat labour, farmers, white-collar workers, business men and industrial leaders best, the reply must have heartened the CCF.<sup>22</sup>

	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Liberal</b>	<b>CCF</b>
Farmers	23	25	25
Labour	11	17	42
White-collar	24	26	19
Businessmen & Industry	44	21	5

Similarly, the oft-cited poll, taken in October 1943, which showed Canada more reform-

oriented than either Britain or the United States led many to prophesy a new society when the soldiers returned:<sup>23</sup>

"After the war would you like to see many changes or reforms made in Canada, or would you rather the country remain pretty much as it was before the war?"

	<b>Canada</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>Britain</b>
Reform	71	57	32
No Reform	23	34	58
Undecided	6	9	10

Nor Was the CCF support confined to the young. In Ontario, for example, supporters were found at all levels,

21-29	- 26%
30-39	- 29
40-49	- 27
50 plus	- 21

The war, it seemed, would bring not Armageddon but the New Jerusalem.

David Lewis and Frank Scott were ecstatic: "This war," they declared, "is becoming a people's war." The people, "roused by the burdens and sacrifice, are finding their own strength, sensing their own potentialities, and seeing their role of leadership in the revolutionary process." We were in the war's "second stage" where our thoughts no longer dwelt on victory above all else.<sup>25</sup> The farmer and the worker could now claim what was rightfully theirs. The coalition seemed as solid as any that political parties had built in our past.

It was not. Many of the recent converts changed their minds again as Damascus neared. Why they did is not easily explained. The notion that a propaganda campaign undermined the CCF is simplistic. As one recent thesis has shown, the anti-CCF propaganda of Trestrail, Murray and others gained greatest circulation after the decline of the CCF in the public opinion polls. Moreover, the propaganda, despite the support of some Liberals, probably hurt the Grits as well as the CCF. Business, the polls showed clearly, was not very fond of Liberalism between 1943 and 1945; their hearts, their votes, and, in most cases, their contributions belonged to Bracken. The areas where the propaganda flourished were not those where CCF was strongest.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, the CCF remained in 1945, as in 1943, the political party primarily identified with "social security" and economic equality. Since the CCF decline in urban English Canada seems to have begun after September 1943, several months before the Liberals proclaimed their commitment to reform, the King swing to the left cannot be the full explanation for CCF decline.

Indeed, as the Liberals began to move left, Canadians seemed to move towards the centre at the beginning of 1944. The polls in 1944 showed a retreat from the reformist feeling the previous years' polls had evoked. Unlike 1943, CCF supporters were increasingly isolated in their advocacy of government ownership and intervention. Thus, while 51 per cent of CCF supporters approved nationalization of life insurance companies and 49 per cent of banks, only 28 per cent of Canadians generally approved of life insurance nationalization and 23 per cent of banks. Both nationalizations were planks in the Regina Manifesto. Even greater isolation

occurred when pollsters asked what was the best way to keep up employment after the war. Thirty-five per cent of CCF supporters answered government ownership of industry, but only 3 per cent and 8 per cent of Conservatives and Liberals respectively answered in this way. This poll, taken in September 1944, contrasted strongly with a similar December 1943 poll which showed much more Liberal and Conservative sympathy for public ownership. What these polls suggest is the definite limits on the growth of CCF support. As their platform became better known, party support began to weaken. Moreover, their commitment to expansion of government control conflicted with the growing sentiment among farmers and workers in 1944 that controls should not last.

Western support for the CCF weakened first. Between September 1943 and late January 1944, the Gallup poll showed a 7 per cent decline in Western support for the CCF, although it remained at 34 per cent, the most popular party. Similarly, support among farmers for the CCF nationally tumbled from 25 per cent in September 1943 to 17 per cent in June 1944.<sup>28</sup> The Saskatchewan election victory in that same month may have been less striking than it would have been a year earlier. Some Liberal organizers believed this, and blamed the existence of controls for the Liberal defeat in the province.<sup>29</sup> The CCF thus profited from the opposition to the application of a technique of which they philosophically approved.

But it was urban Ontario where the old parties gained most and where CCF hopes<sup>30</sup> were most bitterly dashed. The polls, unfortunately, are not so helpful here.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, we do have some valuable information on a single constituency which may illuminate what happened between 1943 and 1945.

In late 1943 and early 1944, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with labour and civic officials commissioned a large scale survey of an area roughly the same as the provincial North Waterloo constituency. Over 10 per cent of the residents of the area and nearly all local businesses responded to this survey of their post-war expectations and of their war-time occupations. The area is mainly urban, possesses a strong industrial base, and only in its ethnic make-up does it differ from other Ontario industrial cities. In 1942, labour officials in the city of Kitchener, as elsewhere in Ontario, had protested strongly against controls on their wages. The area newspaper carried many complaints about the impact of wage controls on workers, and the Kitchener mayor, who had attacked labour unions at the war's beginning, had become, by 1942, a supporter of labour's claims. In short, it is very likely that more residents of this area thought they were "worse off" than "better off" as Canadians generally did according to early 1942 polls. In the 1943 provincial election, the CCF candidate, John Cook, a trade union official, was elected in this traditionally Liberal seat. Here, as in other respects, North Waterloo followed other urban, industrial constituencies.<sup>31</sup> If we can assume that North Waterloo's economic profile and its political attitudes reflect urban, industrial Ontario, the survey may clarify our understanding of socio-economic and political change in the later war years in urban, industrial Ontario.

The predominant impression gleaned from the survey is of a society that has recently undergone great disruption of normal patterns. In 1939 the community employed 9,239 men and 4,288 women, and 3,198 men and 131 women were to enlist in the armed forces in the next four years. Yet, in 1943, the community employed 11,411 men and 6,824 women, a net addition to the work force of 8,037 employees. This result surprised the survey directors who sought to discover where the additional work force had been found. About 2,000 from the community itself had been "retained in, or drawn into employment because of war conditions."

Surveys of the surrounding area showed that at least 400 had begun to commute to Kitchener factories from their farms or villages. The rest, it appears, were "sucked into" the city from the towns and farms of southern Ontario, a fact indicated by the increase of 2,100 in "boarders and roomers" between 1939 and 1943. Surveys of four rural townships confirm this impression;

The result of (the war-time growth of industry) is that, from approximately 2,500 farms in the four townships canvassed, more than 1,200 members of farm families have left in the past four years - or almost one from every second farm; and, in addition, there has been a loss of more than 700 hired men, who had been employed on a permanent basis until war broke out - or not much less than a loss of one hired man from every third farm in the district.

And yet farm income had not suffered nor had production decreased; indeed, the opposite had occurred. Between 1939 and 1943 average farm household income increased from \$2,300 to slightly more than \$3,700, that is, 61.5 per cent. This new prosperity may partly explain why farm communities in southern Ontario did not turn strongly towards the CCF in the 1943 provincial election. The war had been more generous towards them than their western counterparts whose incomes did not reach such levels. The farm communities in southern Ontario had lost many to the factory and the uniform, but the evidence clearly indicates that these men were underemployed, a drain upon, rather than a contributor to, farm incomes. The war, therefore, may have strengthened the traditional community and maintained normal voting patterns.<sup>33</sup>

In the city, however, the traditional community was much changed. Those who carried out the survey expressed astonishment, claiming that "the changes ... constitute something like an industrial revolution." This was more than mere Chamber of Commerce hyperbole. The comparison of 1939 and 1943 illustrates how remarkable the change was:

	1939	1943
Payroll	15,149,000	30,331,000
Manufacturing payroll	10,973,000	24,579,000
Aggregate sales	74,000,000	146,250,000
Manufacturing sales	53,700,000	115,500,000

The workers reaped benefits from this increased production as average wages rose substantially:

	1939	1943
All occupations	\$1,120	\$1,663
Manufacturing	1,076	1,708

Throughout the city the war had effected a significant redistribution of income patterns:

Households	Under \$1,500	\$1,500 to \$2,600	\$2,600+
1939	57%	29%	14%
(early) 1944	36%	45%	19%

The middle income group was thus much strengthened. The survey aptly concluded that "there can be no doubt that in material comforts the population of Kitchener-Waterloo lives, on an average, considerably better than it did in 1939 - in spite of heavier taxation and even after purchasing War Bonds and War Savings Certificates to the tune of \$17,500,000." There can also be no doubt that they wanted to live after the war as they had come to live during the war.

What they wanted in the post-war world was a richer material life. In answer to questions about post-war wants, citizens overwhelmingly spoke of refrigerators, motorcars and, above all, houses. More important, they believed they would obtain these things. Survely few had ever heard of Keynes but experience had led them to share what an Ottawa mandarin described as Keynes' exciting vision of what could be accomplished in a free society...." The vision was expansive as well as optimistic, and it removed the constricting and limited conceptions of what a society could achieve, so prevalent in the thirties.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, the 1945 White Paper on Employment and Income represents not merely an "unreserved declaration of acceptance of the Keynesian approach" but also an expression of the everyday experience of many Canadians in wartime.<sup>34</sup>

After a decade of depression and of more recent wartime disruptions, things had come together at last. The urban residents of all income groups expected no real loss of income at the war's end. They certainly did not fear a depression. The survey further revealed that this confidence was justified. The businesses of the community indicated that they did not intend to reduce employment significantly after the war; indeed, only 4-1/2 per cent of the work force needed to fear loss of their job because of the end of munitions contracts. But there were other firms, such as clothing and textile manufacturers, who already could indicate their intentions to expand to meet post-war needs. These needs would surely exist, because, in the survey of post-war spending intentions, residents indicated they could finance 61-1/2 per cent of their planned post-war consumer purchases - stoves, clothing, and even vacations - out of their past savings. One can imagine Chamber of Commerce members chortling as they wrote: "No more encouraging piece of news attained: we would become a nation of prudent spendthrifts. The report's overall conclusion was also unambiguous: "... if everyone, in the territory covered by the Survey, succeeds in realizing his objectives as stated, the post-war demands of Kitchener-Waterloo can absorb successfully the number of workers then likely to be seeking jobs...."<sup>35</sup>

In early 1945 the world these workers wanted was not so far away; and they knew it. In the elections of 1945, John Cook, the CCF MPP, lost and, one week later, the Liberal Louis Breithaupt won a decisive victory in the Federal election. In the provincial election, the CCF vote dropped significantly in the working class areas of the city although, rather interestingly, CCF totals in some middle class areas remained almost the same. This might be explained by the survey evidence that service workers had done less well in wartime than either the farmer or the factory workers. In the federal election, the same pattern obtains. Breithaupt took seventy-five of the seventy-six Kitchener polls and his weakest performance was in the most prosperous polls despite Breithaupt's own position as the pre-eminent businessman of the city. Perhaps it was not the worker but the businessman who remained outside the new consensus.<sup>36</sup>

What did this consensus mean and how had it been formed? Perhaps we can now give a preliminary sketch of the road to 1945 which the urban Ontarian followed. The Kitchener-Waterloo survey and all other evidence suggests a society where in 1941 and 1942 men and women were suddenly in motion from the farms to the city, from the home to the factory, from under-employment to full use of productive capacity. In the first two years of the war, the

growth in employment could come mainly from those workers who had had none; after that time, the city turned to the country and towards other areas where it had not sought workers for many years. The result, in Kitchener-Waterloo, was an addition to the work force almost equal to the pre-war work force, which, of course, had itself not remained the same. New rooms, new faces, new friends, and, for many, the first shock of factory life, all these came so quickly. The effects were probably concentrated in the period of mid-1941 to mid-1943, and only the discipline of war constrained the chaos of that moment. So much was left behind, and in 1943 many showed this in their support for the CCF and their abandonment of traditional political ties. The rural areas, which had once turned to a third party, remained true to the old parties. But the war had not much altered their traditional social and economic patterns; indeed, it may have reinforced them. This was not so in the cities.

In early 1942 most urban residents thought the war had not improved their lot. By early 1944, they no longer believed this. Moreover, the disruption of social and economic life which had occurred in 1941 and 1942 had ended, and there was a new regularity to social patterns of work life. Initially puzzled by the changes occurring about them and later uncertain what had brought the new material benefits, urban Ontarians were receptive to new thoughts on the organization of society. They expressed these thoughts to pollsters and, when they could, in the polling booth. But always there was an ambiguity in the responses. They wanted a more active state if this meant social security, but not if it meant nationalization. They approved of controls, but not of rationing. In their commitment to the war, they exuded idealism, but their personal goals were permeated with materialism. From ambiguity and uncertainty came confusion and, in some cases, freedom from old restraints. As uncertainty disappeared, however, so did the desire to innovate. Just as they hoped and expected to remain in the better position they had obtained, those who had flirted with alternative visions of society now could accept that the larger society could also stay what it had become in wartime. The conclusion was conservative, but, in terms of 1939, the result was not.

Workers would still be workers even if wartime needs meant that their standard of life was, by earlier standards, middle class. Yet, as Ely Chinoy has shown, North American workers in the post-war era accepted the lack of occupational mobility because they regarded the accumulation of personal possessions as a very real way of "getting ahead".<sup>37</sup> Contrary to the expectations of many intellectuals, the war had probably blunted the sense of class antagonism and stultified the formation of working class consciousness. But in a larger sense, perhaps, Theodore Zeldin's comments on French intellectuals are relevant here. "(The intellectuals) told the world what it was that divided it, their slogans were adopted by political parties and they provided interpretations of history." In doing so, "they gave a false veneer of simplicity to the issues on which Frenchmen did have opinions, obscuring the multiplicity of their attitudes."<sup>38</sup> One sees in Canada, too, this multiplicity of attitudes that defies simplification; and to see the war's impact on politics in terms of the familiar political continuum does not help our understanding of a complex phenomenon. The road to 1945 ran through not merely King's College, Cambridge and the East Block, but through the heart of the workshops of our nation.



## NOTES

- 1 J.W. Pickersgill and Donald Forster, The Mackenzie King Record: Volume II, 1944-1945 (Toronto, 1968), 378. King assumed that Hitler was dead.
- 2 Frank Scott, Canada Today (Toronto, 1938), 68, 151. Also, League for Social Reconstruction, Social Planning for Canada (Toronto, 1935), 3; and David Lewis and Frank Scott, Make This Your Canada (Toronto, 1943), 150-181; and Alexander Brady and Frank Scott, eds., Canada After the War (Toronto, 1944), esp. 60-87.
- 3 Walter Young, The Anatomy of a Party (Toronto, 1969); Gad Horowitz, Canadian Labour in Politics (Toronto, 1968); and Gerald Caplan, The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism (Toronto, 1973).
- 4 Jack Granatstein, Canada's War (Toronto, 1975), 413; and Donald Creighton, The Forked Road (Toronto, 1976), 104, 115. For an earlier analysis of the overwhelming impact of the planners, see F.E. Dessauer, "The Party System and the New Economic Policies," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, IX (May 1943), 139-49; and Maurice Lamontagne, "The Influence of the Politicians," Canadian Public Administration, II (Fall 1968), 263-71. For a balanced Marxist analysis of the 1945 "consensus", see Reg Whitaker, "Images of the State in Canada," in Leo Panitch, ed., The Canadian State (Toronto, 1977), 59. See also Whitaker, The Government Party (Toronto, 1977).
- 5 Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, C.D. Howe: A Biography (Toronto, 1979); Bothwell, "The Health of the People," in John English and J.O. Stubbs, eds., Mackenzie King: Widening the Debate (Toronto, 1978), 191-220; William Young, "Making the Truth Graphic: The Canadian Government's Home Front Information Structure and Programmes During World War II" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1978). See also, W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, Out of the Shadows (Toronto, 1977), 253-9 for an interpretation which emphasizes political choice. An example of the international importance of "middle opinion" may be found in the description of the North Atlantic Relations Conference 1939. RG 19, V. 3593 (Public Archives)
- 6 Paul Addison, The Road to 1945 (London, 1975), 14, 21.
- 7 King Diary 19 September 1939.
- 8 A.F.W. Plumptre, Mobilizing Canada's Resources for War (Toronto, 1941), 11 and 13, and 17. Combined Production and Resources Board, "The Impact of the War on Civilian Consumption," Truman Papers OF 712, Truman Library.
- 9 J.M. Beck, Pendulum of Power (Toronto, 1968), 238-9; Granatstein, Canada's War, 92.
- 10 King Diary 16 January 1940. On unemployment question, see James Struthers, "No fault of their own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Toronto, 1979), 586 ff.
- 11 See Alan Peacock and Jack Wiseman, The Growth of Public Expenditure in the United

Kingdom (Princeton, 1961), 7-9. Also, Alex Skelton, "Dominion-Provincial Conference Aftermath," 11 January 1941, RG 19, E2C, V.108 (Public Archives).

- 12 K.W. Taylor, "Canadian Wartime Price Controls, 1941-6," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (1946), 81-98. Cost of living index was 101.5 - 1939; 105.6 - 1940; 111.7 - 1941; 117.0 - 1942; 118.4 - 1943; 118.9 - 1944; 119.5 - 1945. Source: Canada Year Book 1947-48 (Ottawa, 1948), 954. See also, Granatstein, Canada's War, ch. 5.
- 13 Undecideds (20 per cent) have been eliminated in calculating the 1942 results. Polls discussed here are found in Public Opinion Quarterly, 6 (1942), 159-61, and 308-10. The support for conscription varied between 52 per cent (February 25, 1942) and 64 per cent (March 14, 1942).
- 14 Ibid., 491. It is not clear whether the business and intellectual leaders are American or Canadian. One presumes from the report that it is both. In any case, calls for post-war plans were already coming from business and intellectual groups in Canada.
- 15 See V.O. Key, The Responsible Electorate (New York, 1964); and H. Daudt, The Floating Voter (Leiden, 1964).
- 16 King Diary 24 March 1941. King had been reading the Biblical passage: "I will write upon him the name of my God, which is new Jerusalem which cometh out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name."
- 17 Public Opinion Quarterly, 6 (1942), 657; Ibid., 7 (1943), 326-328.
- 18 Ibid., 8 (1944), 144.
- 19 Wartime Information Board Survey 21, 16 January 1943, WIB papers, v. 7. Also, William Young, "Making the Truth Graphic," 82 ff.
- 20 Ontario poll 5 June 1943:

	<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Pro-Cons.</b>	<b>CCF</b>
Federal	32	38	27
Provincial	32	37	28

Public Opinion Quarterly 7 (1943), 493.

- 21 Ibid., 747.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid., 748.
- 24 Ibid., 493.

- 25 Make This Your Canada, 189.
- 26 Janet Sidey, "Ontario and the 1945 General Election" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Waterloo, 1979). On the effect on the Liberals, see Parliamentary Assistants, "The Political Parties Today," King Papers J4,v.240. this points to much business "private enterprise propaganda" as "nearly naked Conservative propaganda," although it does speak of "more important work behind the scenes." See also, Whitaker, The Government Party, passim, for a sophisticated analysis of the complex relationship between business interests and the Liberal Party in wartime. On party fund-raising, see Bothwell and Kilbourn, C.D. Howe.
- 27 Public Opinion Quarterly, 8 (1944), 159, 290-1, 444-6, 601.
- 28 Ibid, 143, 445.
- 29 See A.T. Proctor to King, 20 June 1944, King Papers, J1, v. 369. Also, Senator John Stevenson to King, 14 July 1944, Ibid, v. 375. Stevenson wrote: "The reason (for the defeat) seems to be the many little restrictions that has had (sic) to be put on. A lot of people seem to think that many of them were unnecessary even with the war on and they were very unreasonable in their attitude towards the government.
- 30 A poll after the 1943 Ontario election asked all Canadians why the CCF did so well. 53 per cent gave what the CIPO called "negative answers." What this means is quite unclear. Public Opinion Quarterly, 7 (1943), 747.
- 31 Cook 7570; Smith (Liberal) 6455; Brill (P.C.) 4392. Source: Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1945, 534. The seat was traditionally Liberal.
- 32 Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Kitchener-Waterloo Survey (1944). On the industrial character of the area, see Terry Copp, ed., Industrial Unionism in Kitchener 1937-1947 (Elora, Ontario, 1976). For a Liberal's interpretation of Saskatchewan which emphasizes the farmer's bad lot, see R.J. Dechman to King, 23 June 1944, King Papers, J1, v. 358. The farm incomes in this survey are considerably above the national averages both before and after the depression.
- 33 The details of purchasing intentions are too detailed to repeat here, but may be found in the survey. On Keynes' vision, see John Deutsch, "Canadian Economic Policy 1945-1965 - A Summing Up," in Canadian Economic Policy Since the War (Canadian Trade Committee, 1966), 123; also S.F. Kaliski, "Introduction," Ibid, 14.
- 34 J.H. Perry, Taxes, Tariffs and Subsidies (Toronto, 1955), V.2, 385.
- 35 Survey, passim. The savings of Canadians generally rose rapidly during the war years, and they provided the foundation for post-war consumption expenditures. See Granatstein, Canada's War, 273n. C.D. Howe always shared this confidence in post-war growth. See Howe to King, 17 November 1943, King Papers, J I, v342.
- 36 Based on comparison of assessment rolls and election returns (Kitchener Public Library). I am indebted to Rosanne Polillo for some of this information.

- 37 Ely Chinoy Automobile Workers and the American Dream (Garden City, N.J., 1955), 124.
- 38 Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Politics and Anger (Oxford, 1979, paperback edition), IX.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Phyllis Audy

The importance of the Second World War for Yugoslavia was that it subjected a young (founded in 1918), multi-national state to the trauma of invasion and occupation. Yet the country survived dismemberment, destruction and civil war to become reunited and more effective as a state after the war. Defeat unleashed both racial and ideological civil war in Yugoslavia. It also resulted in a political, social and economic revolution which brought to power in 1945 a communist government which still rules today.

Invasion of Yugoslavia by the Germans in 1941 brought about the dissolution of the state. This was decreed by Hitler but facilitated because of the bitter dissatisfaction of ethnic groups in the country with the government they had had imposed on them since the creation of the state. The break-up freed these dissatisfied people - the Croats in particular - from the rule of the dominant nationality, the Serbs, who were accused of having denied equality and cultural rights to other nationalities in the state. To Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and other ethnic minorities the war brought liberation from Serbian centralist government but it did not bring freedom. When war ended in 1945, the separated regions and peoples reunited of their own accord, without outside pressure.

This restoration of Yugoslavia might seem all the more surprising because it took place in spite of the fact that Yugoslavs had fought each other in bitter civil war which had taken place alongside the fighting against Germans and other occupiers. The civil war was complex and diverse. It was partly a blood-letting, stemming from the intense hatred which had built up in the inter-war years between Serbs and Croats as well as between religious groups. It was also a struggle for post-war power between extremist groups, and the great struggle for power had an ideological character. The two main protagonists were the Serbian Chetniks under their leader General Staff Colonel Dragoljub (called Draza) Mihailovic, whose basic aim was the restoration of power to an enlarged greater Serbia, and the Partisans under their leader Josip Broz-Tito, whose aim was to create a post-war communist state of Yugoslavia. The civil war, like the global war, was fought to a no-surrender conclusion in which nationalists, both Serbs and Croat, were the losers. It was Tito and the communists with their international ideology and appeal for all-Yugoslav unity who triumphed at the end of the war. This Yugoslav experience, like that of any other nation was unique, but the history of fratricidal conflict and ultimate reunification has a special interest for comparative history dealing with states which include peoples of widely differing cultural and historical backgrounds.

#### **2. Pre-war National Experience**

Only twenty years old when the Second World War began, Yugoslavia was made up of territories inhabited by south Slav peoples - Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Macedonians (as well as other minorities); the national loyalty of these peoples was first to their ethnic group. The period between the two World Wars was not long enough for them to develop a feeling of loyalty to the Yugoslav state, and few people thought of themselves as Yugoslavs. The Serbs were the only people who had had their own independent state before 1914, and they provided the new Yugoslavia in 1918 with its dynasty, army, capital (Belgrade) and the institutions of

their previous kingdom of Serbia. This ensured predominant power and privilege to Serbs; Croats, Slovenes and others demanded autonomy or at least equal rights with an agreed constitution. Failure to obtain these resulted in bitter and sometimes violent disputes which often led to paralysis of government. Centralist government, imposed by Serbs without the consent of other nationalities, made conflict between the nationalities inevitable. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that Serbs and Croats had different religious and cultural traditions. The Serbs belonged to the Orthodox Church, used the Cyrillic script in writing and had strong ties with Russia. The Croats were catholic by religion, shared western catholic cultural traditions and used the Latin script. They had been ruled from Hungary as part of the Habsburg empire and had had no independent state since the twelfth century. Their strong national and cultural identity had been nurtured in opposition to alien rule and they were expert in tactics of opposition which they exercised with skill in the Yugoslav state. Hostility between the different nationalities in Yugoslavia greatly facilitated Hitler's take-over of the Yugoslav lands. When the Germans invaded, most Croats and Slovenes were unwilling to fight in defence of a Serbian controlled Yugoslavia. Some Croats such as the Frankovci and Ustase had been advocating separatist policies and saw war as an opportunity for Croatia to obtain its independence. They welcomed Hitler's offer of a Free State of Croatia under Italian and German protection. Their defection left the Serbs as the sole people prepared to fight against the German invaders; it left a legacy of bitterness and accentuated differences between already hostile nationalities.

When the Germans invaded on April 5, 1941, Yugoslavia was unprepared and seriously disunited. They conquered and occupied the country in ten days. Hitler declared Yugoslavia had ceased to exist and divided it into nine different occupation zones.<sup>1</sup> The Yugoslav government and King, mostly Serbs, with only a few Croat and Slovene politicians, went into exile. In conquered Yugoslavia, some Serbian officers refused to surrender and formed resistance groups who came to be known as Chetniks. communists also went into hiding and began to prepare resistance. Hitler created the Free State of Croatia (NDH) under the extreme Croat nationalist Ante Pavelic. There was no longer any focus for Yugoslav loyalty, and Yugoslav peoples were thrown back on the loyalties and identities of their ethnic group. Even the Yugoslav government in exile failed to provide Yugoslav leadership and was riven by feuding between the various national groups, especially between Serbs and Croats. It was to be some time before this vacuum of overall national Yugoslav leadership was filled. Surprisingly it was the communists led by Tito who came to use the idea of Yugoslav nationalism as a rallying call for a liberation movement to restore the Yugoslav state.

### **3. Wartime Nationalism in Croatia**

In 1941 few Croats mourned the passing of the Yugoslav state. Most were pleased that a Free State of Croatia had been established even though it was with foreign support and had a government led by extreme nationalists. Ante Pavelic, Poglavnik, or leader of the new state, was fanatical in his Croatian extremism, determined to create a 'racially pure' Croatia. To achieve this, he believed it necessary to eliminate other nationalities living in the frontiers of his new state.<sup>2</sup> Included in the Free State of Croatia were areas which for generations had been populated by Serbs who had been free to practice their Orthodox religion; other regions were populated by practising Moslems. Pavelic used his Ustase troops in a systematic pogrom of the non-catholic, non-Croat population of the NDH (including Bosnia-Herzegovina).<sup>3</sup> In 1941 and 1942 many thousands of people, mostly Serbs but including also Moslems were slaughtered and their villages destroyed. These Ustase killings and atrocities were a profound wartime experience both for those people who suffered the pogroms and for the Croat people who

shared the guilt and the shameful war crime. Inevitably relations between Serbs and Croats worsened and another legacy of inter-racial feud was injected into history. Pavelic's state was weakened by the Ustase pogroms, and the Germans increased their hold over the puppet state; moderate Croat nationalists were repelled, and many eventually joined the persecuted Serbs and Moslems and fled to the Partisans whose numbers were greatly increased as a result of Pavelic's policy.<sup>4</sup> Another result of the extremism of Pavelic was that there was no place in his state for moderate Croat opinion. Macek, the leader of the pre-war Croat Peasant Party (HSS) refused to cooperate with either Pavelicé or the Germans. He lived in retirement and was eventually imprisoned, but he gave no lead to his many pre-war followers, and the HSS, which up to 1939 had been a united movement, ceased to exist and was never able to reorganize itself after the war.

The experiment of the Free State of Croatia was not a success. Croatia was too small - in spite of its large accretion of territory in Bosnia-Herzegovina - to exist independently. Croats had the bitter experience of knowing an independence that proved illusory, but at the same time, it strengthened their national awareness. Even those Croats who joined the Partisan movement for the most part retained strong national feelings.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the war most Croats were willing, or had no alternative but to accept the return of Croatia into a reunited Yugoslavia in which they had been promised equal federal status with other nationalities. The extremists and those guilty of war-crimes had in any case fled the country. But all Croats who remained shared one thing - and this included extremists, moderates, HSS and most communists - all cherished their Croatian identity and wished to have their independence institutionalized in the new state. Two lessons of wartime experience were paramount for Croatian nationalists: extremist national government imposed by a foreign power was not acceptable; and Croats divided among themselves were unlikely to achieve independent rule.

#### **4. Serbian Chetnik Nationalism**

Ethnic national feeling among Serbs was also strengthened by wartime experiences. Many Serbs had been disturbed by the way in which conflict with Croats had immobilized government for much of the pre-war period. They blamed Croat intransigence for all that had gone wrong and were incensed that Croats had not fought for Yugoslavia when the Germans invaded. Among the Serbs, as with the Croats, there were some extreme nationalists. The Chetniks, led by Mihailovic, held such views. The Chetniks started as a resistance movement in the summer of 1941, but by November they were already being used by Mihailovic mainly in actions against the communist-led resistance movement of Tito's Partisans. The Chetniks continued to develop as a Serbian nationalist movement. Their connections with Chetnik supporters in other parts of the country were few and certainly not enough to give the movement a Yugoslav character. The determining factor in all Mihailovic's policy was the question of Serbia's position and power in any post-war state. To achieve such power and ensure that Serbian people did not suffer crippling losses during the war, Mihailovic was willing to use any ally-Germans, Italians or British. Between September and November 1941 he was negotiating simultaneously with all these and with the Nedic quisling ruler of Serbia. He regarded the communists as the only possible competitors for future political power and considered it his prime task to exterminate them.

Mihailovic made radio contact with the British and the Yugoslav government in exile in August 1941. Both of these recognized the propaganda value, at that early stage of the war, of news of a resistance movement. Mihailovic received allied recognition and was made

(though remaining in Serbia) Minister of Army, Navy and Air Force in the Yugoslav government in exile. Although Britain was short of all supplies, he was sent token aid. The British sent a liaison officer, Major D.T. Hudson to investigate the strength of resistance movements in Serbia, including reports about community-led resistance. He met both Tito and Mihailovic and was the first of a number of officers sent to the latter's headquarters.<sup>6</sup> Anxious to get weapons and other aid, Mihailovic received them but they certainly did not influence his war aims. He remained throughout somewhat hostile to the British because he thought the aid they sent inadequate. Mihailovic believed that the communists, led as he mistakenly thought by a Russian, were the prime enemy. He was fighting communism both as a hated international ideology and as a force which could, with foreign aid, challenge the restoration of Royalist government in Serbia at the end of the war.<sup>7</sup> The strength of support for his Chetnik movement in Serbia was its appeal to the deep-rooted feeling of national Serbian identity and loyalty amongst ordinary Serbs, especially the peasantry.

The Chetnik plan put forward for post-war Serbia in 1941 and 1941 was based on a memorandum formulated by Dr. Stevan Moljevic in June 1941.<sup>8</sup> The stated aim was for the creation of a "homogenous Serbia" which would include "the entire area populated by Serbs ... Transfers and exchanges of population, especially of Croats from the Serbian and Serbs from the Croatian areas is the only way to create better relations between them..." This greater "homogenous Serbia" would include "the entire area populated by Serbs" together with all of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia as well as parts of Croatia. Within its enlarged frontiers, Serbia was to become a "racially pure" Serbian homeland, and this could only be achieved by the removal or exchange of non-Serb population. These plans were as unrealistic and in many ways similar in inspiration to those claims for a Greater Croatia put into practice by Croat extremists - and some of the same large areas of Yugoslavia were claimed by both Chetniks and Ustase Croats. These aims were also set out in a document drawn up by a Belgrade Chetnik committee and taken to London in September 1941 by Dr. Milos Sekulic.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike Pavelic in Croatia, Mihailovic never had the chance to make his programme a reality; but there is no doubt that his conviction that the very survival of Serbia and its hopes for the future were threatened by the war situation, provided the overriding motive for much of his direction of Chetnik activity during the war. It was the main reason why he persistently refused to use Chetnik forces in significant numbers against the Germans and their allies. It was a reason, additional to retaliation -for Ustase slaughter of Serbs, for the Chetniks' killing of Croats and Moslems. The only major actions in which Chetniks fought in large numbers during the war were undertaken against the Partisans, and this was because Mihailovic saw this communist-led movement as the sole Yugoslav challenge to the return of Royalist Serbia to power at the end of the war.<sup>10</sup> Although Mihailovic made many mistaken prognoses about the way the war would develop, he was right about this. He committed his forces - even to the extent of fighting together with Germans and Italians - to an all-out attempt to annihilate the communists before the war's end. But by choosing the Germans as allies he collaborated with the losing side. And more importantly, although he wanted British aid, he refused to undertake operations in support of British war strategy. For this reason (much more than for reasons of collaboration) Mihailovic lost British recognition and support, which was transferred to Tito and the Partisans in late summer 1943.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the Chetniks' loss of Allied support, Mihailovic continued to believe that the Royalist government would be restored at the end of the war and made his plans accordingly. Late in November 1943 the Partisans made public their political programme for a restored



Yugoslav state. The Chetniks offered their alternative programme early in 1944. From January 25-28 they held a congress at Ba near Mihailovic's headquarters at Ravna Gora in Serbia.<sup>12</sup> It was attended by more than three hundred delegates, mostly Chetnik commanders but also including Dr. Stevan Moljevic, author of the earlier programme for greater Serbia, as well as two pre-war Serbian politicians, Adam Pribicevic of the Independent Democrat party and Zivko Topalovic who had been leader of the pre-war Socialist party. There were also present a small number of Croats, a Slovene and a Bosnian Moslem.<sup>13</sup>

The programme agreed at the congress contained some of the strong commitment to Serbian nationalism of the earlier Moljevic memorandum, including a declaration to mobilize all anti-communist Serbs for the fight to save 'Serbdom'; it also stated the intention to create in the post-war world a federal Yugoslav state under a constitutional parliamentary monarchy. The way was left open for the creation of a greater homogeneous Serbia:

The congress considers that the solidarity of future Yugoslavia is dependent on the creation, in a democratic way, of a Serbian unit in the state as a whole, which on a democratic basis would gather the whole Serbian people on its territory. The same principle ought to be valid for Croats and Slovenes.<sup>14</sup>

An important concept emerging from the Ba Congress was the suggestion of a Yugoslav Democratic Union. This had the support of Chetniks and of Pribićević and Topalovic.

The programme of the Ba Congress was meant to have a wider appeal than earlier Chetnik statements. It contained a muted form of the greater Serbia aims that had attracted Serbian nationalists. Its purpose as well was to enlist support from other Yugoslav peoples who opposed the Partisans and were prepared to accept a more democratic version of the pre-war Yugoslav state. It was also presented as a democratic political programme (an alternative to the communist programme of the Partisans), which might appeal to the western allies at a time when Mihailovic, in common with Tito and the Germans, was expecting a possible British landing in the Balkans via the Yugoslav Adriatic coast or Salonika. Such a landing, Mihailovic hoped, would turn the tide in his favour. It did not come and the Ba programme was never put to the test. During 1944 Soviet troops advanced towards Yugoslav frontiers and the Partisans gained in strength. By the end of 1944, Tito was in power in Belgrade, in theory with the support of the government in exile. It was only a matter of time before he had control of the whole country including Serbia. Chetnik forces that remained were incorporated into the German army formations and were retreating with them from Yugoslavia.

Although the Chetnik movement failed, and perhaps also because it failed, it must be counted as a profound wartime experience for the Serbian people. Its appeal was to ancient Serbian national feeling that had inspired the legendary struggle against the Turks. It also produced another legendary failed leader for Serbian folk history. But this was not a tradition for other Yugoslav people. For them the Chetnik movement was linked with the ideas of Serbian supremacy that had been such a controversial factor in the inter-war state; these ideas were to linger on even after 1945.

## **5. Other National Peoples**

It is not possible in this short essay to deal with all national groups in Yugoslavia, although nationalist feeling was probably intensified in all of them. All faced the same

ideological, moral and practical choices that were posed by occupation and civil war. The Slovenes, a homogeneous group of people with strong national identity, refused (with few exceptions) to believe that their independence could fare better under German protection than under a Serbian dominated state as in the inter-war years. But when the Partisans - amongst whose leaders were Slovenes in leading positions -- proposed a federal republic with equal rights for all peoples for the post-war state, it was an acceptable idea to many Slovenes. Slovenia seemed to have no future linked with any other country of central Europe, and above all, Tito was a strong supporter of Slovene Territorial claims for lands occupied by Slovenes but assigned to Italy (Istria and Venezia Giulia and Austria (parts of Carinthia and Carniola) at the end of the First World War.<sup>15</sup>

The national group that gained most for their aspirations as a result of the war were the Macedonians. In modern times, these south Slavs who regard themselves as distinct in racial grouping, history and language, have been divided into three groups living in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece. The area they inhabited at the outbreak of war was bounded by the Aegean sea in the south, the Shar mountains in Yugoslavia in the north, the Rhodope mountains in Bulgaria in the east, and in the west by Lakes Ohrid and Prespa. All three countries where Macedonians lived denied their separate identity as an ethnic group; and all three countries laid claims to more Macedonian territory than that which they possessed. These conflicting claims were sharpened by the geo-strategic importance of the Macedonian lands which lie astride the highroad between the Mediterranean Sea and central Europe. Their share out of this region had been determined by the great powers of Europe after the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. This division of Macedonia left Bulgaria dissatisfied and determined to rectify these frontiers in her own favour at the earliest opportunity. In both the First and the Second World Wars Bulgaria supported Germany in hopes of satisfying her claims to more Macedonian land. In both wars she was disappointed and Yugoslavia inherited and retained the part of Macedonia awarded to Serbia in 1913.

In the inter-war years the Yugoslav government's policy to Macedonia was to incorporate it into the region of Serbia, deny Macedonian identity and treat Macedonians as 'South Serbs'. The result was bitter resentment amongst the Macedonian people whose situation was also made more complex by Bulgarian claims that all Macedonians were Bulgarians. The German invasion in 1941 with the disintegration of Yugoslavia gave the Yugoslav Macedonians change of government but no freedom. The Bulgarian army occupied their homeland without opposition. Yet as the war progressed, it became clear that the confused war situation offered an opportunity for Macedonians to manoeuvre and fight for recognition of their national identity. It was Tito and the Partisans who saw that this desire for national recognition could be used to gain support for their movement in this important region of the Balkans. It was a situation with important international implications. It was made even more complicated by the fact that many Yugoslav Macedonians in pre-war times, and even as late as 1942, had preferred to give their support to the Bulgarian communist party rather than to that of the Yugoslavs. Tito made great efforts first to get control over Macedonian communists and then to build up a Macedonian resistance movement under the authority of the Partisans. This difficult task was assigned to one of his most able leaders, Vukmanovic-Tempo, whose efforts met with considerable success, especially when it became clear that the Germans and their Bulgarian allies were going to lose the war.

Tito's ambitious plan was to recognize Macedonians as a separate people, give them equal status in the federal Yugoslavia with other south Slavs and use this as a possible nucleus

for a greater Macedonia to include all Macedonian peoples. This idea was linked with a scheme for a possible Balkan federation which would include Macedonia and Bulgaria and in which Yugoslavia would be the leading member. Although the scheme was discussed between Tito and Dimitrov, it was eventually aborted on the orders of Stalin.<sup>16</sup> But the Yugoslav Macedonians achieved their age-old ambition - recognition of independent nationality, including recognition of their own separate language and eventually of their own Orthodox Church.

## **6. The Partisan War Experience**

For many Yugoslavs of all national groups the Partisan movement was undoubtedly the greatest experience of the war. Under communist leadership its aims were to liberate all Yugoslav lands from enemy occupation and simultaneously to fight civil war against Chetniks and any other contestants for post-war power. In these concurrent wars communist aims for political revolution were fused with the national aims of Yugoslav peoples to free their lands from enemy occupation. The Partisans were successful in both these aims. Whilst it is clear that they could not have achieved this success without the help of the major campaigns of the allies in the global war, at the same time, the Partisan claim that they won their success in Yugoslavia by their own efforts had some justification. During the most critical period of the war, up to the summer of 1943, the Partisans fought alone without help from Great Britain and with no help from their communist bigbrother, the Soviet Union. They experienced terrible losses and great suffering, but it was during this time that the movement began to achieve some kind of Yugoslav unity transcending local nationalisms that had been characteristic of pre-war Yugoslavia and that were present amongst communists and others, even in the Partisan movement. This unity was perhaps not very strong, however it was an element in the Partisan movement as it faced the problems of its own success at the end of the war.

The leader of the Partisan movement was the Secretary General of the illegal pre-war communist party, Josip Broz-Tito, a little known man of Croat and Slovene parentage, who had been trained as a communist in the Soviet Union by the Comintern, but who retained a remarkable independence of character. Although he dutifully maintained contact with the Russian leaders via the Comintern for most of the war, he was undisputed leader in Yugoslavia, making his own decisions, with his communist colleagues about the direction of the Partisan movement.<sup>17</sup> The Partisans started organized resistance throughout Yugoslavia after the German invasion of Soviet Russia June 21, 1941. Their major operations at that time were in Serbia where Chetniks were also active - for a time in conjunction with Partisan groups. This alliance did not last long in spite of British and Soviet pressure on the leaders of the two movements to join forces under the leadership of Mihailovic.<sup>18</sup> Two meetings between Mihailovic and Tito (September 19 and October 26-27, 1941) aggravated rather than solved their differences. Mihailovic was already convinced that the communists were more of a danger to his movement than the Germans, and Tito soon realized that the Chetniks, pro-Serb and supported by the Yugoslav government in exile and the British, were his only rivals in the struggle to gain support in Serbia and post-war power in Yugoslavia.<sup>19</sup> Thus from the fall of 1941 the stage was set for civil war between Chetniks and Partisans. In November the Germans, who had rejected requests from Mihailovic for arms and support in his fight against Tito's communists, mounted a successful operation in Serbia against Chetniks and Partisans. The Partisans retreated into Bosnia-Hercegovina and were not to return in strength to Serbia until 1944.

The year 1942 was the most difficult for the Partisan forces, but it was during this year that Tito and his associates in the Partisan High Command organized the characteristic military and political structure of the movement. There was a conventionally organized army (estimated by the Germans at some 30-35,000 men) which remained with Tito and up to 100,000 other Partisans organized in local units in the different areas of occupied Yugoslavia. A parallel political structure was set up with political commissars assigned to army units. Where the Partisans were able to organize 'liberated' areas, National Liberation committees were set up and eventually many thousands of Yugoslavs who were not communists, and from different national groups besides Serbs, came to be members of the Partisan forces and movement. Fighting against the Germans and their allies, and still without allies himself, Tito used his own brilliant organizing ability to build up a movement which the Germans considered a threat to their position in the Balkans.

The climax in the Partisans' war against both Germans and Chetniks came in the first half of 1943 when the Germans, with the participation of Italians, Pavelic troops and some 12-15,000 Chetniks, mounted operation Weiss I and II which was immediately followed by Operation Schwarz (the 4th and 5th offensives of Partisan history). Tito's army managed to escape German encirclement in the first operations and routed the Chetnik forces against which they had concentrated one of their major attacks. Tito's losses were also dangerously heavy. It was after this operation that he sent emissaries to try to negotiate a truce with the Germans to allow time to evacuate the wounded and recuperate his forces, as well as to arrange exchange of prisoners; such exchanges had been negotiated on earlier occasions. Partisan explanation of these negotiations is that they were in no sense collaboration for there was no offer to fight with the Germans and that they were necessary because the Partisans had no protection for wounded under international law as the Germans refused to recognize them as belligerents."<sup>20</sup> The negotiations were abortive and the Germans continued their efforts to annihilate the Partisan armies. Before the end of Operation Schwarz, Tito had been contacted by the British and an exploratory British mission was sent to him in the last week of May. As a result of its reports about the size and strength of the Partisan movement and the value to the allied cause of its operations against the Germans, Tito received allied recognition and considerable quantities of aid. Recognition was eventually withdrawn from Mihailovic but there was a time when both Chetniks and Partisans were receiving Anglo-US aid.<sup>21</sup>

The majority of British aid was sent to the Partisans after the capitulation of Italy (September 1943). The Italian withdrawal from Yugoslavia enabled the Partisans to get hold of abandoned Italian supplies and to increase the liberated territory they controlled. In all these matters a distinction has to be drawn between the experience of the Partisan movement as seen by the leaders and as seen by the rank and file; but in the final issue, all decisions of the Partisans' leaders had an impact on the movement as a whole. The refusal of the Germans to recognize Partisans as belligerents meant that more Partisan wounded died; British aid, the capture of Italian medical supplies and weapons helped their fighting potential. It is probable that none of these things was crucial to the ultimate issue which could already be foreseen in the light of the inevitable allied victory and the situation of the Partisans in Yugoslavia by the end of 1943.

After the Italian capitulation, although the Partisans still had important military engagements (as at the German parachute attack on Tito's HQ at Drvar in May 1944), the major struggle for the communists' objective of post-war power moved into the political field. This introduced a new element into Partisan experience. The change was from heroic suffering and a

seemingly endless fight against fearful odds, to an atmosphere of almost certain victory and international recognition. It was typical of Tito's leadership that even in the darkest days he had made political preparations for future takeover of power. The first Partisan Congress (Anti-fascisticke Vece Narodnog Oslobodjenje, AVNOJ), held in November 1942 was assembled in the dark days of isolation; the second congress at Jajce (November 29 - December 2, 1943) was held after the tide had turned and in an atmosphere of euphoric confidence.

This meeting took the major step of declaring itself the legal government of Yugoslavia. This was ultimately accepted by the allies, including, after some hesitation, the USSR, but with the proviso that members of the Royal Government in exile should be included in Tito's provisional government. AVNOJ and the regional and local anti-fascist committees established in all regions of Yugoslavia helped in the close stages of the war to involve people from all over the country, communist and non-communist, in the process of reconstruction. But first, the Partisan leaders had to put forward a solution to the nationalities problem. At the Jajce meeting it was stated that Yugoslavia would be organized 'according to the federal principle' and 'on the basis of the right of every nation to self-determination including the right of secession or uniting with other nations.'<sup>22</sup> This was further spelled out in the agreement Tito made with the Yugoslav government representative, Ivan Subasic, which said "the sovereignty of each nation's individuality will be honoured in the spirit of full equality and guarded as it was decided at the second session of AVNOJ. The predominance of any one nation over another will be excluded."

It is not the purpose of this essay to consider how these promises worked out in practice, but rather to show that they were instrumental in gaining support for the Partisans in the closing stages of the war. They helped to create an image of a new Yugoslavia to replace the unacceptable idea of the pre-war state. In this new state, local nationalisms would not be eradicated but nationalities would be equal and would not need to fight each other. This was the theory which communist leaders tried to get accepted, and they used the authority of an increasingly centralized government to put the message across and dissipate the many local and regional conflicts that still existed. In the conditions of continued fighting throughout 1944 and into 1945, central authoritarian government was accepted - even where there was disagreement, as with some Croats and Macedonians. This helped the transformation from National Liberation Movement to communist-led government.

From the beginning Tito had been aware of the importance of propaganda in building up numbers and unity in the Partisans and had organized a strong 'agitprop' section which had an impact on all Partisans. It was used to put across communist ideas but its overriding objective had been to get wide all-Yugoslav support for the Partisan movement. In this it was successful. One of the greatest assets in the creation of a Partisan spirit was the leadership of Tito. He was portrayed in Partisan literature, songs and every facet of propaganda as an almost legendary figure of epic proportions. This was fortified by his own remarkable wartime exploits. His charismatic qualities of leadership and his natural authority were invaluable as unifying elements, the more valuable because Tito had an all Yugoslav image without any special association with any regional group.

Many questions remain unanswered about the Partisan wartime experience. One is the elusive problem of why so many people who were not communists joined the movement. Many joined to fight the alien occupier; others were fleeing from massacres and destruction; some joined from fear; some had an ideological commitment or need to fight for a better future. An

outstanding fact is that Partisans had the new experience of participating in a successful movement which had the support of Yugoslav peoples from all national groups.

## **7. Allied Involvement in Wartime Yugoslavia**

It is impossible to deal with wartime experience in Yugoslavia without some mention of allied military and political involvement. This, however, is a complex subject requiring a separate study; it can only be touched on briefly here. The defeat of Germany and her allies in global war by Great Britain, the United States, the USSR and their allies, including Canadian forces, was a decisive factor in the issue of the war in Yugoslavia. It enabled the Partisans to triumph over all enemies, external and internal, and gain power in Yugoslavia. This is not to say that the Allies put Tito in power at the end of the war. His claim that the Partisan movement created the conditions that brought it to power is difficult to deny. But an important question is - how far did the British decision to switch its recognition and aid from Mihailovic to Tito in 1943 affect the ultimate issue in the civil war between Partisans and Chetniks? Did allied support contribute substantially to Tito's assumption of power?

Both Mihailovic and Tito complained that aid and supplies received from the allies were inadequate. Yet as far as Mihailovic is concerned, there is little evidence that his movement was capable of better organization or more constructive all-Yugoslav aims even if it had received more supplies. The considerable aid (Anglo-US and Russian) which the Partisans received was almost all sent after the Italian capitulation which had enabled the Partisans to capture large quantities of war materials for themselves. It certainly helped Tito in the final stages of the war, and air support from the western allies was crucial at certain stages (e.g., the German attempt to capture Tito at Drvar). But Partisan numbers and organization were so strong by 1944 that they could probably have held out alone until the arrival of the Red Army on Yugoslav territory later that year. Moreover, the issue of the civil war between Partisans and Chetniks had been decided during the German operations Weiss and Schwarz. After that, though Mihailovic retained forces in Serbia and Montenegro as well as small numbers in some other areas, he was no longer in a position to challenge Partisan power. Allied aid to Tito did not begin to flow until some three months after these operations.

On the political front, allied recognition of Tito was more decisive, and the withdrawal of recognition from Mihailovic left him without international status in the crucial period when manoeuvring for post-war recognition made powerful allies imperative. Had Mihailovic fought the Germans in strength and cooperated with the British, it is difficult to see how the British government could have withdrawn recognition from him. Moreover, the Soviet Union had not shown itself committed to Tito to the extent of opposing British policy. Until quite late in the war, Stalin was prepared to recognize and send a mission to Mihailovic. In general, Churchill's policy had been in favour of restoration of the Royalist government. As late as August 29, 1944 the British government was trying, however unrealistically, to get Chetniks and Partisans to fight together against the Germans.<sup>23</sup> Stalin did not oppose this. He stated to Churchill that "the Soviet and British Governments agreed in Moscow to pursue as far as possible a joint policy towards Yugoslavia. The USA, on the other hand, and especially President Roosevelt were less than enthusiastic about abandoning Mihailovic and supporting Tito. Even after recognizing Tito, Roosevelt allowed, or turned a blind eye to semi-official US missions to Mihailovic and only withdrew these after pressure from Churchill. Roosevelt believed that a solution more acceptable to the Royalist government might be a division of Yugoslavia into "three nations in place of one", with King Peter the head of "a reconstituted Serbia". He added in a message to

Churchill; "Personally I would rather have a Yugoslavia, but three separate states with separate governments in a Balkan federation might solve many problems."<sup>24</sup>

Whilst allied leaders were thinking of a compromise solution of shared power between the Royalist government and Partisans, Tito went ahead inside Yugoslavia disposing his forces for the take over of all political and military power. He refused to receive King Peter on Yugoslav soil but accepted Subasic, the former Ban of Croatia as representative of the government in exile. However Tito allowed Subasic no opportunity to establish a power base. He realized that British policy allowed him freedom of action. Churchill had stated to Stalin that "the Yugoslav people as a whole should have complete freedom to decide as soon as conditions permit both on the question of the Monarchy and on the new federal constitution." With an underestimation of Tito's power in Yugoslavia which was shared in common by both Roosevelt and Stalin, Churchill had added; "Provided there is goodwill and loyalty among Yugoslavs this freedom of decision seems to be safeguarded in the Tito-Subasic agreement."<sup>25</sup> Tito, however, in undisputed power in Yugoslavia, interpreted the conditions for these decisions in his own way. He believed that the Partisans had won the right to govern and had sufficient support inside the country to do so providing there was no outside interference.

## **8. Conclusion**

In conclusion the question must be asked - was there a Yugoslav experience during the war? Did the many experiences help to mould something that could be called a feeling of belonging to a Yugoslav state? Or did the war divide Yugoslav peoples more than they had been divided before? There is no scientific answer to these questions. Yet during the war Yugoslav interests and those of the Yugoslav Communist party coincided in some respects, and the feeling of fighting for Yugoslavia was inculcated into the Partisan movement. But at the end of the war Yugoslavism was not cultivated by that party; the concept smacked too much of pre-war bourgeois ideas, and federal independence was cultivated instead. Some people believe that a golden opportunity for creating Yugoslav nationalism was missed at this time. This is merely conjecture. It has been clear in modern times that regional nationalism was still strong after the war. It is also possible to point to the fact that Yugoslavia has continued as a state for some thirty five years since the end of the war; that it has won international respect and become a leader among states of the third world. This is often attributed to Tito, and the importance of his long leadership should not be underrated. It must also be attributed to the fact that the different nationalities, in spite of disagreements, have worked together sufficiently well to build up the country to its present state of development. Up to the present, the elements of integration in post-war Yugoslavia have been stronger than those of disintegration. Since the present is ineluctably linked with the past, this must in some ways have grown out of the experiences of the Second World War.





## NOTES

- 1 H. Trevor Roper, ed., Hitler's War Directives, London 1964, pp. 60-62, 74-75.
- 2 Violence in pre-war Yugoslavia had not been confined to one nationality and the killings during the war were in some ways an extension of earlier history. The Croat leader Stjepan Radic had been murdered in 1927 by a Montenegrin (Serb). King Alexander (a Serb) was murdered in 1943 by a Macedonian hired by Croat extremists whose leader was Ante Pavelic. His appointment as Poglavnik, or leader in Croatia by the Germans, was a deliberate attempt to keep Yugoslav peoples disunited by encouraging violence.
- 3 Tito stated that by spring 1944 (when recruitment to Partisan forces had already started as against previous voluntary enlistment), 30 percent of Partisans were Croats compared with 44 per cent Serbs.
- 4 Public Record Office, London (PRO) WO 202/163; FO 371/30292; V. Bakaric to this author July 19, 1979.
- 5 Bakaric, *ibid.*
- 6 A full account of the Chetnik movement can be found in J. Tomasevich, War and Revolution: The Chetniks, Stanford University Press 1975. There is a large bibliography on the subject in many languages. Most items to 1975 will be found in the above book; Archival material on the Chetniks is found in British, German, Italian, United States and Yugoslav war archives. Important British documents on this subject will be found in PRO, FO 371/44276/R12712, FO 371/44269/R4937 and FO 371/44282/R21295.
- 7 Mihailovic gave a clear account of his fears for Serbia and his attitude to communism in his talk held at Divci, November 11, 1941 with representatives of the German Wehrmacht Command in Serbia. The Germans made a shorthand transcript of the talk. It can be found in J. Marjanovic, ed., Documents of Collaboration of D. Mihailovic's Chetniks with the Enemy Forces of Occupation (1941-1944), Belgrade nd., pp. 17-27. See also *ibid.*, for document of report of German General Bader on his negotiations with Chetnik officer Major Kanguic, February 2, 1942. This is printed in K. Hnlicka Das Ende auf dem Balkan 1944-45, Gottingen 1970, pp. 187-193.
- 8 The text of Moljevic's memorandum can be found in the archives of the Vojno Istoriskog Institut, Belgrade (AVII) Cetnicki Fond 4/1/144.
- 9 PRO, FO 371/3022/59-124.
- 10 See The Cetniks: A Survey of Cetnik Activity in Yugoslavia April 11th, 1941 - July 1944, Confidential Pamphlet published in Sept. 1944 by AFHQ, *passim*.
- 11 PRO, CAB/127/271, July 3, 1944. *Ibid.* No. 167, May 18, 1944.
- 12 PRO, FO 371/44281/95 et seq.

- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Tomasevich, op.cit., p. 402 and PRO, FO 371/44281/140 (R10232).
- 15 PRO, FO 371/30240/ (No. 960) 4735 pp. 5-13. By the agreement signed in 1954 Tito obtained a considerable proportion of his claims against Italy (though not the city of Trieste).
- 16 Kardelj to this author August 1965.
- 17 Yugoslav Communist Party Archives in Belgrade (Institut za Radnicki Pokret) CKKI 1941-43 gives copies of the telegrams exchanged between Tito and the Comintern. Although the Comintern was abolished May 23, 1943, Tito's correspondence with his contact Dimitrov continued to the end of the year. Thereafter, from early 1944, his contacts with the Soviet leaders went through their military mission at Tito's headquarters.
- 18 PRO, FO 371/30221/139-143, 174, 184 and passim.
- 19 PRO, FO 371/30221/4695 No. 162 November 19, 26, 27 and 28 1941.
- 20 Tito to this author October 8, 1968.
- 21 From September 1943 there were military missions headed by Brigadiers at both Tito's and Milailovic's headquarters. In December 1943 the British took the decision to withdraw support from Mihailovic (PRO, FO 371/44269/R4937) and this was carried out in 1944.
- 22 L. Gerskovic, ed., Dokumenti o Razvoju Narodne Vlasti, Belgrade 1948.
- 23 PRO, CAB 127/271/HNO 03480/F 16.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid. T.2399/4 December 19, 1944.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### POLITICS AND CULTURE: THE FRENCH CANADIANS AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Richard Jones

The French Canadians approached the Second World War with misgivings. They were particularly concerned about avoiding the introduction of military conscription for overseas service. As for the details of Canada's participation itself, there were, of course, great differences of opinion. In the federal Parliament, Liberals such as Liguori Lacombe, Wilfrid Gariépy and Jean-Francois Pouliot had voted against war credits and demanded a separate Canadian policy. Maxime Raymond, the well-known nationalist and federal MP for Beauharnois-Lapraire, opposed Canadian participation in any foreign war. Jean-Charles Harvey, of the newspaper Le Jour, first favoured limited participation but, as the plebiscite approached in which the federal government was seeking to be released from its anti-conscription promises, he campaigned for a YES vote. Louis Francoeur, a popular radio commentator, demanded that England financially support Canadian participation in the war. When, in 1940, the National Resources Mobilization Act was passed, Camillien Houde, the Mayor of Montreal, advised his compatriots not to register, but the Catholic hierarchy, under the leadership of Cardinal Rodrigue Villeneuve, recommended compliance to the faithful. Despite the shades of opinion, there was broad agreement between French Canadians as to the essential point: any attempt to impose conscription should be fought. And the Francophone politicians merely reflected, in their own fields of activity, their constituents' basic concern.

When the conscription issue was raised during the Quebec provincial electoral campaign in the autumn of 1939, both parties (the Liberals, who were in opposition and the Union Nationale, who were in power) strove to convince the electorate that they represented the best defence against conscription. The Union Nationale under Duplessis had doubts about Canadian participation in the war and maintained that the federal government would take advantage of it in order to pursue its policy of centralization. The provincial Liberals obtained valuable help from their federal counterparts, who, under the pretext of supporting the provincial Liberal leader, Abelard Godbout, proclaimed from the rooftops that if Quebecers voted for Duplessis, they, would have no choice but to resign, at which point the federal government would not hesitate to introduce conscription. Godbout and his federal allies criss-crossed the province, promising that with them the threat of conscription would be averted. The Liberal leader even undertook to "quit my party and even fight it if, from now until the cessation of hostilities, a single French Canadian is mobilized against his will under a provisional regime (Union government) in which our present ministers in Mr. King's cabinet participate."<sup>1</sup> As is known, Godbout won the election. Many English-speaking Canadians heaved a sigh of relief, thinking that a Liberal Quebec would favour the cause of participation. The Toronto Star saw in the defeat of Duplessis a Canadian victory in the country's war effort.<sup>2</sup> but in reality, Quebec's voters had chosen Godbout because he seemed to offer the best guarantees against conscription.

The federal French-speaking politicians also had to take stock of the revulsion French Canadians felt towards conscription. Rebuffed by Quebec since time immemorial, the

Conservative Party, under the leadership of Dr. R.J. Manion, spent a good deal of effort trying to allay the traditional fear in which French speaking Quebecers held that party. Before Duplessis was defeated, Manion tried to obtain his support but, in the face of the unpopularity of the Quebec Premier in English Canada, he ended up keeping his distance. During the 1940 electoral campaign, a prominent Quebec Conservative, Major C. Gwyllym Dunn, President of the Chronicle-Telegraph, wanted to organize a meeting between Duplessis and Manion. The federal leader replied by telegram, saying that he was busy and asked Dunn to "keep in mind effect of every move on other provinces".<sup>3</sup>

Other Quebec Conservatives tried in vain to steer their party towards a less "imperialist" position. Georges-Henri Héon, MP for Argenteuil in the House of Commons, was resolutely hostile to sending Canadian troops to Europe since Canada had in no way been consulted about the policies that threatened to lead to war; there had to be popular consultation.<sup>4</sup> Frédéric Dorion, a Conservative from a long line of Conservatives, told Manion after the stunning defeat in 1940 that he was "convinced that the Province of Quebec in the next elections would be ready to support the Conservative party only, insofar as it did not outdo the King government in matters of the war effort."<sup>5</sup> Dorion begged Manion to try to restrain the enthusiasm for participation of several Anglophone Tories. Showing realism, Manion replied: "I fear that you are asking too much when you suggest that I prevent some of our members from criticizing the Liberal party for not pursuing the war effort more energetically."<sup>6</sup> Dorion entered the House in 1942 after the Charlevoix-by-election, but it is revealing to note that he ran as an independent, not as a Conservative. Broadly speaking, Quebec rejected the Conservative candidates in 1940. Manion seems to have understood the reason for the setback to his party: "We couldn't convince the good old mothers of Quebec that we weren't going to send their boys to the slaughter,"<sup>7</sup> and there can be no doubt that the rare Conservatives who did succeed in obtaining the support of French Canada during this period owed their success to their anti-conscription stands.

Just as the Conservatives had to fight against the longstanding animosity of Quebec electors towards them, so did the Liberals enjoy the favour of the same voters. This is why, in part, some Liberals could allow themselves to talk around the subject when commenting on compulsory enlistment without turning off too many voters. A famous example of this was Louis St. Laurent, whom King had chosen to replace Ernest Lapointe, his Francophone right-hand man who had died in 1941. Appointed Minister of Justice, St Laurent had to get himself elected, and so he faced the voters in Laurier's old riding, Quebec East. By-elections were called for February 9, 1942 in this and three other constituencies. St. Laurent fought the nationalist Paul Bouchard. At a time when the federal plebiscite was already under discussion, the issue of conscription could not, perforce, be avoided. Bouchard campaigned in favour of Canadian independence from Great Britain and denounced Canada's military obligation without mincing his words. St. Laurent's comments, on the other hand, were more ambiguous. Recalling 1917, he stated that he was "opposed to this conscription" and assured his listeners that it would "not be repeated under ... King". By contrast, he defended the principle of the plebiscite, going so far as to say: "I will probably come and ask you to vote YES on the plebiscite."<sup>8</sup> St. Laurent won the by-election with a majority of 4,000 votes over his rival, Bouchard. Are we to conclude that the voters were not irrevocably opposed to conscription? Surely not, for the Liberals had tried hard to show that King, in Ottawa, gave much better guarantees than the Conservatives who had imposed conscription in 1917. Unless people voted for the Liberal candidates during the by-elections, party workers maintained, the position of the Prime Minister would be weakened and he might even be obliged to resign. Arthur Meighen, reviled by Quebecers, who

saw him as the father of conscription, could, in that event, take power at the head of a Union government, and then the people would have conscription immediately, brought in on bayonet point as it had been in 1917, without any popular consultation. Of course Bouchard did say that he was against conscription, but what could he do in Ottawa? Apparently the voters understood the message.

Certain nuances aside, then, Francophone politicians denounced compulsory enlistment for overseas service, and in that regard, no one could claim that they were not representing their electors. Indeed, during the plebiscite in April 1942, an overwhelming majority of French-speaking Quebecers indicated their unwavering opposition to conscription. In what follows we will try to show that this opposition was in large part dictated by simultaneously nationalistic and social considerations.

In her book, The Crisis of Quebec, 1914-1918, Elizabeth Armstrong attributes French Canadian opposition to conscription in 1917 to a "passive sense of nationality". On the one hand, French Canadians rejected British imperialism, a cause ardently espoused by many English Canadians. On the other hand, at the time of the Ontario school crisis surrounding the notorious Regulation XVII, they seemed to believe that their fate would be decided on this side of the Atlantic, that the "Prussians" of Ontario were a greater threat to the collective rights of the Francophones than the German Prussians, as Henri Bourassa somewhat bitterly remarked. But what was the situation in 1939-45? Was the nationalism underlying Francophone opposition to conscription of the same kind as that expressed during the First World War?

Anti-imperialism was certainly very much alive among Francophones in 1940. At the moment when the spectre of conscription reappeared, François-Albert Angers, a well-known nationalist, wrote: "Deep in every English Canadian, if indeed he is a Canadian, slumbers an imperialist, a gentleman who, having lived in a world empire, carries with him and receives from his parents, an imperialist conception . . . of the defence of his new country."<sup>9</sup> For the imperialist Anglophone, "defend" means "demanding absolute security", which in turn means that he has to control the world in such a way that he alone has real security. According to Angers and many other nationalists of the period, the French Canadians did not share this point of view and had no interest whatever in becoming involved in the quarrels among the great powers. The imperialists described this world view contemptuously as "isolationist".

Thus, French Canadians and English Canadians did not have the same analysis of what the world had at stake in the war, even though the French Canadians did generally sympathize with England and the United States. The French-language nationalists also, however, worried about the danger that this conflict could pose to traditional society. For them, the war would greatly encourage the degeneration of French Canadian social and moral life and contribute to the anglicization of the Francophones and, what was more, held the gravest risks for provincial autonomy, that pillar of the survival of French Canada. Let us examine these allegations more closely.

The nationalist elite, which stood solidly behind traditional society, had often pointed out the alarming consequences of the First World War for French Canada. They did not hesitate to hold the World War responsible for certain socioeconomic transformations, even though these changes would have happened anyway, although perhaps at a less frantic pace. Maxime Raymond, the federal MP and the founder of the Bloc Populaire in 1942, blamed the First World War for the increased exodus of French Canadians towards the United States. Besides,

he said, the war had given the young a taste for adventure and especially for urban life, so that when they returned home, they settled in the cities rather than going back to the land.<sup>10</sup> The war had, of course, stimulated Canadian manufacturing industry, thus contributing to the urbanization of the country. But, in the opinion of the nationalists, the unfortunate phenomenon of urbanization, which was destroying the rural foundations of French Canadian society, could only intensify during the Second War. They were not slow to grasp the meaning of certain things said in the House by Col J.L. Ralston, the federal Minister of Defence, on the question of the exemption for the sons of farmers. For him, an enormous number of Canadian farmers hardly produced more foodstuffs than they needed for themselves and their families. The Minister wondered, then, "whether those men ought to be left in that occupation, or whether some farmer with capital and greater productive capacity and a sufficient establishment for the purpose would not better be raising the food" for a farmer in the other category.<sup>11</sup> For the French Canadian nationalists, this English-speaking Minister, the pro-conscriptionist to end all pro-conscriptionists, wanted to reserve agriculture for the Westerners while dealing the death blow to French Canadian rural life and hence the traditional order. For the nationalist elite of that period, agriculture was not a profession like any other. It still continued to be the way of life upon which an entire civilization rested as indeed was stressed by the Quebec episcopate after the war came to an end.<sup>12</sup>

The war also stimulated the entry of women into the job market, thus sowing anxiety among the defenders of the traditional family. For the *École Sociale Populaire*, a Jesuit organization, the working woman was the "terrible price of modern total war."<sup>13</sup> The magazine *Relations* predicted that the presence of women in the factories would bring about the "break up of the family"<sup>14</sup> while Alfred Charpentier, president of the *Confederation des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada*, worried about the repercussions of working nights on the health of women and other members of the family.<sup>15</sup> And who, the question went, would look after the children? Would people not be obliged to entrust them to "more or less benevolent strangers charged with bringing them up as though they were so many numbers in a collection of children forcibly subjected to a stifling, mass-education system?"<sup>16</sup> Still worse, some English leaders seemed to be considering the conscription of women. The French Canadian nationalists were not slow in reacting: they had said "never" to the conscription of men; to the conscription of women, they had to reply "a thousand times, never!" In short, they feared that the consequences of women working were far more serious than all the physical ravages and even the massacres of war. What would a victory won at such a price really be worth?

The problem of morals in the army also worried the clerical and nationalist leaders. As F.-A. Angers said, the quality of moral life was not "as high as could be expected in a country whose leaders officially described themselves as the defenders of Christianity."<sup>17</sup> More precisely, drunkenness and the sins of the flesh were common currency there. Invariably, there was an "accursed bar" right in the middle of the military camps, which "no sooner open than it was filled with, and filled, soldiers." The majority of young recruits became cursers and blasphemers. The officers seemed to prevent the soldiers from attending mass. In the neighbourhood of the camps, "mothers bitterly complained of the danger, unfortunately not always platonic, that followed their daughters on account of the prestige of the uniform. And the passage of regiments in turn often left behind weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, "theoreticians lacking any conscience" were advocating contraceptive methods among the soldiers. Rumour even had it that officers were discouraging the practice of continence as "dangerous to the personality" and were more concerned with hygiene than morals.<sup>19</sup> The situation was troubling, especially "when one thinks of the risk this entails for the

souls of those who will not return."<sup>20</sup> In the face of the multiple dangers of military life, the Canadian episcopate thought it meet to ask the soldiers to be "worthy of the name Christian" and "not to take advantage of the leisure that would be granted them to betray their blood at the same time as their consciences and waste, in the name of vile pleasure, the strength that they owe to the service of their God and Country."<sup>21</sup> Conscription could certainly accelerate the work of national sabotage that was already going ahead at full steam, but the nationalists seemed to go so far as to regret even Canada's participation in the war.

The language question was also much discussed during the war years. Andre Laurendeau, a journalist and defender of nationalist causes, wondered if the old plan to anglicize the French Canadian was not resurfacing with the conflict. He brought to mind the speech by J.S. Duncan, of the Ministry of Defence, who had stated that the air war should be conducted in one language and that the pilots should be trained in English, the majority tongue. The situation was hardly better in the army. French-speaking soldiers were integrated into English units and all the military camps outside Quebec functioned in English. Laurendeau also deplored the new stress placed on bilingualism in Quebec itself, which could only favour English, since it was the Francophones who were supposed to become bilingual. He thought it more important to campaign in favour of French since that was the language that was threatened. Mgr. Camille Roy, the Rector of Laval University, admitted that the Francophones ought, perhaps, to learn English in order to get along in the business world, but asked that "care be taken lest a bilingualism that had become so general that it was on the lips of all the little children of Saint Urban and Saint André-deep-in-the-forests finish up as English unilingualism."<sup>22</sup> The moment, therefore, had come to defend French but precautions had to be taken. The Censor's Office was watching out for every word that might be damaging to Canada's war effort, and the federal government was maintaining that national unity was essential for the pursuit of the war. Would the defence of the rights of the Francophone minority and the demand for a juster bilingualism not be seen by the federal authorities as a cry of rage that was unlikely to harm national unity, and hence as unlawful? French Canada, truly, was in a worrying position.

The war and the centralization it brought also threatened provincial autonomy. The Quebec nationalists were traditional supporters of autonomy, mistrusting what they identified as the expansionist aims of the federal government in fields, which, in their opinion, fell under provincial jurisdiction. In the wake of the Great Depression Ottawa had set up a royal commission to look into the relations between the federal government and the provinces. The nationalists received its recommendations with a good deal of trepidation, seeing in the report a veritable centralizer's bible. The commissioners had proposed that the provinces give up their powers of taxation to the federal government in return for various subsidies and grants. This recommendation inspired the deepest worry among the nationalists, for whom the power to tax was a necessary guarantee of provincial autonomy. According to André Laurendeau, "Ottawa is proposing to us that we exchange our rights for a few pieces of gold."<sup>23</sup> F.-A. Angers entertained the same doubts about the Rowell-Sirois Commission's recommendations, seeing in them a new centralization campaign. In his opinion, increasing centralization "is to prepare for another 1837 and the death of Confederation", to place Quebec under the yoke of the English Canadian majority and push the Francophone minority towards assimilation.<sup>24</sup>

For the nationalists, even limited participation had very grave risks for French Canada. Several of them had known the experience of the First World War; now this new conflict threatened to be still more disastrous for the nation. By contrast, most Francophones did not

seem hostile to participation as such, although it would be hard to speak of popular enthusiasm, as in 1914. For all, however, conscription was unacceptable and the politicians thus represented a point of view which they probably also espoused personally.

The opposition to conscription, and even to participation, was based on other factors that had been absent in 1914, factors connected to the actual idea of society which people held. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 had stunned the west and the major social problems encountered in various countries after 1918 had continued to spread fear among defenders of the established order. The world view of the clerical and nationalist elite in Quebec, just like that of the European right wing, was marked for several decades by the attempts of the left to weaken and overthrow civil and religious constituted authority. Espousing the cause of order and rejecting that of revolution, the elite here showed, throughout the critical years between the wars, a certain sympathy for the right-wing dictators who had seized power in several lands under the pretext of containing the communist threat. Often critical of the methods of the right, French Canadian Catholic circles were scarcely hesitant about approving its goals. When war finally broke out in 1939, they persisted in thinking that the communists were a much greater danger than the fascists. This idea was not without its influence on the elite's interpretation of the role it thought Canada ought to play in the war.

Between the wars, the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec unceasingly denounced atheistic communism, banded together with free-masonry and international Jewry in an infamous trinity. It is true that after 1920, communism paused in its expansion and even Russia retrieved some semblance of order. But for Catholic circles, peace hardly returned. Anti-clericalism reared its head in France, Mexico and elsewhere. The events in France in particular troubled the French in Canada and L'Action catholique, a Quebec daily, even published a chronicle for several months entitled "The Religious War in France".

On the threshold of the 1930s, the social and economic situation deteriorated and the communist menace again became serious. As the decade continued, the revolutionary danger increased in Germany, France and Spain, to name only three countries. At the same time, in Russia, Stalin initiated massive purges and communism took on an even more horrendous aspect than ever.

Who, therefore, would save the world from the Red terror that threatened to engulf it in flames? In 1922, after his march on Rome, Mussolini levered himself into power in Italy and announced his intention of restoring order and saving his country from a bloody communist revolution. Although relations between church and state were strained for a while, Rome and the Vatican finally signed a Concordat in 1929. This act passed off the Italian Duce as a veritable "tool of divine Providence"<sup>25</sup> and, what is more, his anti-communism earned him great admiration in right-wing circles. When Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1935, Catholic circles hardly spoke out in condemnation of him, opposing the sanctions which some people wanted the League of Nations to impose on him. For L'Action catholique, what Italy was doing was no worse than what other countries, like England, had already done before. Besides, the opinion of the paper was that Moscow was behind the forces pushing the League into imposing sanctions on Italy. Instead of blaming Italy, L'Action preferred to condemn the Jews and free-masons who, it said, were busy inventing the worst news items in order to turn public opinion against the Italian leader.

It is common knowledge that Catholic Quebec fell in right behind General Franco and



the Nationalist party during the Spanish Civil War. This conflict was analysed in absolute terms: it was a struggle between the forces of Good (Franco's nationalists) and Evil (the communists and socialists), between christian civilization and revolution. When Hitler and Mussolini entered the war in support of Franco, L'Action catholique hardly found any cause for complaint: "If the Nazi dictator and the Fascist Duce have faults on their consciences, it is surely not for having succeeded in halting communist ambitions. Although their intervention may be a subject for discussion, they have still saved Europe from the Bolshevik peril."<sup>26</sup>

As for Hitler himself, Catholic circles were slow to criticize him. Needless to say, they did find that the Führer's methods were sometimes brutal, but his iron discipline "is re-establishing order where otherwise disorder and total disregard for the right to life and property would have reigned. It is a lesser evil which has its greater advantages."<sup>27</sup> Eugène L'Heureux, a well-known nationalist and editorial writer in various newspapers, went so far as to ask whether Hitler was not "richer than his detractors in this virtue that has become so rare among parliamentarians, and yet is so necessary: sincerity."<sup>28</sup> In 1936, L'Action still found that the "strong method" was justified in the struggle against communism, since the adversary did not "tread lightly". And with regard to the persecution of the Jews, Quebec catholic circles shared the traditional anti-semitism of right-wing groups. Hitler may have had his faults, but "one has to give him credit for having snatched his country from the hands of the Communists by laying his iron hand on the disorderly elements, very many of whom, in Germany as in Russia, were Jews."<sup>29</sup> With the passing years, and certainly right up until the end of 1938, the spokesman of the archdiocese of Quebec condemned the methods used against the Jews while justifying the campaigns against "these undesirables".

Other right-wing European dictators also won the admiration of catholic circles, but none, perhaps, was appreciated more than Portugal's Salazar. Later, Marshal Pétain drew the support of many Francophones in Canada. The Quebec right had always shown its antipathy towards the Third Republic, with its socialist, often anti-clerical governments. But the Vichy regime was received more favourably because it further incarnated the national and catholic tradition of old France. Marshal Pétain had dissolved the masonic lodges, restored the privileges of the religious communities, promised to organize France on a corporate, christian basis, and had replaced the revolutionary slogan "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité!" with the motto "Travail, Famille, Patrie!" Of course, pro-Vichy sympathy started to decline as the regime fell under Nazi domination.

In the eyes of the clerical and nationalist elite in Quebec, therefore, communism appeared to be a decidedly more serious threat than fascism. Catholics could, of course, disapprove of the methods used by the fascist dictators, but they did endorse certain of their goals: the restoration of order and the containment of the Red peril. Despite the faults of the fascists, it was possible to believe in their redemption. Catholicism and communism, on the other hand, were irreconcilable. As Jules Dorion, the editor of L'Action catholique, wrote: "Fascism . . . varies according to the character of the man who practises it . . . . Marxism . . . which is embodied in today's communism, is the negation of that which differentiates man from beast and which makes of him an animal albeit more intelligent than the other animals, but whose fate is no different."<sup>30</sup> Cardinal Villeneuve fully agreed. In a circular addressed to the diocesan clergy in 1937, the Archbishop of Quebec stated: "Dictatorship is far better than revolution."<sup>31</sup> Thus at the approach of war, French Canada showed little interest in fighting the fascist dictators, the less because they were expecting the enemy to be communist Russia. Nonetheless, Hitler did not have significant support in Quebec in 1939 and, as the fighting

intensified, the sympathies of French Canadians were on the side of the allies. Canada, therefore, should participate in the war but without falling back on conscription for overseas service.

By contrast, the English maintained that Canada had to fight to save democracy from fascist tyranny and dictatorship. The Quebec elite hardly endorsed this goal: after all, dictatorship was sometimes necessary to maintain order. Eugène L'Heureux, for example, denounced the "illusion" of popular sovereignty, upholding the thesis that the masses were unsuitable to govern since "the Creator has not given them the ability."<sup>32</sup> In 1937, Jules Dorion expressed the opinion that democracy and fascism could "both quench the thirst of peoples for justice."<sup>33</sup> Louis-Philippe Roy, at Franco's announcement that he was setting up his dictatorship in Spain, refused to be shocked: "Dictatorship is not incompatible with Christian civilization. Salazar is a dictator about whom Europe has no cause to blush and of whom Christianity may legitimately be proud."<sup>34</sup> Is it therefore surprising that it was impossible to whip up the enthusiasm of the Quebec elite for a crusade involving every sacrifice including conscription, by stressing the need to save democracy in its struggle with dictatorship?

Our primary interest here has been with the reactions of the clerical and nationalist elite, without attempting any analysis of the attitudes of the other groups comprising Quebec society. Even if we know that French Canada was almost unanimously opposed to conscription, our research does not permit us at this time to show whether ordinary mortals shared the concerns of their leaders. But in a society in which the church still occupied a very important position, in which few other institutions could really rival it, and in which the incidence of religious practice was extremely high, neither have we any reason to doubt the influence of the elite on the mass of the people. We have seen that the attitude of this elite towards the war and Canadian participation was based on nationalism and conservatism. But the man in street, of course, did not analyse the world in such elaborate terms. For him, the war was being fought in a far-off theatre and hardly touched him. He could agree that Canada should participate; but he certainly did not feel the necessity for conscription whose price he, in every likelihood, would be required to pay.

## NOTES

- 1 Excerpt from a speech delivered over station CKAC on 30 September 1939, quoted in Ceux que nous devons écouter, ceux que nous devons croire, document 2, published by the Liberal Organization, n.p., n.d.
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- 4 Canada, Débats de la Chambre des Communes, 1939 session, vol. 100 (January 1939), p. 485.
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- 21 Lettre pastorale collective et mandement de l'épiscopat canadien sur l'attitude des catholiques au Canada dans la présente guerre, Le Devoir, 9 July 1942.
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- 33 Jules Dorion, "0 liberté, comme on t'a jouée!", L'Action catholique, 11 December 1937.
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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SOLIDARITY AT HOME AND ABROAD: THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE OF WORLD WAR TWO

Olav Riste

Among the smaller nations of the western world, watching through the 1930s the unfolding of events that threatened to unleash another major war, few were less able than Norway to identify with the problems of nationality, and of threats to territorial integrity, which appeared to lie at the source of Europe's troubles. No appreciable minority problems, and no identifiable threats to the nation's security, seemed to mar Norway's peaceful existence on Europe's outskirts. As late as August 25, 1939 the Foreign Minister Dr. Koht expressed the view that although hard times would fall also on Norway in the event of another great war, he was reasonably confident that the country would be able to stay outside the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

Norway's problems in the 1930s were of a different kind. The economic and social upheavals in the wake of the First World War, subsequently overtaken by the economic crisis of the early thirties, had had a polarizing effect on the political situation. The radicalization of the labour movement, which for a period brought the Labour party - then the third largest of the political parties in the Norwegian "Storting" or Parliament - into membership of the Moscow Communist International - instilled into the non-socialist parties the fear that the revolutionary language could at any time be translated into violent political action. Bitter labour conflicts and large-scale unemployment suggested a widening gulf between the haves and the have-nots which might become a real threat to the nation's social fabric. The gradual moderation of the Labour party's policy line, clearly visible in the party's election platform of 1933, and the subsequent "crisis compromise" between the Labour and Agrarian parties, which ushered in a Labour Cabinet two years later on a programme of state intervention to reduce unemployment and alleviate the hardships of the farmers, suggested that the rifts might yet be overcome. Even so, it was not until the eve of World War Two that those who belonged to the labour movement could bring themselves to regard the national symbols - the flag and the national anthem - as anything but the symbols of the bourgeoisie.

Class conflict was also at the root of Labour's anti-military stance, which created a hostile climate for any attempt to increase the country's readiness to defend its neutrality by armed force. In this respect, however, the main factor was the generally unspoken, but widely shared assumption that Norway continued to enjoy what The Times had called "effortless security"<sup>2</sup> behind the shield of British sea power. This assumption - shared as it turned out by the British themselves - lent to the debates on national defence in the 1930s an air of sterility and irrelevance. Nobody was able to establish a credible threat against which the country would have to defend itself by armed force - with the possible exception of intermittent fears about Soviet designs on north Norway. The nation's interminably long coastline was considered out of reach to any but the British, and the latter would hardly need to secure by violent means what they already controlled. Furthermore, in the unlikely event that such a need should at some point arise, what sort of defence preparedness would be required to enable a nation of three million people to keep the Royal Navy at bay?

Thus it seemed to be in the cards that Norway in an eventual major conflict might

expect and be prepared for some sort of replay of the First World War, resuming the role of Britain's "neutral ally",<sup>3</sup> attempting to secure the best possible terms for survival on the frontlines of economic warfare.

The German invasion of Norway on April 9, 1940 reversed the verdict of all such calculations. To the surprise of all - the Germans themselves included - British sea power in the North Sea turned out to be a paper tiger, insofar as the German navy was able to operate in the waters round south Norway with relative impunity. And after a two-month campaign, whose outcome was partly settled by the collapse of the allies in northern France towards the end of May, the Norwegian King and his Cabinet had to give up the armed struggle on home territory and go into exile in London. The precariousness of the exiled government's position had many aspects. One of them was the question mark over the British Isles as a safe place of refuge from the victorious German armies, which in June and July prompted the Cabinet to make active preparations in consultation with Canadian authorities for a further move across the Atlantic to Canada.<sup>4</sup> In a more long-term perspective, however, there arose the dangers inherent in the heavy burden of political liabilities which the government had to shoulder. Its foreign policy had been shipwrecked through the German invasion on April 9. And the outcome of the Norwegian campaign, despite the fact that Norway had somehow resisted an apparently invincible enemy for two months, put the stamp of failure also on its defence policy. The government was also aware that its decision to seek refuge abroad could lead to its final, fatal defeat. For in leaving the national territory, they inevitably left themselves open to the accusation of having abandoned a people faced with foreign occupation. Seeking refuge in Britain also meant joining with an ally that many Norwegians felt was at least partly to blame for dragging the country into war; an ally whose assistance during the campaign had been woefully inadequate; and whose chances of winning the war seemed remote at the time. The main danger inherent in these liabilities was that they could be used, through skillful enemy propaganda, in order to turn the Norwegian people away from their government and towards some internal regime loyal to the occupiers. Then the government would become exiles in every pejorative sense of the term: an emigré clique cut off from the people of Norway and consequently of little or no use to a fighting alliance.

However, the government also brought important assets. First of all, with the King firmly on their side, their legal and constitutional status was beyond doubt. And the authority of the King and Cabinet to represent their country abroad was never questioned either by allied or neutral states. Turning to assets of a more material kind, the Norwegian government had one immense advantage in being financially independent of the allies. Having secured control over the vast majority of Norway's overseas merchant navy, about four million tons of modern tankers and cargo ships, the Norwegian government could not only make a considerable contribution to the war, but could also be sure that its war effort in exile would be a self-financed affair. Further financial security was provided by the gold reserves of the Bank of Norway which had been shipped abroad to Canada and the United States during the campaign.

With the home country under foreign occupation, it was clear that Norway's contribution to the war effort could not be based on significant manpower resources. The twenty to thirty thousand men employed in the merchant navy would obviously have to be reserved for allied maritime transport. As far as the Norwegian armed forces were concerned, only small elements of the navy and air force had managed to escape to Britain with the government. Any further addition to the manpower resources would have to be contributed by refugees from the home country. Yet the Norwegian government was determined from the first

moment to maintain its own armed forces, land, sea, and air, as a recognizable Norwegian element of the allied forces. On this basis the first Norwegian naval squadron was formed on June 30, 1940, based on Rosyth. Also in June 1940 the Norwegian government decided that the officers and men of the Norwegian air force, for whom training facilities could not be provided in Britain, would be sent to Canada for training in a newly established Norwegian training centre at Island airport, Toronto.

Evidently, however, Norway's place in the alliance would not only be determined by what it could effectively contribute to the war effort. It would also depend to a large extent on how the Norwegian government organized that contribution; in other words how the Norwegian government determined its posture in the alliance and in particular its attitude to Norway's major ally, Great Britain.<sup>5</sup>

The process of laying a political groundwork for Norway's role in the alliance took the form of a debate which lasted well into the autumn of 1940. In this debate, three alternative postures were outlined. The first alternative was represented by the Foreign Minister, Halvdan Koht. His attitude to Norway's place in the alliance was, in the summer of 1940, dominated by his view that Norway's future independence depended on not one but two great powers. First, naturally, there was Great Britain. Koht from the beginning advocated active cooperation and close association with Britain, and was instrumental in establishing close collaboration, *inter alia* in intelligence matters. However, Koht's willingness to cooperate closely with Britain was tempered by his lack of confidence in a British or allied victory in the war. Should the war end in a compromise peace, there was another great power, presently cooperating with the enemy, whose attitude to Norway would also be of major importance, namely the Soviet Union. In any case Norway's geographical position, in an area where the strategic interests of three great powers overlapped, would seem to make it only common sense to take into account the interests of more than one of these powers. On the assumption that the Soviet Union's major interest in Norway was that the country should remain free of domination by any other great power, Koht was anxious to underline Norway's independence of Great Britain. In Koht's view, therefore, Norway's best posture was to maintain active practical cooperation with Britain, while retaining a clearly independent profile.

Dissatisfaction with Koht's line was to appear from two quarters. One line of opposition was voiced within the Cabinet from two of Koht's colleagues. The two ministers, who had joined the government in early June 1940 as part of the Prime Minister's effort to give it a broader political basis, advocated what might be termed traditional Norwegian attitudes to foreign relations - particularly relations with great powers. Theirs was the old emphasis on formal written guarantees or treaties, whereby Norwegian rights could be secured and the corresponding duties and obligations of great powers specified. Although obviously reflecting deep-seated small power resentments at great power politics, this policy however seemed irrelevant to the immediate problems confronting the government, and did not have much support. In the more isolated atmosphere of the home front, nevertheless, the feeling that the World War was not really Norway's war lingered on, and was a factor which the government had to take into account in its longterm policy planning.

The third alternative for Norway's alliance posture was put forward in a letter to the cabinet by five prominent Norwegian intellectuals who had accompanied the government into exile. The authors of this letter took as their point of departure the fact that Norway, through refusing the German ultimatum on April 9, had de facto become allied to Great Britain, and that

Norway's fate therefore was primarily tied to Britain and to the war the British were determined to pursue this war would have to become, in their view, a revolutionary and ideological struggle against Germany and all that Nazism stood for. Like Churchill, the signers of the letter wanted Europe to be set ablaze, not just in the material sense. And in this process the nations which had refused to capitulate and which still had their free governments, like Norway, could play an important and active role. A central part of their argument was that Norway could only hope to safeguard its independence and protect its national rights during the war through active and effective support for Britain and the common cause. "If the British Government is convinced that the Norwegian Government will do its utmost, then Norway's authority will be respected and we will at least to some extent be taken into the councils of the alliance. But if the British Government thinks that the Norwegian Government is lukewarm towards the struggle, is unreliable, or goes its own ways, then sooner or later the British authorities will end up by pushing our own military and administrative authorities aside."<sup>6</sup> With particular reference to Koht's concern for Norway's relations with the Soviet Union, the letter stated that Norway could not have its ally's enemy as a friend. It would therefore be foolhardy to let distant and uncertain promises of Soviet political support get in the way of the immediate necessity for close cooperation with Great Britain.

The issue between Koht and his opponents thus was not whether Norway should be an ally and a belligerent. Rather it was a question of to what extent Norway should, so to speak, "wear the alliance on its sleeve". There was no disagreement that Norway should both protect its independent rights within the alliance and at the same time cooperate actively in the common cause. To a large extent the problem was one of priorities. Koht wanted to protect Norway's longterm rights first of all, while cooperating actively with Great Britain. His intellectual opponents, and their supporters inside and outside the government, put first priority on active and positive cooperation with Britain, and saw this as an essential means to assure Norwegian independence and Norwegian rights. In questions affecting vital Norwegian interests, such as the complicated issue of the Norwegian gold reserves which the British government at one stage coveted; that of control over the Norwegian merchant navy; or in matters concerning the organization and employment of Norwegian armed forces, there was little or no disagreement among the Norwegians in exile. Koht's resignation as Foreign Minister, in November 1940, was therefore not so much a matter of a change of policy as of a change of emphasis and above all of attitude towards the wartime alliance. Koht's resignation was taken as a sign that the Norwegian government had demonstrably broken with its neutral past. And the new Foreign Minister, Trygve Lie, was evidently determined to show a new spirit of cooperation.

The central idea of Norwegian foreign policy planning during 1941-45 is usually referred to as the "Atlantic idea" or "Atlantic policy". This idea was in fact barely visible in the first official foreign policy statement of the Norwegian government - a radio speech by the new Foreign Minister, Trygve Lie on December 15, 1940.<sup>7</sup> That statement only referred in very general terms to Britain and the United States as Norway's historic and natural partners, leading up to the suggestion that the wartime alliance now being forged should form the basis also for post-war cooperation. The government's main purpose in issuing such a policy statement was to demonstrate its complete solidarity with the alliance, and its concomitant rejection of the neutralist and isolationist policies of the past. The Norwegian government wished to convince the British that it was a fully reliable partner in the alliance, and therefore deserving of every possible consideration and goodwill on the part of Great Britain. As The Times put in an editorial commentary, the Norwegian Foreign Minister had "admitted that Scandinavian unity



and Scandinavian neutrality which had previously been regarded as protection was no longer enough".<sup>8</sup> Only a new relationship with the leading powers of western democracy could in the future ensure national freedom and economic and social security for Norway. The policy of isolation and neutrality was no longer a viable option, and would have to be replaced by a binding cooperation for mutual advantage with Great Britain and other western powers.

As to what new forms this post-war cooperation should take, the Foreign Minister's speech was deliberately vague: speaking of the wartime alliance "which our allies and all progressive forces of the world are endeavouring to build up and strengthen", he went on to say that this endeavour would in its turn "provide the basis for a cooperation which can and must endure after the war: a political cooperation to secure our national freedom and remove the danger of assaults by arrogant and tyrannical aggressors, and an economic cooperation providing social security and preventing the destruction of our economies and our welfare."

Only between the lines can one here discern the far-reaching proposals for post-war military cooperation which the Foreign Minister was at the same time putting forward in private conversations with officials of the British Foreign Office:<sup>9</sup> a future alliance for mutual security covering the North Atlantic and embracing Britain, Norway, the United States, Iceland and the Faeroes. For the post-war world, Trygve Lie here envisaged nothing less than a mutual defence system with a network of naval, military and air bases in the respective territories.

With these specific suggestions about a post-war alliance, the Norwegian Foreign Minister was undoubtedly way ahead of most of his Cabinet colleagues. A long period of gestation would therefore be needed before such thoughts could become official government policy. In the short term, however, they served their purpose as a strong reinforcement of the message contained in Lie's public speech, to the effect that Norway was a reliable ally and therefore deserved Britain's full support. And initial reactions in the British Foreign Office showed that this final purpose was on its way to being fulfilled. The Norwegian policy declaration, and in particular the practical aspects entailed in the proposals for a mutual security system for the North Atlantic, were termed "an exceptionally important development in Norwegian foreign policy". In order to ensure that this new policy should take firm roots among the Norwegians, therefore, the British Minister to the Norwegian government advised that "His Majesty's Government should bear it steadily in mind in all their dealings with the Norwegian Government, and be careful that the latter retain their present enthusiasm for it."<sup>10</sup>

Almost a year was to lapse before Foreign Minister Trygve Lie made another public declaration of the Norwegian government's long-term policy aims. In the meantime Trygve Lie sought to promote his point of view at various levels. Thus in April 1941 he informed the Minister of the United States to the Norwegian government of his plans, without of course expecting any official reaction as yet from neutral America. Lie's clear desire to include Iceland in the Projected postwar cooperation also found expression during this time. When the Norwegian Minister to Reykjavik suggested that Norway might perform a mediator's role between Iceland and Denmark, after Iceland in May 1941 formally decided to dissolve the union with Denmark, Trygve Lie rejected this idea. Iceland's action had his support, and he also thought that "it would be easier to interest Iceland in a military security arrangement once it has become a free and independent country". During the spring the Norwegian Foreign Minister also sought to propagate his ideas among Norwegian exiles in Stockholm.

The second major statement of Norway's foreign policy was made at Oxford in

October 1941, where Trygve Lie gave a lecture which was subsequently transformed into an article in The Times.<sup>11</sup> Here the main focus was on the "Atlantic idea". The statement referred to the need for complete and unilateral disarmament of Germany after the war, and pointed to the common military tasks of the allies in this respect as forming a natural basis for further military cooperation. "We ought to reach an agreement which gives to each of the allied powers specific tasks, and for the smaller states these would be of a regional character. Norway is naturally particularly concerned about the defence of the Atlantic...." In his Oxford lecture Lie had been even more specific: "What I would like to see would be an agreement on Eastern Atlantic defence between Britain, the U.S.A. and Canada, covering Greenland and Iceland. Norway would then wish to come in for the sake of her own defence, before the mood of the present time should change.... Norwegian defence must be based on permanent strategic facts, not on talk, and must endure for many years. It is a strategic fact that the defence of Norway is part of the defence of Britain. I am therefore hoping to start with arrangements for the common defence of Norway and Britain. The U.S.A. should be kept fully informed of such arrangements from the beginning of conversations; she would participate in turn if she entered the war."<sup>12</sup>

It may in retrospect seem odd that the Soviet Union as late as October 1941 had not yet been given a role in the Norwegian Foreign Minister's policy plans for the post-war period. On the other side: what place could one give the Soviet Union in 1941? The traditional uncertainty about the aims and means of Russian policy in a global, European, and north European perspective had admittedly been resolved on a preliminary basis through the accession of the Soviet Union to the alliance against the Axis powers. But it was uncertain how long the Russians could hold out against German pressure, and one still knew little about long-range Russian aims. Norwegian policy-makers therefore had only two alternatives as regards the place of the Soviet Union. They could either fall back on traditional scepticism - not to say fear - concerning Russian expansionism in northern Scandinavia, or they could take up the line which former Foreign Minister Koht suggested in 1940 - a line which actively aimed at avoiding conflict between Norwegian and Soviet security policies. For the time being, however, Foreign Minister Trygve Lie remained ambivalent on this issue, and kept the question of the place of the Soviet Union open.

It is worth emphasizing therefore that the central motive for Norway's Atlantic policy scheme at this stage was not to create a bulwark against communist expansion. The purpose was the more general one of taking Norway out of its security isolation from before the war and of preventing a new "April 9", that is to say renewed German aggression. The problem of Russia was nevertheless bound to crop up. The British Foreign Office at this time were speculating that the Russians might have territorial ambitions in the north, including an ice-free port in north Norway. British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden therefore advised the Norwegian government to proceed with caution regarding its plans for the northern Atlantic so long as Russian views were not known. However, during Eden's talks with Stalin in late December 1941, no Russian claims to Norwegian territory were put forward. The Russian claims concerned Bessarabia; Finnish territory up to the frontier that existed before the German attack in June 1941; Poland east of the Curzon Line; and Soviet Russian bases in Roumania. In return, Stalin seemed to view with favour the prospect of a military alliance between Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, and "was not opposed to Great Britain acquiring naval bases in Norway and Denmark", although a guarantee concerning the exits from the Baltic would be appreciated.<sup>13</sup>

After this clarification of Soviet aims, the British Foreign Office after New Year 1942

saw fit to consider the "Atlantic" policy scheme somewhat more fully. An inter-departmental meeting produced a long memorandum<sup>14</sup> for the Foreign Secretary, in which the Atlantic policy was viewed in a larger context, tied in with a Greek proposal for a similar system in the eastern Mediterranean, and with Roosevelt's stray thoughts about American bases abroad. The inter-departmental meeting had seen a security scheme based on such a system of naval and military bases as "one of the few ideas in regard to the post-war structure which seem to have practical value and to have some chance of general acceptance. M. Lie's proposals should therefore be welcome in principle, and there are special reasons why it appears desirable for His Majesty's Government to consider it without delay."

The Foreign Office memorandum concluded with a proposal to request the opinion of the military experts about the strategic aspects of the plan. To this Eden agreed, but added in his minutes that there were still two big questions to be resolved concerning the political aspects. They were on the one hand the old problem of relations with the Russians, and on the other the opposition which had already been expressed in the British Cabinet against a system of military and naval bases as a foundation for post-war security.

In fact, a main reason why the British government's attitude towards Norway's "Atlantic policy" had so far never gone beyond expressions of general encouragement and positive interest, was that high-level British political consideration of the post-war international order had at this time hardly begun. Of the many preliminary questions which would have to be clarified before the British government could take a stand, only two made some progress towards a settlement in the first half of 1942. Firstly, the Chiefs of Staff gave as their opinion that in a future defence system against renewed German aggression, bases in Norway would not be of decisive value unless backed up by the United States. When specifically requested to review the situation for the eventuality that Russia might be a future enemy, the Chiefs of Staff at first thought Norway would be too exposed as a defence bastion unless accompanied by a defence arrangement with Sweden. But on reconsideration the Chiefs of Staff still advocated a British naval base at Stavanger in order to secure control over the maritime routes from the Baltic to the Atlantic.<sup>15</sup> The other issue in which progress was made in the first half of 1942 concerned relations with the Soviet Union. In May 1942 a twenty year British Soviet treaty of alliance was concluded, stipulating among other things that each party undertook not to conclude any alliance nor to take part in any coalition directed against the other. Further the two powers pledged their common efforts to prevent future German aggression. This in some ways could be seen as providing the Soviet Union with a veto over any kind of defence arrangements entered into by Great Britain for the post-war period. At least it would seem to ensure that any such arrangements could not be openly directed against the Soviet Union.

The growing importance of future relations with the Soviet Union in any consideration of post-war Atlantic or European defence arrangements was reflected in the next official statement of Norway's foreign policy aims. This official document, entitled "Principal Features of Norwegian Foreign Policy",<sup>16</sup> was fully debated and then voted on by the Cabinet in May 1942, and therefore stands as an authoritative expression of the consensus of the government. Relations with the Soviet Union were here given a prominent place. Speculations about Soviet threats against north Norway were rejected as groundless, and closer relations and better cooperation with the Soviet Union were strongly recommended for all the western powers. In matters related to defence the following formula was used:

During this war, Northern Norway has been one of the starting points for the

German attack upon Soviet Russia and the western powers, the Soviet Government will be positively interested in the development of the defence of Northern Norway. Should the relations between Soviet Russia and the western powers be hostile, the position of Northern Norway would be much more complicated. Norway will, therefore, do her utmost to prevent such a conflict from arising. The basis of friendly relations between Soviet Russia and the western powers must be laid now, during the war.

On the whole, this foreign policy statement of May 1942 reemphasized Norway's advocacy of its Atlantic policy. But Atlantic cooperation was now seen in a wider context and related to both universal and Nordic cooperation. In its central paragraph regarding post-war security the document contained the following propositions:

Until it becomes possible to create an effective and universal League of Nations, Norway will be compelled to seek security in regional arrangements. Norway, therefore, desires binding and obligatory military agreements concerning the defence of the North Atlantic, and she is anxious that Sweden should be a party to these agreements. The Norwegian Government would also look with satisfaction upon the adhesion of Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France, to the system. The Norwegian government desires that the military cooperation shall be developed as far as possible in the course of the war itself. The Norwegian Government desires to initiate negotiations even now regarding this future military cooperation.

In many ways, this document has come to represent the high point in the development of Norway's "Atlantic policy". From then on, as the post-war planning of Britain and the other great powers got into its stride, Norway's role as the initiator of new policy approaches was over. Henceforth the tasks of Norwegian policy-makers became that of adjusting their ideas to policy developments determined by the great powers. To some extent the Norwegian government also had to face the problem of dissenting opinions, as well as a revival of interest in closer Nordic cooperation. In liberal and conservative circles outside the government the isolationist impulse was not yet dead. From the United States the Norwegian conservative leader C.J. Hambro attempted to reestablish the old distinction between the cynicism of the great powers and the moral superiority of small states, and warned against a peace settlement dictated by the "Big Four".<sup>17</sup>

A final attempt to extract from the British government, and also from Washington, some sort of commitment to an Atlantic defence system was made in the autumn of 1942. In the meantime, support for the idea of tying Great Britain and the United States into a defence system had been forthcoming from the Foreign Ministers of the Netherlands and Belgium. And dutch Foreign Minister Van Kleffens, after a visit to the United States, claimed to have found much positive interest in the idea among American leaders. Prompted by this widening support, Eden in October 1942 attempted to get War Cabinet consent to new instructions to the British Ambassador in Washington, authorizing him to discuss the idea with the State Department and to express general British support for the political implications of a security scheme on these lines. But the consensus of the War Cabinet was against even such a limited commitment on the part of Britain, and the outcome of the debate was a request that the Foreign Office develop the broader lines of British and international post-war security first.<sup>18</sup> The resulting memorandum, entitled "The Four-Power Plan", gave primary emphasis to the emerging American ideas of a

universal system of post-war security and cooperation dominated by the great powers. Regional defence systems might still have their place. "In particular, it is to be hoped that in North Western Europe special agreements will be made whereby it will be possible for Great Britain and possibly the United States to establish naval and air bases in the territories of the various powers bordering on the North Sea...."<sup>19</sup> But regionalism seemed by now to have been relegated to a somewhat ancillary concept, and during 1943 the idea of a global framework for international cooperation, under great power leadership, began to take precedence also in Norwegian foreign policy planning.

In January 1944 the change of emphasis in Norwegian foreign policy planning for the post-war world was publicly stated both in a major speech by the Foreign Minister and in a parallel article in The Observer by Trygve Lie's chief adviser.<sup>20</sup> First priority was now clearly given to the universalist concept of the United Nations. And this was done, as Trygve Lie admitted to the Foreign Office, in order to conform to the views of Great Britain and the United States. An Atlantic regional arrangement was still put forward as the concept most likely to provide the maximum degree of security for Norway in the post-war world. But this took second place to the global scheme of four-power cooperation, and was moreover made conditional on the goodwill or at least tacit acquiescence of the Soviet Union. As Trygve Lie put it, "Norway's interests would be best served by an agreement embracing the countries bordering on the North Atlantic, on condition that it was subordinated to an international organisation and was accompanied by an extension of our good relations with the Soviet Union." This, then, was the general order of priority applied by the Norwegian government in its approach to the organization of peace during the remainder of the war. But the new proviso regarding relations with the Soviet Union points to the final and major development in Norwegian wartime foreign policy: the special relationship developing between Norway and its new great power neighbour to the east.

In fact, ever since the autumn of 1942, the Soviet Union had been showing an increasing interest in Norwegian foreign policy guidelines. And in April 1943, while enquiring of the Norwegian Finance Minister whether there were any new developments in Norway's Atlantic policy, the Soviet Ambassador to the Norwegian Government in exile said that "Norway should be aware that in order to obtain their security aims, it was not only necessary to be in agreement with the western powers. One should in addition make sure of a good relationship with the Soviet Union, which also was a power with Atlantic interests."<sup>21</sup>

But the major impetus for an increasing attentiveness to Soviet interests in the north was provided by the prospect that the Red Army, in the eventuality of Finland withdrawing from the war, might become the first allied liberation troops on Norwegian territory. This prospect, and the lack of interest on the part of the western power in providing allied liberation forces to counter-balance the possible presence of Soviet troops in north Norway, lay behind a series of cooperative approaches towards the Soviet Union in the spring of 1944, culminating in the conclusion of a Civil Affairs Agreement between Norway and the Soviet Union simultaneously with similar agreements with the western powers. This agreement was intended to regulate the exercise of Soviet military jurisdiction on Norwegian soil and the gradual transfer of sovereignty to Norwegian authorities, and was concluded in spite of British warnings against "inviting Soviet troops in". Soviet policy during and after the conclusion of this agreement showed a clear preference for conducting Soviet-Norwegian relations in regard to north Norway on a strictly bilateral basis, excluding any involvement of the western great powers.<sup>22</sup>

However, the possibility of establishing bilateral relations and closer cooperation on a more permanent basis was wrecked when Molotov, during a midnight meeting with Trygve Lie in the Kremlin in November 1944, presented his demands for a revision of the 1920 Svalbard Treaty which established Norwegian sovereignty over the archipelago, and for a cession of Bear Island to the Soviet Union. These demands inevitably produced shock waves that were to reverberate far into the postwar period. The immediate effect of Molotov's brusque tactics was to pulverize the prospects of a cordial relationship being established in the north in the wake of the Soviet-Norwegian liberation agreement of May 1944. The presence of Soviet troops on Norwegian territory in Finnmark, which had been warmly welcomed by the Norwegian government in an official statement on 26 October as "a further manifestation of the friendship between our two countries", was henceforth bound to serve as a reminder that Soviet aims and Norwegian territorial sovereignty in the Arctic might be at cross purposes.

The result of these developments was that the Norwegian government in the course of 1944 had passed from an early restatement of its Atlantic policy preferences, through a period of accommodation to Soviet interests -sufficiently marked to elicit warnings from Eden about the effect of such a pro-Soviet attitude on the other Nordic countries - to an attitude of detachment from international politics. From the autumn of 1944 the prevailing mood in the Norwegian government was one of disillusionment with the western powers, and deep suspicion of the aims of Soviet policy in the north. With such a fundamental uncertainty about the direction of future Norwegian foreign policy, it is hardly surprising that the belated British attempts during 1944 to regenerate interest in Atlantic security should fall on stony ground as far as Norway was concerned. The time for Norway's open commitment to collective western defence arrangements seemed to have passed.

Formal non-alignment, however, was not the same as a return to the prewar status quo. The basic premise of Norway's Atlantic policy, the realisation that a small state not only has to come to terms with the great power on whom its survival might depend, but that it should also aim to provide a positive contribution to the establishment of a relationship based on close cooperation and mutual trust, remained in force. Hence, despite the eclipse of the Atlantic idea in its 1942 configuration, and a certain resurgence of the isolationist impulse from the summer of 1945, there remained a strong under-current of functional links between Norway and its western wartime allies which ensured that the nucleus of the vision about a continuation into peacetime of allied military cooperation was preserved. Through cooperative ventures in the fields of arms and equipment supplies and of training, combined with the joint tasks undertaken in the occupation of Germany, an infrastructure was maintained which, while not tied to multilateral treaties and organizational set-ups, had the peculiar advantages of a purely functional cooperation. And this network of practical arrangements at least went some way towards preserving a central element in Norway's "lesson" from 1940: the conviction that, as one of the chief architects of Norwegian foreign policy stated, "military cooperation cannot be improvised"<sup>23</sup>. For the time being this was all that could be achieved, and perhaps all that was needed. Only a renewed sense of impending crisis three to four years later persuaded the country to draw the full consequences of the 1940 experience, by way of a formal commitment to the concept of a mutual North Atlantic defence system -- precisely the sort of "formal and binding military agreement for the defence of the North Atlantic" which the Norwegian government in exile had called for in its May 1942 policy declaration.

The conclusions suggested by the wartime experiences on the domestic front were perhaps less clear-cut, and their long-term consequences are correspondingly harder to trace.

But the available evidence at the very least suggests that the social and political cleavages, alluded to earlier, had at least temporarily been submerged in the united resistance against the German occupant and against the attempt to impose an alien ideology. At the end of the war, inspired by this national experience of internal solidarity in defence of common values, an effort was made to translate that unifying spirit into practical terms. Stimulated by the widespread realization within the resistance movement that political or social divisions weighed less than the values about which a broad consensus existed, leaders of different political complexions agreed on a joint programme. This document, in the form of a common election platform for all the political parties, serving as a superstructure for the party political platforms, listed the aims and means which it was intended should remain above party political dispute. Among those were a firm commitment to full employment, to a more just distribution of incomes, and to an organization of the economy based on the close cooperation of the state, capital and labour.

Although party political divisions gradually reasserted themselves as the 1940s approached their end, the spirit and to some extent the letter of the "Common Platform" proved remarkably durable. It is hardly too much to say that the spirit of that platform set the tone for Norwegian politics in the whole of the post-war period, with its general lack of extremism on both sides of the political spectrum and a convergence towards the centre on major political issues. So although election campaigns and parliamentary debates may have suggested irreconcilable differences, there seems to have remained not only a sense of what the Common Platform termed "the experience that we were one nation", but also a desire "to preserve that experience as a living impulse for people's life and work in Norway's future."





## NOTES

- 1 NRK (Norwegian State Broadcasting) sound archives. Recorded speech.
- 2 The Times, 6 July 1935.
- 3 Cf. O. Riste, The Neutral Ally: Norway's Relations with Belligerent Powers in the First World War. (Oslo and London 1965).
- 4 NMFA (Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs) Archives, file 1.5/19 and Lie Papers.
- 5 For a full treatment of Norway's wartime alliance and foreign policy see O. Riste, "London-regjoringa" Vols. I-II (Oslo 1973-1979.)
- 6 NMFA Archives, file 34.1/19, Doc. 978/40 C 3.
- 7 English version in L.W. Holborn, War and Peace Aims of the United Nations, 1939-1942 (Boston 1943) pp. 489-490.
- 8 The Times, 16 December 1940.
- 9 Public Record Office, London. FO 371/29421, N 214/87/30.
- 10 Ibid., N 1307/83/30.
- 11 The Times, 14 November 1941.
- 12 Excerpts from the lecture in PRO, FO 371/29422, N 6510/87/30.
- 13 For the Stalin-Eden conversations see PRO, Cab 66/20, WP(42)8, 5.1.1942.
- 14 PRO, FO 371/32832, N 518/463/30.
- 15 The military appreciations are in PRO, Cab 84/44, J.P.(42)354 and 3.P.(42)432 (0); and Cab 84/45, 3.P.(42)497.
- 16 Full text i.a. in FO (Archives of the Norwegian Defence High Command), file L-10-d. Quotations are taken from the official English version of the document.
- 17 See C.J. Hambro, Taler i krig (Oslo, 1945), esp. p. 97.
- 18 PRO, PREM 3/59; FO 371/32832, N 5716/463/30.
- 19 PRO, PREM 4/100/7, pp. 308-9.
- 20 "Norsk Tidend" 19.1.1944 (Text of Lie's speech); "The Observer" 2.1.1944.

- 21 NMFA Archives, file 34.4/99, P. Hartmann minute 12.4.1943.
- 22 On these matters see also N.M. Udgaard, Great Power Politics and Norwegian Foreign Policy (Oslo 1973), Chapters 4-7.
- 23 Radio speech by A. Ording, Trygve Lie's chief political adviser, on the BBC Norwegian Service 16 March 1943, printed in Ording, 100 kronikker (Oslo 1946), p. 208.

## CHAPTER NINE

### COPING WITH A WAR: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CANADIAN DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Don Page

Down through the ages the writers of military history have developed the axiom that the successful prosecution of any major war cannot be confined to the events on the battlefield. Behind any success on the field lies a supportive home base. To be effective, diplomats, like others who serve their nation at war, must have the will and the means to acquire and deploy their resources for the achievement of the common goal. Moreover, the performance of a Foreign Office during a war will determine its capacity for making the peace. When Canada declared war on September 10, 1939, its Department of External Affairs was both psychologically and physically unprepared to support its participation in the war effort. Yet, after six years of constant struggle to obtain and effectively deploy its human resources, it emerged in a position of world leadership in fashioning a new international order. This story of transformation from a graduate seminar to a full-fledged diplomatic service is based on learning to cope with and finally to overcome war time impositions.

Press statements to the contrary, the government was, apart from enabling legislation for the defence of Canada, unprepared to assist its allies in waging war abroad. Despite the fact that throughout 1938 and 1939 the Department's Legal Adviser, John Read, had played an important part in the writing of emergency legislation on censorship, internment of enemy aliens, transportation and air raid precautions as well as the operative Defence of Canada Regulations, no thought was ever given to a Departmental War Book.<sup>1</sup> The reason was obvious. Few in External Affairs had really considered that Canada would actually join in a war overseas. For the Minister and also the Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, any extensive war preparations could destroy national unity.<sup>2</sup> The Under-Secretary at External Affairs, O.D. Skelton, whom the Prime Minister's subsequent private secretary described as "Mackenzie King's closest adviser in all public affairs, domestic as well as external", had profound doubts and hesitations about Canadian participation in the war.<sup>3</sup> These were not masked in his paper on "Canadian War Policy" that King read to the Cabinet on August 24. Five days later the Chiefs of Staff recommended raising an army corps of 60,000 men for immediate despatch abroad when war came. This proposal was cut to shreds by the Department's "super isolationist", Loring Christie.<sup>4</sup> Even those who may have wished to make preparations at the last minute were deterred from doing so by the government's reluctance to speculate on the nature and level of Canadian participation in a possible war effort. It took nine months of war before Skelton was convinced that "the real place to defend our land is from across the seas".<sup>5</sup>

When war did come, External Affairs was denied "war department status". The government had divided departments into wartime and peacetime services and, as a non-war department, External Affairs did not qualify for the benefits deferred on "a unit engaged exclusively in war work". This meant that for supplies and accommodation the Department would have to scramble for what was left over after the war departments had liberally helped themselves. Even more important as it turned out, External Affairs could not be exempted from Treasury Board's freeze on promotions, reclassifications, and salary raised through war duty supplements. Arguments before Treasury Board that the amount of its non-war work was "so

small as to be insignificant" went unanswered.<sup>6</sup> Staffing new missions abroad and serving on committees involved in war time controls did not qualify as war work. Even the Prime Minister who added the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office to External Affairs' appeal would not support it before the Board. In the meantime the Department was losing its support staff to better paying positions in the war departments, and officers abroad found themselves living on a frozen salary while representatives of other departments in the mission received promotions for no more important or demanding work.<sup>7</sup> After some hesitancy and in order to allow for the staffing of new missions the Department did receive an exemption for hiring and finally on June 1, 1943, Treasury Board agreed to allow appeals for the supplements in "meritorious cases" where it could be documented that the position reflected "substantial added responsibilities and increased duties". However, the Board warned, this would not apply to those cases where the war had merely required the employee to work harder and longer since the Board believed "that Civil Servants generally are eager to be of the greatest possible service and willing to undertake extra duties without too much regard to established salary ratings"<sup>8</sup>. This was undoubtedly so, but as the war dragged on employees, especially in the clerical ranks, became more concerned about the prospects for post-war employment that would depend upon their wartime salary scales.

War made apparent what officials in External Affairs had known all along, Canada did not have the means of acquiring first-hand information about developments that would vitally affect its prosperity and future. The parsimonious Prime Minister had repeatedly rejected Skelton's requests for the establishment of posts beyond London, Washington, Paris, Tokyo and Geneva.<sup>9</sup> Arguments that Canada had no wealthy political or public-minded men suitable for representing their country abroad were fallacious. Furthermore, the economy if not status demanded more representation. When the last expansion of missions abroad had occurred in the 1920s, foreign trade was freer and governed by relatively stable import tariffs. Government assistance to export trade could under these conditions be reasonably assigned to the Trade Commissioner Service which had a rather anomalous legal status in a host country. In the thirties, the tendency towards increased state participation through internal controls that were governed by political pressures made diplomatic representation for commercial purposes more necessary. Moreover in view of the competition for markets, continued reliance on the British to make the Canadian case was absurd. This was the main reason why in 1939 a Legation was opened in Belgium with dual accreditation in The Netherlands.

The war made imperative, regardless of expense, an expansion of Canadian representation abroad. In rapid succession High Commissions were opened in the Dominions in 1939-40. After some prodding from Washington and London, missions were opened in Argentina, Brazil and Chile in 1941-42 and this was followed by missions to China, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Norway, Poland, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia by the end of 1943. Since there were too few senior career officers whom the Prime Minister considered to be eligible for heading a post and those who were could not be spared from their demanding work in Ottawa, London and Washington, expendable senior civil servants and political appointees were found to head these new missions. With little more than their accumulated experience and innate intelligence, they were despatched abroad under the tutelage of some junior career officer who would assist them in writing reports and hopefully guide them through diplomatic protocol without any serious slip. Recruiting then began for replacement Third Secretaries and for other war-related assignments that the Department had taken on.

Brains more than skills were emphasized in examining the many hopefuls, with a rough

balance being upheld between successful candidates in the two linguistic groups. This policy of a linguistic balance in the external service was begun by Skelton and carefully followed by his successor Norman Robertson and King, even if it meant accepting lower standards when recruiting or making appointments or postings at all levels. "We have maintained", Robertson told King in 1944,

a certain balance in the intake of English and French candidates by requiring a stiffer standard of academic performance from the former group, but this kind of makeshift adjustment is not very satisfactory because it must tend to perpetuate the present position, in which most of the hard and unrewarded work is done by English Canadian officers.<sup>10</sup>

This was a reference to those French Canadians who had joined the external service as a free ticket to an easy life in Europe where they wanted to remain for life. Those who joined during the war were of a different mold. Each had been exposed to international affairs where they recognized that Canada could be playing an important role in shaping the post-war world. They wanted to get in at the ground level. They wanted to show their compatriots that a French Canadian could influence policy in Ottawa. It was not really a question of lower admission standards but rather the application of standards that did not properly test them. While they wrote the examination in French, it was on Shakespeare rather than Molière, on British constitutional law rather than the French Civil Code and their oral examination was in English which they scarcely knew. Their credentials however were impeccable as all seven had practiced law. Two of them would go on to become Under-Secretaries and all of them became senior Ambassadors. The Ottawa civil service of the early forties was not a hospitable home for young francophones where it was thought that the only good French Canadian was one who had been to Oxford, spoke English with an accent, and watched the Saturday afternoon ball games. But they came anyway, thanks to the encouragement of most members in the Department and especially their father figure, the Assistant Under-Secretary Laurent Beaudry who, with his kind words and charming daughters, persuaded them to come back from happy weekends with the family clan in Montreal. They stayed on in spite of their foreign working conditions.

After the fall of France the war became a people's war and young men began to feel uncomfortable if they were not actively participating in the national effort. Some of the new recruits even signed a petition threatening to quit unless they were allowed to enlist. For fear of losing his new protégés, Skelton persuaded them that they were already doing essential wartime service as an alternative to military service and a fruit salad chest. Robertson made every effort to get them to posts on the front lines which he hoped they would find morally satisfying as well as qualifying them for a "para-military record".<sup>12</sup> He was later to resent the efforts of the National Selective Service to boost its statistics by enlisting his eligible men in the armed forces and then seconding them to the Department. This would have defeated the whole point of his argument about equivalent service that had given him a 100 per cent retention rate.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of 1941 it was decided to take on no new Third Secretaries for the duration of the war unless they were unfit for military service. This seemed the only fair thing to do in order not to prejudice the chances of the enlisted men for positions at the end of the war. But additional help was still needed desperately and the solution was to hire by competition university trained women as Grade four clerks, since the position of Third Secretary was an exclusive privilege for males. However, their work was the same as Third Secretaries and in some cases they directly filled the positions of those going abroad.<sup>14</sup> Twelve women entered in

1942 and 1943 at a fixed salary 40 per cent lower than that of a Probationary Third Secretary. Mindful of the injustice and the refusal of the Civil Service Commission to do anything about it, they laboured on with their just rewards coming late in the war through war duty supplements.

As the service expanded through recruiting there developed a need for middle management who could take on important assignments without much direct supervision. Several expedients were tried to solve this problem but only one was successful, the temporary acquisition of patriotic university professors as Special Assistants. They were all close friends of Robertson, Pearson, Read, and Hume Wrong and they invariably rendered admirable service. The majority of them stayed on in the Department or were shortly after the war attracted back to it. As Professor George Brown remarked with obvious satisfaction after a visit to External in September 1943: "I found an historian in almost every other room working away like mad on contemporary affairs. I told them it was the historian's Babylonian captivity".<sup>15</sup> but there was a limit to those who could be captured for service in Ottawa.

The second method attempted for acquiring middle management was more ambitious and consequently less likely to succeed. In 1942 plans were afoot in the United States and the United Kingdom for the establishment of a single foreign service out of the diplomatic commercial and consular services. Hugh Keenleyside, who as the Assistant Under-Secretary for the American and Far Eastern Division was anxious to create a Canadian consular service in the United States, seized the moment to propose an amalgamation for the undermanned External Affairs service with the under-utilized Commercial Intelligence Service in order to find the trained manpower for a nascent consular service.<sup>16</sup> His argument was couched in the changing attitude of diplomats who had traditionally distained trade matters - "the comparatively recent recognition of the fact that trade and other economic factors are fundamental to ninety percent of all international relations and are thus worthy of, and in fact demand, consideration by the most competent and responsible officials available". The main problem, but not in Keenleyside's view an insurmountable one, was "the inadequacy of some of the members of the Trade Commissioner Service for senior posts in External Affairs"<sup>17</sup>. The amalgamation of the British services in May 1943 prompted Robertson to suggest to Trade and Commerce that a committee be established to examine the possibilities of a closer relationship between the two services. The former Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce, Dana Wilgress, had been a supporter of amalgamation but he was now External Affairs' Minister to the Soviet Union and the Acting Deputy, Oliver Master, was of the opposite view as was his Minister, James MacKinnon. Before the committee could meet, the Trade Commissioners who were on duty in Ottawa emphatically told them in a collective submission: "that it would be very desirable that some definite understanding be arrived at which will prevent Trade and Commerce personnel, the only Government Department personnel at present trained in foreign trade, being relegated to a status in foreign posts inferior to that of junior officials appointed abroad for the first time by External Affairs".<sup>18</sup> Before Robertson and Keenleyside heard of Trade and Commerce objections, the whole notion of amalgamation was put to rest by the Prime Minister in an interchange with Gordon Graydon in the House of Commons. In King's views the two services were quite distinct in training and purpose and, what must have really hurt Robertson, External Affairs did not have time to look after commercial interests abroad.<sup>19</sup> Trade and Commerce officials were now armed to meet their counterparts in External Affairs to discuss means of better coordination between the two services rather than amalgamation. Keenleyside who in the meantime had prepared elaborate studies on other single foreign services was allowed to make his pitch, but no one on the other side was prepared to listen to a scheme that had been rendered

futile by the Prime Minister's fiat.<sup>20</sup> His consolation was to have the committee accept in its terms of reference that amalgamation could be regarded as an eventual possibility of no immediate or early concern. Meanwhile, the committee would turn its attention to the more pressing problems of coordination that the joint venture in the recently opened New York Consulate General made all too apparent. There were some in External Affairs like Vincent Massey and R.M. MacDonnell who were pleased at the outcome even though it did not solve their manpower problems.

An underhanded attempt to have some of the Prime Minister's staff work on External's despatches only served to get Robertson a strong rebuke from the Prime Minister.<sup>21</sup> There was no way out other than long hours which some of the bachelors at least began to enjoy as a status symbol of power in an otherwise dull city. For others the sweat of the brow led to nervous exhaustion. But the essential work did get done in a spirit of patriotic or perhaps ambitious fervour.

Those in support positions also suffered the strains of hard work occasioned by inadequate staff. Here their problem was less one of recruitment than keeping recruits.<sup>22</sup> It took six months to train people in the file and code rooms but few stayed past that. In one three-month period in 1941 the Code room lost eleven of its sixteen staff, eight to better paying jobs in other departments. However, that did not stop the telegraphic traffic that had to be labouriously coded and cyphered by hand (See Table I following the Notes). In desperation and because of the security risk involved in too frequent changeovers, the Under-Secretary decreed that all junior officers would henceforth have to spend allotted hours each week in the Code Room.<sup>23</sup> For even in the midst of an emergency when bombs were raining all around Canada House, the Prime Minister's "Secret and Most Immediate" message had to get through: could the High Commissioner find him some momentos of bombed out Westminster Hall for his ruins at Kingsmere.<sup>24</sup> At least the request provided comic relief for those on both ends of the telegraphic machine.

The turnover rate was no less in the filing room that was bulging with files being created at the rate of about 12,000 per year with no space for orderly storage. Inadequate space and staff meant long delays in retrieving documents and getting them on file. Complete work stoppages were prevented by managers who put in more than a few thirty-hour shifts.

The Department's experience with messengers was even worse than with clerks. In order to free men for war service, the Department began at the beginning of the war to use young boys who very soon proved to be unreliable and immune to threats of dismissal. It was then suggested that by combining with the Prime Minister's Office and the Finance Department there could be a joint East Block service until this invitation was seen for what it was, a subtle raid on other department's messengers. The Under-Secretary's Executive Assistant, Saul Rae, then suggested some men in uniform with motorized transport which Robertson rejected as too demeaning for the army. In desperation young girls were hired, however they could not be allowed out on the streets with their precious secrets and in any case, they were little better than the unruly boys. External Affairs then asked National Defence for some discharged soldiers who proved to be even worse.

The first man we took on appeared one morning somewhat under the influence of liquor. He was given two letters to deliver by hand and was not seen again in the Department for two days. He was discharged.

The second man appeared for an interview at ten o'clock one morning and Don Matthews judged from the smell of his breath that he had already, that morning, consumed a fair amount of his twenty-six ounces. He was not employed.

The third man appeared for an interview and turned out to be a nervous case, who, poor fellow, had had a tree fall on him in Scotland. He might have been alright, however, until it was discovered that while he could read, he could not write. He was not employed.<sup>25</sup>

The message soon got around that if you wanted something coded, filed or delivered in a hurry you had better do it yourself.

War brought an end to the quiet little graduate seminar atmosphere that the Department had enjoyed under Skelton. Not only did the Department have to cope with an enormous volume of old work (see Table 1), it also entered so many new diversified fields from evacuations abroad to American oil wells at home. There was no organizational structure at the beginning of the war to handle all these activities in any systematic way. When an officer joined or returned to the Department, Skelton would look around for unassigned or lagging assignments and that odd mixture which lacked any specification, clarity or continuity became his duties.<sup>26</sup> Duplication and overlapping led to confusion as when seven officers were assigned the handling of various aspects of immigration problems. Right down to the last detail of supply everything went out over Skelton's desk and he continued to open and direct most of the incoming mail. While it was pandemonium for the senior officers, the junior officers often had to detain a messenger boy leaving the Under-Secretary's office in order to find enough to occupy their day. Instead of delegating, Skelton took more and more on himself while continuing to advise King on how to run the government. "I have known no man with a sense of duty greater than Skelton", wrote King on February 1, 1940, "or who took on tasks more willingly and with less complaint. I am afraid that he will not be able to stand very long further indefinite strain".<sup>27</sup> But instead of relieving the pressure King demanded Skelton's attention on the Dominion-Provincial Conference of January 1941 and this and that speech and telegram. On January 28, 1941 the powerhouse suddenly failed. The future had never looked bleaker and things were in their usual state of disarray in his Department when Skelton died.

So well had Skelton developed the service over the past sixteen years that any one of seven senior officers could have succeeded him and done a creditable job. The Prime Minister's choice fell on the youngest, the brilliant trade negotiator Norman Robertson, who was probably the closest to Skelton in temperament and philosophy.<sup>28</sup> The most hopeful aspirants were to be moved on or elevated to be his Assistants. In taking the office Robertson was fully conscious of his own deficiencies as an administrator.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, administration of the Department was to be assigned to his two Assistant Under-Secretaries, Hugh Keenleyside who in utter frustration at the inefficiency he saw had grudgingly won from Skelton permission to begin work on organizing the Department by charts and definitions so as to relieve the burden on the Under-Secretary,<sup>30</sup> and Pearson who by good personal relations had managed the administration and personnel of Canada House without much liking for either. Pearson questioned going back to Ottawa without being Under-Secretary for he was "not quite sure what this post of Joint Assistant Under-Secretary means. My own view is that it means Mr. King wants Norman Robertson as a sort of super personal assistant and is going to give him the rank of Under-Secretary for that reason, while I am going to be brought back to do the work ... without being given the rank."<sup>31</sup>



Before Pearson had returned to Ottawa, Keenleyside had his proposed scheme for organization outlined and ready for distribution. It was based on the "rational principles.... that subjects of like quality or inherent relationship should be grouped together and that there should be as clear a distinction as possible between the different units of the organization".<sup>32</sup> Administration was Keenleyside's forte and he knew it. Henceforth everyone entering the Department would know where he fitted into the structure and to whom he could delegate or transfer work when necessary. The proposed new structure involved rather curiously, in view of Pearson's imminent return, a single Assistant Under-Secretary, a Legal Adviser, four geographical divisions (American, Far Eastern, Europe, Commonwealth and Empire) and six functional divisions (Administration, Consular, Legal, Commercial, Economic, Information and Research). There would also be a Personnel Board responsible for writing and administering a "Service Code", examinations, and making recommendations to the Under-Secretary for the handling of personnel problems. Tagged on the end were some further suggestions for expediting the flow of paper. Although Robertson liked the proposal, even if some of the divisions would for the present be pretty thin in manpower, he was initially unwilling actually to take any steps towards implementation.

When Pearson arrived from London he found the Department still in "a hive of unorganized activity". He was not sanguine about the prospects for Keenleyside's scheme because he recognized the basic flaw was in the Under-Secretary himself. Already, Pearson observed, Robertson had fallen right into Skelton's weaknesses and two obstacles impeded any decentralization: "First the Prime Minister's insistence on dealing with one person and one person only, the Under-Secretary, on every matter, great and small. Secondly, the necessity under the present system of getting the Prime Minister's approval on practically every step - diplomatic, administrative or political - which the Department desires to take".<sup>33</sup> The first was irremovable and the second was somewhat beyond External Affairs' control because Treasury Board rules that had been designed for another era required Ministerial approval on anything from the purchase of floral tributes to the installation of new phones. Even when in 1943 the Minister of Finance agreed that King's signature could be dropped from routine submissions to Treasury Board that did not exceed \$200, King never signed the authorization.<sup>34</sup> King wanted to keep on top of every detail right down to the appointment of the doorman for the Legation in Washington. And if the temperamental King wanted to keep on top of all this minutiae, Robertson had to serve as the conduit. Operations overseas were directly responsible to the Under-Secretary. This meant an endless flow of issues to be resolved about support staff, finances and accommodation. At the conclusion of one memo to Robertson about these matters, Pearson wrote:

I think the fundamental weakness of our departmental organization is shown by the fact that I have to write you about matters like this. There should be some one to relieve you of this side of the work, so that you will only be approached on administrative matters when a final decision on some important matter is to be made.

Personally, I don't see how you are going to show the Prime Minister how to win the war and make the peace if you have to spend two hours each day talking about the cost of Mr. Desy's table linen or the salary of the newest stenographer.<sup>35</sup>

When at the same time Escott Reid returned from Washington, Robertson was treated to a homily on the consequences of failing to implement Keenleyside's scheme. Reid was concerned lest "external policy may be the result of improvisation, not of considered

judgement" or from what he had observed of Canadian government operations in Washington, "merely be the sum of a number of possibly inconsistent or unrelated policies arrived at by various organs of the Government".<sup>36</sup> Not only must the Department in these circumstances coordinate policy into a single programme that would be consistent with the national interest but it must through political imagination and inventiveness be able to present the Government with alternative policy choices. In order to accomplish this, senior officers had to accept the fact that the war and its aftermath of reconstruction would continue for some time therefore requiring them to delegate some of their authority instead of seeking only improvisations until the house could be set in order during a quieter time. Unfortunately Reid went on to overstate his case by calling for an unrealistic, immediate doubling of resources. This, at a time when External Affairs had experienced only a modest growth in resources at headquarters, was like asking for the sky. Perhaps he had for a moment forgotten that he had recrossed the border into a nation at war. As Pearson was to point out, since the outbreak of war there had been a net gain of only four among the senior staff in Ottawa, the majority of whom were now consumed in part or in whole by special war work. The net gain among junior officers was also only four and three of these were still too junior to undertake any substantial responsibility.<sup>37</sup>

The efforts of Keenleyside, Pearson and Reid had their impact, and finally in July 1941 Robertson persuaded King to accept a modest and more sensible organizational change based on Keenleyside's proposals. Instead of ten divisions there would be ten sections combined into four divisions, each to be headed by an Assistant Under-Secretary and the Legal Adviser: a Diplomatic and Commercial Division under Beaudry; a Legal Division under John Read; a Commonwealth and European Division under Pearson and an American and Far Eastern Division under Keenleyside. This organization was more in keeping with actual officer strength than the first one and took care of the most senior men. Although the line responsibilities were now in place, unfortunately the cramped quarters did not allow much shifting of space allocations that would facilitate operations. By this time, 203 employees were crammed into the space previously occupied by sixty eight, with the only addition being that of three rooms acquired from the other occupants of the East Block when the Governor General's staff was sent packing to Rideau Hall. Even if renovations would have helped they were all but denied a unit without war department status. One important suggestion that had originated with Wrong was lost in condensation. There would be no research and planning section for another year.

Also in the scheme of things was a Personnel Board that had been established in May 1941 to relieve the Under-Secretary of routine personnel administration. Although its mandate was not as precise as Keenleyside had envisaged, it did set out to do many of the same things. For reasons that are not clear from the files, after a busy few months it soon ceased to meet. One possible explanation for this is the number of petty administrative matters that one of its members, Agnes McCloskey, kept bringing before it. Another is the structural problems that made handling the external service so difficult within a framework of regulations designed for a home service.

The establishment of the Department and Canada House came under the Civil Service Act whereas the staff at other posts that was created by Order-in-Council did not. The resulting confusion had been highlighted by the fact that there was no provision for the transfer of senior people abroad back to Ottawa as Assistant Under-Secretaries at an equivalent rank and salary or the promotion from one class to a higher one by an officer charged with equal responsibilities. The salary scale for Assistant Under-Secretaries and the Minister-Counselor in Washington was well below that of Ministers and High Commissioners, even though the responsibilities of the

former were far heavier than most of those in the latter categories. Thus the "irreplaceable" heavy-weights in Ottawa were being penalized by remaining in Ottawa.<sup>38</sup> An Order-in-Council of May 10, 1940 further complicated transfers by prohibiting any changes in classification during the war. Nor was it just officers who were affected. An Order-in-Council dating back to 1922 forced support staff below the Grade IV level to resign their positions, thereby losing all of their superannuation benefits, when being posted anywhere but London.<sup>39</sup> At stake was the broader question of who should control the conditions of employment for the external service.

A report of an investigation by the Civil Service Commission suggested new pay scales for all ranks and amendments to the Civil Service Acts that would ensure upward mobility of promotions and transfers. The Secretary of the Treasury Board also agreed to cooperate in righting the anomalies. At this point there seems to have been some disagreement in the Personnel Board as to whether the external service should come under the control of the Civil Service Commission at all.<sup>40</sup> Instead of following the route recommended by the Commission, Read set out to draft an amendment to the External Affairs Act. Read was no supporter of a separate service like the British and Americans had and he argued for a system that would allow complete interchangeability with the Civil Service. Transfers would continue to be handled in the Departmental Estimates but Heads of Posts would have responsibility over all Canadian civil servants within the country. In giving the Secretary of State for External Affairs authority to make personnel policy, he stopped short of an independent service since Treasury Board approval would still be required if money was to be spent and the approval of the Commission if organizational structure involving reclassification was entailed. In effect, Read's proposal also combined a subtle way of clarifying channels of authority, particularly in Washington where there were frequent disputes with officials of Munitions and Supply. Although Read's draft was printed as a Bill, because of the pressure of parliamentary business it was never sent to the House of Commons. As Pearson was to write to his old head of Post: "I am encouraged by the views and attitude of the senior members of the Department - but somewhat discouraged by the political difficulties in the way of translating those views into action. If we only had a Minister of our own!"<sup>41</sup> After further reflection he continued: "I suppose it is too much even to expect the Prime Minister to spend the necessary time and energy on it and without his interest and support it can't be done."<sup>42</sup> "By hook or by crook" as Wrong said, officials found ways of circumventing regulations in order to keep the establishment fluid and prevent the loss of key men but it left an unholy mess for later resolution.<sup>43</sup>

One of these methods involved the deposition of the redoubtable Agnes McCloskey who had been with the Department since its foundation in 1909. She had been a former school teacher who since 1927 had run the financial, support staff and supply side of the Department as "a cross between a country school and a country store".<sup>44</sup> Since Skelton had not wanted to be bothered with administrative details she had gradually built a little empire which, for the same reason, Robertson was reluctant to tamper with. An outside observer might have thought she was an Assistant Under-Secretary the way she would lecture a poor Third Secretary about the use of government property. The Commission in its report had recommended the appointment of a senior experienced administrative officer, but as Pearson and Robertson both knew: "no business manager would have a chance as long as she remains there".<sup>45</sup> Finally, in April 1943 Robertson convinced her of the honour of being appointed to New York as Canada's first woman Consul, with the personal rank equivalent to a First Secretary. On hearing the announcement in Washington, Pearson noted in his diary: "For anyone who has had to pry expense accounts out of her the significance of this move will be obvious. In the Legation, it

overshadowed all the war news; even the advance of the 8th Army had to take second place".<sup>46</sup>

Agnes McClosky was to be replaced immediately but at a higher level by Don Matthews, a dollar a year businessman and lawyer from the Foreign Exchange Control Board. In his pleasing manner he quickly demonstrated a capacity for efficiently handling an enormous number of administrative and personnel issues with a short period. Together with Saul Rae, who began to organize the flow of paper that came through the Under-Secretary's office, the bottlenecks were gradually alleviated and departmental committees were established and charged with coordinating and making written recommendations for administrative policy.

In January 1945 a further departmental reorganization of the Divisions was carried out by Hume Wrong who, because of his valuable services to Robertson, was given the personal designation of Associate Under-Secretary. The Divisional changes reflected new wartime responsibilities and changes in personnel but the basic structure was that laid down by the father of External Affairs organization, Hugh Keenleyside.

Because of its long term implications for the Department, one small organizational change needs to be mentioned. Through his close association with the economic mandarins<sup>47</sup> in Ottawa and his active participation in the Economic Advisory Committee and the Foreign Exchange Control Board, Robertson was very involved in matters of commercial policy before assuming the Under-Secretary's mantle. Fashioning and negotiating economic policies in this company was the work he liked best of all and he was determined to keep direct responsibility for postwar commercial policy towards Britain and the United States who needed to be convinced of the need of a multilateral convention that would secure ready Canadian access to world markets. The key economic mandarins valued his advice and used him as a convenient and forceful channel for putting their ideas to the Prime Minister.<sup>48</sup>

In the State Department in Washington there were no fewer than six divisions handling commercial policy and agreements and Wrong urged him to use this argument to convince King of the need of substantial expansion in Ottawa. Meanwhile, "we are trying", Robertson told King,

to cover the same ground in the Department here. Stone, single handed, except for such assistance as I can give him, performs in the Department the functions of five of the six divisions under the Board of Economic Operations in the Department of State, and looks after questions of censorship as well. He, among others, is slipping behind in his work which is steadily increasing beyond the capacity of our establishment.<sup>49</sup>

As seen in connection with External's efforts to absorb the Commercial Intelligence Service, King was not interested in the Departments' plight.

Finally, in April 1942 Stone himself was complaining to the UnderSecretary that things were getting out of hand both at home and, where much of the action was, in Washington. The 1941 organization had not helped. Shipping questions were separated from export control, economic warfare from war production and tag ends found a haphazard distribution among various officers. There was no time for liaison and the number of independent agencies involved was steadily increasing. "I believe", Stone wrote:

that unless the Department can organize itself efficiently to work more

expeditiously, to take more effective decisions based on considerations of the whole field, to co-ordinate its relations with other departments and agencies in one division, we should resign ourselves to playing a secondary role in a good many matters where it should be considered essential for us to take the lead. It is not only impossible, under present circumstances, for us to make the running but also not right for us to try. It is essential to face the fact that as a result of our lack of staff, lack of organization and resulting lack of efficiency in the economic fields External Affairs is being most severely criticized by other departments of the government and that whenever these other departments can short circuit us they do so. Officers of the department have been told this in so many words.... when in point of fact our real role - we are the only department that can play this part - is to bring some kind of order into chaotic crises which arise from time to time.<sup>50</sup>

Keenleyside who had responsibility for American affairs was also finding this piecemeal and ineffective way of doing business increasingly intolerable. As mentioned earlier, he wanted a full-fledged Economic and Commercial Division but the person who by rank would have to lead it was judged unsuitable for an Assistant Under-Secretaryship. To transfer it all to Keenleyside's Division would mean the loss of Stone who refused to work under Keenleyside's machine-like efficiency. He did, however, give up his duties to Henry Angus, an economist on loan from the University of British Columbia, who was on paper to head a new Economic Section under Keenleyside. Unfortunately Angus who after the war would be returning to the University was not always brought into the picture by the strategists, Robertson and Wrong.<sup>51</sup> In February 1943 an Economic Division was created, but it lacked both the clout that an Assistant Under-Secretary could have given it and continuity in staff. Moreover, its brightest young economist who had made such a remarkable impression at Bretton Woods, John Deutsch, was meanwhile edging toward the Department of Finance where more of the action was.<sup>52</sup> That was to leave only Robertson who himself would depart without a successor in this field a year after the end of the war. The wartime failure to build up a strong economic and commercial expertise would, as Stone had warned, be around to haunt the Department for many a year.<sup>53</sup>

Whether being the Prime Minister's Department was more of a curse than a blessing was always a debatable point for people in External Affairs. But one thing was sure, it most certainly distorted and detracted from the normal functions of a foreign Office. The linkage between the PMO and the Department had always been a close one, with the Under-Secretary responsible for the Prime Minister's staff and budget and having several young officers seconded to the PMO. The Prime Minister argued that there was no better place for an aspiring diplomat to get a sound training since no Prime Minister could fail to play a major role in the shaping of Canadian destiny in the world, especially when King was so fond of Prime Ministerial diplomacy. Arnold Heeney's appointment, first as the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary and later as Secretary to the Cabinet and Clerk of the Privy Council, further galvanized External Affairs' close ties with the PMO because he was so closely associated with Robertson and had his own special areas of responsibility that touched on External Affairs' work. In this regard he was directly responsible for making the arrangements for the carrying out of American defence projects in the north-west of Canada. In the absence of a Cabinet Secretariat or a Home Office, being the Prime Minister's Department meant that you willy-nilly became involved in anything he chose to involve you in. At the Under-Secretary level it meant that Robertson was always on call to a demanding boss. Shortly after Skelton's death, Robertson's old negotiating friend from the State Department, Jack Hickerson, called on

Robertson to warn him not to let King kill him with overwork the way he had Skelton. At that point in an unusually frank conversation Robertson related an incident of the previous evening. He had left the office late and was preparing for bed when he remembered that he had left a classified document on his desk. Dutifully he trudged back through the snow that was falling to his office whereupon the phone rang and it was the Prime Minister with another one of his fancies. "The old so and so took it for granted that I would be there", Robertson complained.<sup>54</sup> And so it continued throughout his entire term as UnderSecretary whenever King wanted advice on things totally detached from External Affairs. "It is very difficult for a layman", Robertson began hesitatingly in one memorandum, "to offer any useful comment, or even ask an intelligent question, about National Defence recommendations for enlarging the Canadian Army establishments in the United Kingdom", but he then went on as requested to offer some suggestions.<sup>55</sup> Other subjects would include the "Unification of railways and telegraphs of Canada as a means of economising ... manpower and scarce materials", national holidays and General McNaughton's resignation.

At the conclusion of the war Robertson wrote a "private and personal" memorandum to the Prime Minister discussing the merits of a Secretary of State for External Affairs distinct from the Prime Minister. In respect of internal administration and establishment, the Department had grown during the war to the point where a separate Minister would be helpful. On the other hand the Prime Minister could not escape from questions of major policy involving in particular Commonwealth Prime Ministerial consultation and, as the Ogdensburg and Hyde Park agreements showed, direct relations with the President. Moreover the Canadian public, Robertson thought, demanded the Prime Minister's leadership in United Nations matters. In conclusion, Robertson could not suggest a satisfactory division of powers for a separate Minister.<sup>56</sup> What was not said but very well known was the status among other Departments that the PM's leadership gave which offset the frustrations of dealing with him. What they really wanted was the same arrangement under a new Prime Minister.

In fairness to the Prime Minister the further dissolution of External Affairs' mandate during the war was not entirely of his making. Many of the officers such as Pearson, Glazebrook and Stone were only too eager to see the Department move into all kinds of war-related activities. They believed that with their accumulated brains they could identify problems in the war effort and find solutions for them which others could then be charged with carrying out. This is how they got involved in intercepting prisoner of war mail, censorship, prisoner of war exchanges and air priorities, without in the end being able to extricate themselves from the directing of these activities.

The most peculiar example was the public opinion study conducted in the province of Quebec. After Quebec registered a resounding negative vote on the conscription plebiscite, two young French Canadian officers began in their spare time to write a memo for Robertson explaining why Quebecers had voted the way they had, coupled with suggestions on "the ways and means to correct or at least to minimize the dangers inherent to the state of mind now prevailing in Quebec". They then went on to suggest how the government should propagandize Quebec for the Canadian war effort.<sup>57</sup> Wanting to make sure of the assumptions that their paper was based on and in order to test the real state of French Canadian sentiment, they persuaded the Department to send them to Dr. Gallup from whom they learned how to sample and measure public opinion. After this short weekend course they spent two weeks, supposedly on leave, sampling Quebecers on the "underlying motive and basic attitude behind Quebec's view of the present war". Their very "secret" sixty-eight page report<sup>58</sup> was then typed and distributed

through External Affairs to the Prime Minister and made available to the Liberal party organizers in Montreal. Because so few people saw the report and External Affairs had become so ingrained in the political climate of the country, no one questioned the propriety of such an activity for a Foreign Office.

Too late it was realized that these activities were making an enormous drain on its resources, and it was simply fallacious to believe that other Departments could not have handled them just as well or, as in the case of State Department, they could have been assigned to new agencies and committees with External Affairs left to the coordinating role. Instead it got too involved in the mechanics and could not channel its energy into its proper function of giving advice and direction to other departments and agencies on issues of interest to them abroad. This failure by External Affairs to serve all of the national interests abroad later encouraged other departments to send their own emissaries who would speak at times with a discordant voice. Having said this it cannot be overlooked that all this happened during a World War when nations were fighting for their very existence.

At least the Department would not face another war unprepared. In mid 1943 the post-hostilities problems committee had begun the work that would allow Canada's diplomats to make a major contribution to the shaping of the post-war world.<sup>59</sup> And one of the Department's historians compiled the Departmental War Book, to be updated at regular intervals.<sup>60</sup> The wonder of it all is that the Department survived; that it did so in such impressive style was entirely owing to the intelligence and hard work of its members. Even if administration was not always their long suit, they made enormous personal sacrifices to overcome the weaknesses of organisation that had created one bottleneck after another. Rewards and recognition denied them in the war would come through peacemaking, and a golden age of Canadian diplomacy. Its practitioners won their spurs in the war effort.

Alfred Rive, the trojan for work on prisoners of war and problems of interned civilians and, by his own admission, the not so very High Commissioner to New Zealand, captured the mood in his own poetic fashion.

When first I was an F. S. O.,  
"third Sec." was the designation  
I thought "Some day my chest will show  
Some simple decorations."

And so, as slow I struggled through  
External's pre mutations,  
I saw myself in distant view  
Bedecked with decorations.

Through thick and thin, as near or far  
Were my perambulations,  
I hitched my wagon to a star  
And other decorations.  
But as I neared the goal space  
And told all my relations,  
External sent a blunt ukase  
"You'll get no decorations.

"We'll put you in no Honours List  
With flattering citations.  
We think your name will not be missed  
No stars - no decorations!"<sup>61</sup>

And the response!

Abandoning the ancient style  
Of formal salutations  
Herewith I venture to reply  
To yours on decorations.

We've known you now for many years  
Enjoyed your aberrations  
But never did we realize  
You yearned for decorations.

We thought the Special Section toil  
With all its tribulations  
Would be for you an ample prize  
Transcending decorations.

Or junkets to the ILO  
And intervening stations  
Would compensate your noble soul  
For bauble decorations.

But ah! tis clear no man escapes  
These tinsel aspirations,  
Even New Zealand cannot slake  
The greed for decorations.

And so I have the honour, Sir  
To send congratulations  
Because you've reached your it lofty post  
Not needing decorations.<sup>62</sup>



## NOTES

- 1 A Committee on Defence Co-ordination had been charged by Cabinet to write a general War Book from which Ministers would then develop their own departmental directives. Nothing had followed in External Affairs and the experience of Sir Joseph Pope in writing one for the First World War had long since been forgotten.
- 2 On September 10, 1938 King had asked Skelton in a "very private" note for a statement in the event of war being declared.
- 3 J.W. Pickersgill, The Mackenzie King Record, Vol. 1: 1939-1944 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 6.
- 4 The term "Super-isolationist" was used by Colonel H.D.G. Crerar in describing Christie in 1936 as quoted in C.P. Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), p. 71. Christie by his own account was such a strong isolationist that he expected to be turfed out of External Affairs when war came. Instead he was sent to Washington with the task of weaning the Americans away from their isolationism. Little wonder that Pearson on reading of the appointment wrote in his diary "strange business". Public Archives of Canada (PAC), L.B. Pearson Diary, September 13, 1939.
- 5 PAC, Mackenzie King Diary, May 24, 1940.
- 6 PAC, Treasury Board Records, Vol. 555, file 2-7. N. Robertson to T.B., December 9, 1942 and December 13, 1942. "Canada and the War: An Outline of the Organization of the War Administration", Ottawa, King's Printer, 1940 outlines the structure involved.
- 7 Department of External Affairs (DEA) file 1086-40, H. Wrong memorandum for Robertson, July 9, 1942.
- 8 PAC, DEA-Personnel Records, Vol. 678, file 134. W. Ronson to the UnderSecretary, June 1, 1943. Relief from this burdensome procedure for obtaining War Duty Supplements was finally granted on April 21, 1945.
- 9 PAC, Under Secretary's Papers, Vol. 788. "Extension of Canadian External Affairs Service" attached to Skelton memo to Beaudry, September 28, 1937 and PAC, Wrong Papers, Vol. 3, file 17. Skelton to Wrong, March 2, 1939. Within the Department invidious comparisons were often made with other foreign services of the 5 to 40 ration representing countries with similar trade and population figure.
- 10 PAC, King Papers, J 4 Series, Vol. 250, C167630. N. Robertson memorandum for the Prime Minister, December 12, 1944. Evidence of this balance being upheld is found in Robertson to King August 6, 1943 and June 23, 1944, Vol. 242, December 10, 1943 and Vol. 268, October 7, 1944.
- 11 Interview with M. Cadieux, June 27, 1979 and Paul Tremblay, October 25, 1979.

- 12 PAC, DEA-Personnel Records, Vol. 791. Skelton memorandum on "Staff Enlistment", August 14, 1940. See also King Papers, J 4 Series, Vol. 250. N. Robertson to V. Massey, January 4, 1943.
- 13 King Papers, J 4 Series, Vol. 250 C167650. N. Robertson to A. MacNamara, February 2, 1945.
- 14 PAC, DEA-Personnel Records, VOL 677, file 111. N. Robertson memorandum for the Prime Minister April 26, 1943 and J. Read memorandum on "Wartime Assistants Grade IV", May 6, 1943.
- 15 University of Toronto Archives, George Brown Papers, Box 23, file 7 G Brown to C.P. Stacey, February 3, 1944.
- 16 External Affairs had since the war appointed four officers to perform limited consular functions in Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Greenland and St. Pierre.
- 17 DEA, 2446-A-40. "Considerations Relating to the Proposed Amalgamation of the External Affairs Service and the Commercial Intelligence Service and the Incorporation therein of a Canadian Consular Service" by H. Keenleyside, October 9, 1942.
- 18 PAC, Trade and Commerce Records, ol. 1035. "Submission Concerning the Trade Commissioner Service by Trade Commissioners and Assistants Resident in Ottawa 1942-43". p. 38.
- 19 Canada, House of Commons Debates, July 12, 1943, pp. 4772-74.
- 20 DEA, 2446-A-40. "Minutes of a Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee to Study Relations between External Affairs and the Commercial Intelligence Service", November 11, 1943.
- 21 King Papers, J 4 Series, Vol. 250, C167500. King's memorandum for Mr. Robertson, February 19, 1944.
- 22 While enlistment certainly contributed to the turnover of support staff, the loss of 34 Canada-based and 5 London employees was not series. PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 846, file W-9 (161).
- 23 PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 791. A. Hall memorandum for the Acting Under-Secretary, March 14, 1941.
- 24 L.B. Pearson, Mike, Vol. 1, p. 188.
- 25 DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 679, file 136-1. These excerpts are from a letter to Major General Leston that was drafted for Robertson's signature but never sent. It appears that Robertson relayed the message to him orally.
- 26 PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 788 "Scheme of Organization for The Department of External Affairs", February 1941 by H.L. Keenleyside.

- 27 King Diary, February 1, 1940.
- 28 Mrs. C.H.A. Armstrong Papers (private collection), H. Wrong to Marga, February 2, 1941. All of the other possible candidates had succeeded at one time or late to get on the wrong side of King or were otherwise not available.
- 29 In formulating my assessment of Norman Robertson I am very much indebted to Prof. Jack Granatstein who kindly allowed me to see his draft chapters for his forthcoming biography of Robertson.
- 30 DEA, 1086-40. H. Keenleyside to O. Skelton September 5, 1940 and "Department of External Affairs, General Division, Assignment of Duties" September 25, 1940.
- 31 Pearson Diary, March 29, 1941.
- 32 DEA, 1086-40. "Scheme of Organization for The Department of External Affairs" by H.L. Keenleyside, March 1941.
- 33 PAC, Pearson Papers, N I, Vol. 1. L. Pearson to V. Massey, May 27, 1941.
- 34 Treasury Board Records, Vol. 555. See file 2-7 on authorities and DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 846, file T-6 (149) on telephones.
- 35 PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 799. L. Pearson memorandum for the Under-Secretary, October 6, 1941.
- 36 DEA, 1086-40. E. Reid to N. Robertson, June 7, 1941.
- 37 Pearson Papers N, Vol. 7, file "DEA Organization 1929-42". "Memorandum for the Under Secretary". (1941).
- 38 PAC, DEA - Personnel Records, Vol. 678, file 136, N. Robertson memorandum for the Prime Minister, February 23, 1943.
- 39 DEA, 1086-40. "Memorandum to the Civil Service Commission" by its Investigator, E.P. Laberge, September 20, 1941.
- 40 Pearson Papers, N, Vol. 2, file DEA organization 1929-42. L. Pearson memo to N. Robertson, September 22, 1941 and J. Read "Note for the Personnel Board", November 27, 1941. For insight into the problems encountered in getting the Act accepted see Vol. 1, L. Pearson to V. Massey, January 9, 1942.
- 41 Ibid., Vol. 1, L. Pearson to V. Massey, May 27, 1941. Pearson's initial observations were confirmed later in L. Pearson to V. Massey, November 4, 1941.
- 42 Ibid., L. Pearson to V. Massey, January 9, 1942.
- 43 DEA, 1086-40, H. Wrong Memorandum for N. Robertson, July 9, 1942. PAC, DEA - Personnel Records, Vol. 686, file 158-B. H. Wrong memorandum for Under-Secretary,

December 8, 1944.

- 44 Interview with A. Menzies, August 3, 1979.
- 45 Pearson Diary, January 9-13, 1943. Pearson was in Ottawa discussing with Robertson among other things, ways of getting rid of Agnes McCloskey.
- 46 Ibid., April 9, 1943.
- 47 W. Clark, Deputy Minister of Finance; Louis Rasminsky, Alternate Chairman of the Foreign Exchange Control Board; Graham Towers, Governor of the Bank of Canada; W.A. Macintosh, Special Assistant to the Deputy Minister of Finance; R.B. Bryce, Department of Finance; Donald Gordon, Chairman of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board.
- 48 DEA, 6000-A-40. N. Robertson memo for Prime Minister, April 26, 1943. It was Robertson who on February 13, 1943 was sent to sell King on the ideas contained in telegrams to London drafted by Towers, Clark and Mackintosh. King Diary, February 13, 1943.
- 49 DEA, 1086-40. H. Wrong to N. Robertson, October 16, 1941 and N. Robertson memo for the Prime Minister, October 25, 1941. On November 1, 1941 Wrong warned Robertson that on matters of export control and blacklisting: "Unless we develop an adequate staff in Ottawa to handle these matters, I think that they may be compelled in Washington to pass over our position and interests because we have not proper machinery for co-operation". PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 788, file 408. H. Wrong to N. Robertson, November 1, 1941.
- 50 PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 788, file 408, T. Stone memorandum for the Under-Secretary, April 22, 1942.
- 51 DEA, 1086-40. H. Angus memorandum for S. Macdonald, March 2, 1943.
- 52 PAC, DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 799. "Memorandum for the Under Secretary of State and for the Personnel Board: Mr. John Deutsch", April 20, 1942.
- 53 Interview with R.B. Bryce, August 17, 1979.
- 54 Interview with Jack Hickerson, September 27, 1979.
- 55 DEA - Administrative Records, Vol. 716, file 6. "Memorandum for the Prime Minister - Notes on Man Power Policy", by N. Robertson, December 4, 1941.
- 56 King Papers, J. 4 Series, Vol. 252, C167753-54. N. Robertson memo for the Prime Minister, June 13, 1946.
- 57 Ibid., Vol. 358, C247551-63. "Memorandum for Mr. Robertson: Quebec and the Conscription Issue" by Mr. Cadieux and P. Tremblay, May 6, 1942.

- 58 DEA, 54-B. "Quebec and the Present War: A Study of Public Opinion" by M. Cadieux, P. Tremblay and S. Rae, July 1942.
- 59 For this story see D. Munton and D. Page, "Planning in the East Block: the Post-Hostilities Problems Committees in Canada 1943-5", International Journal XXXII (Autumn 1977) pp. 687-726.
- 60 The first edition of the Department's War Book as compiled by George Gazebrook was ready on December 10, 1948.
- 61 DEA, 19-AK-4-40. A. Rive to L. Pearson, November 25, 1946.
- 62 Ibid., L. Pearson to A. Rive, January 15, 1947.

**TABLE I**

**Some Workload Indicators in the Department of External Affairs 1938-46**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Employees at home</b>	<b>Employees abroad</b>	<b>Posts abroad</b>	<b>Rep. at Inter. conferences</b>	<b>Agreements concluded</b>	<b>Tels. handled at DEA</b>	<b>Passports issued or renewed</b>	<b>Operational expenditures Thousands of \$ per fiscal yr.</b>
1938	27	*	-	5	29	20	2,230	25,817	1,227
1939	33	68	106	11	20	13	4,668	16,275	1,005
1940	30	202	111	12	-	10	9,428	165,055	1,161
1941	49	203	148	16	-	10	11,493	215,257	958
1942	61	206	142	21	-	20	15,744	145,148	990
1943	69	209	163	23	-	21	16,438	61,999	1,547
1944	72	223	199	25	12	41	20,448	39,270	2,171
1945	107	238	260	26	27	30	21,687	50,948	2,205
1946	132	287	315	26	102	57	23,106	71,811	4,904

\* Accurate statistics not available.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE LIMITS OF TRADITION: AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN WORLD WAR TWO RECONSIDERED

Maurice Matloff

In the post-war debate over the American direction of the war, two extreme views have been set forth: one that the military ran the war with President Franklin Roosevelt simply ratifying their decisions; the other, that the President manipulated and bent the staff to his will. The controversy, fed by the disillusionment and frustrations of the post-war years, extends not only to who played the dominant role but also to the resultant strategy and policy. On the one hand, FDR was accused of blundering into war, bungling its conduct, and losing the peace. This school of thought emphasizes blunders and mistakes, and on this list Pearl Harbour, the unconditional surrender policy, and Yalta Conference, and the Russian issue have usually been singled out for special criticism. An opposing school, viewing this approach as an exercise in hindsight, portrays a President who was drawn into a war he did not really want, rallied the free world, won a great victory, and moved the United States to the center of the world stage. Nor did the American military staff escape. Especially heavy criticism was leveled at the American strategy for the war in Europe. Churchill struck out at "large-scale mass-production" thinking. J.F.C. Fuller, the British analyst, at "iron mongering." Out of the popular writing of Chester Wilmot, an Australian journalist, emerged a sharp contrast - a naive Roosevelt versus a prescient Churchill, a politically oriented British strategy versus a narrow doctrinaire American military strategy. To paraphrase Wilmot's view, the Americans put their faith in a kind of Sears Roebuck strategy - in fashioning a gigantic "military steam-roller" in their camps and factories that they propelled across the Atlantic to crush the Germans by a massive frontal assault without much thought for political consequences.<sup>2</sup>

To do justice to all facets of American wartime leadership, and to the charge and countercharge about American policy and strategy, would take one too far afield. Instead, three main points about the war time relationship of the President and his military advisers will be examined: its historical context, its nature, and its significance. Stress will be on institutional and conceptual factors, rather than on the personal side of the relationship, important as that was, and the subject shall be approached in the perspective of the years that have elapsed since the end of the fighting in that great, global, coalition war.

First, what was the legacy the President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the body he created soon after Pearl Harbour, inherited, and how did that legacy colour their roles during the war? To understand their heritage it is necessary to go back briefly to World War One, the great divide in the history of civil-military relations for the western world. In underscoring civilian control over the military, that conflict only corroborated US traditions that stemmed back to the Founding Fathers and the Constitution. Participation in World War One, in which the US served as a junior partner to the allied coalition, confirmed the American principle that the President determined the "what" of national policy and the military the "how." It also left a legacy of ideas and institutions, of intellectual baggage inherited by American leadership on the

eve of World War Two. For the American military World War One confirmed the doctrines of concentration, of fighting for complete victory, and out of the battlefields of Europe came the foundations of strategic faith that military leaders like General George C. Marshall later sought to apply in the multi-theater context of World War Two.

As has happened so often in American history between wars, the military after a brief moment of glory on the national stage retreated from society amid public indifference to follow technical pursuits and cultivate professionalism. A succession of Presidents became preoccupied with other concerns - with the pursuit of security in non-military terms, domestic problems, and the Great Depression. In this atmosphere during the period 1919 to 1939, the military gave little if any thought to the larger questions of war and peace, to a new world after another war; they were not encouraged to think in global, political, or coalition terms. No close coordination existed between the military and the Presidents. The Presidents stayed out of technical military matters. This gap, added to the traditional separation of political and military spheres in American national policy, would show up later in World War Two.

The important question in civil-military relations was whether in a period of isolation from American society the military would take refuge in a narrow or broad professionalism. Fortunately, the period proved to be for the American military an era of gestation, of experimentation, and of broad professionalism. But American strategic theory and planning developed essentially along individual service lines. The Joint Board, the predecessors of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that had met only twice during World War One and re-emerged after that conflict, straddled strategic issues that might have created controversy between the services; most of the plans evolved by the joint service planners were academic exercises.

While in the context of the times official policy stressed the defensive, offensive notes, stimulated in part by currents in European theory, crept into the strategic thought of the services. On the eve of World War Two, the army fashioned its theory of war around the infantry and a heavy concentration of ground forces - Clausewitz with refinements; the navy put its faith in the capital ship and a powerful sea offensive, especially in the Pacific - Mahan updated; and a vigorous group of theorists in the fledging air force, advancing a more revolutionary approach to war, and reflecting the influence of Douhet and Billy Mitchell, built its concepts around the long range bomber and strategic air bombardment. In effect three distinct theories of war emerged from the quiet revolution in service strategic thinking between the wars. In classical military fashion, the military continued to recognize sharp distinctions between policy, the realm of the statesmen, and strategy, the preserve of the military, a corollary of military subordination to political control.

Thus, on the eve of World War Two, institutionally and conceptually, no meshing of political and military factors into a grand strategy for the United States had taken place, nor had a suitable mechanism for developing grand strategy in the event of war evolved. Basically the services were still co-equal sovereignties. While they still had no plans for global, coalition war, beneath the surface of official planning and doctrine the trends in military tactics, technology, and strategic theory between the wars were reinforcing earlier national experience in large-scale warfare and predisposing them toward decisive all-out offensive war overseas in the event of a future involvement.



On the eve of World War Two President Roosevelt, too, was being molded by his own experiences and reading of the recent past. Like the military, he also fell heir to the American tradition that saw war and peace in absolute terms and in distinct compartments. Assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War One, he had been an observer at first hand of President Woodrow Wilson's experiences with Congress, the military, the allies, and the enemy. The legacy of World War One had confirmed to him that victory had to be won on Capitol Hill - with Congress - as well as on the battlefield.

A naval enthusiast from his youth, he had supported naval appropriations, but had largely ignored the army and its air arm down to Munich. He then extended his knowledge of military affairs to ground and air matters. A new phase began to develop in his relationship with his military staff, as he drew the Joint Board closer to him - no longer did they have to go through the Secretaries. He encouraged them to lay aside their academic exercises, to widen their horizons and to gear their plans for global and coalition war. He fostered staff talks with the British out of which emerged the crucial "Europe first" principle. The military began to appreciate that he would play an important and independent role in strategy and policy. After Munich, he rejected army views for a balanced ground-air rearmament in favour of more aircraft. He also refused to accept the staff's fear that Britain and the Soviet Union might not survive the German onslaught. To help sustain them, he introduced his own creative strategic innovation - lend-lease.

In line with its traditions, the staff stayed aloof from the debate over national policy, and consistent with the tradition of the "how" and the "what," the Joint Board did not seek to ascertain the larger objectives of possible American involvement in war abroad. Clearly, in the realm of higher objectives, the President showed even before Pearl harbour that he would wage his own war, and served notice that he would be his own Secretary of State. Army strategic planners, in keeping with the traditional American notion of a "sharp and decisive" war, showed a disposition to think in terms of meeting the German armies head on - and the sooner the better. To that notion - the core of the American theory of a war of mass and concentration - they would hold steadfast throughout the war. For all the uncertainties in the quickening pace of 1939-41, the relationship between the military staff and the President became closer and the spheres for each more clearly delineated. For the first time in American history a President and his military advisers entered a war with considerable strategic thinking having been done beforehand on how to fight it. The sum total of doctrines to which the wartime JCS fell heir tended toward an American approach to war - total style - but there is no conclusive evidence that their pre-war thinking or values gave them a concerted view of the larger objectives of the war ahead that might have led to the pursuit of a different type of war and peace. Although the President and his military advisers drew closer in 1939-41, the gaps in grand strategy - both institutional and conceptual - had not been closed.<sup>3</sup>

So much for the legacy - a blend of old and new - by the time of Pearl Harbour. Now what about the roles of the JCS and the President with relation to strategy and policy under the impact of war? Basically the pattern that began to emerge between 1939-41 held throughout the war - an active and independent commander-in-chief in a loose but working partnership with his military advisers - one that suited his methods and purposes. He could work through them, he could work around them. As usual, he used any and all instruments at hand. But the JCS did

give his administration an orderly touch that was often lacking in other parts and without which it is doubtful that he could have played his independent political role. At the international conference they carried the burden of debate with the British, allowing the President to play his favourite mediatory role. In many ways they served for Roosevelt in the multi-theater conflict as Generals Pershing and Bliss had served for President Wilson in the essentially one-front war. The day to day running of the war - the hammering out of those numerous decisions to keep a global, coalition war running on the track - fell to the JCS, and permitted the President to concern himself with the larger ends of the war. Not that he did not on occasion interfere with military affairs and pull the rug out from under them. The timing and choice of important decisions he reserved for himself. In this connection, much has been made of the number of times he overruled the staff. Yet, there are literally hundreds of decisions in the military running of the war where the President did not interfere. What is important is the area of the differences. And here, of fundamental importance were the president's political objectives - to help faltering friends, Britain and Russia, to treat China as a great power, and to preserve the Grand Alliance through the war and house it in the United Nations. Note how rarely he interfered in decisions involving the Pacific theater - an area of American and JCS responsibility. He normally dealt with the commanders in the field through formal channels and only met with General MacArthur once during the war, at Pearl Harbour in July 1944, and even then it does not appear that he intervened in the strategic decisions that were pending in Pacific strategy.

Did he have strong strategic convictions? On the basis of the evidence he had predilections, rather than firm beliefs, and took pride in what he felt to be his strategic flair.<sup>4</sup> To FDR, committed to no strategic doctrine except decisive victory, strategy, like politics, was the art of the possible and he was apt to chide the staff for its conservatism. At times he was more in agreement with Churchill than with his own staff. He could bend to strong staff urgings even as he could overrule them. While he did not always see eye to eye with his military professionals, his respect for them grew as the war wore on. But, by and large, as in 1939-41, whatever political objectives he had in the international arena he kept to himself and did not discuss fully and freely with his staff. The unconditional surrender concept that he announced to his staff shortly before the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 and that fitted so well with the basic military doctrine of a war of mass and concentration served further to close off political discussion with the staff.

Now what about the Joint Chiefs of Staff as strategists? Did they prove to be as narrow and doctrinaire as charged in post-war literature and did they thereby mislead the President and the west? It is important to recognize that the strategy they espoused evolved in response to changing pressures, internal and external, and that the American military matured in military diplomacy as the war progressed. It is not generally realized that, after the American disappointment at the Casablanca Conference, the JCS system underwent a fundamental reorganization in the spring of 1943 as military planners and chiefs sought to cope more effectively with the President and to present a more united front vis-à-vis the British at the international conferences.<sup>5</sup> Needless to say, the major cross-channel operation, OVERLORD, finally agreed upon at the Teheran Conference at the end of 1943, represented a compromise between American and British views - a compromise that was two years in the making.

In holding to their strategy against Germany for a war of concentration and in

regarding target dates as sacrosanct, the American military were entirely consistent with their traditions and strengths. As the arsenal of democracy, they regarded a major cross-channel attack as the pivot of the global plans. They were anxious to get on with the war against Japan, in which they bore the primary responsibility. They feared the ultimate costs - in men, money and time -- of a long war of attrition so foreign to the American approach to war and summed up so succinctly by General Marshall's injunction that a democracy cannot fight a seven years' war. Critics of the American case tend to minimize their maturation as strategists in mid-war, the global context of their planning, the war of opportunism they fought in the Pacific, not unlike that advocated by the British for the Mediterranean. They also tend to overestimate the politico-military coherence of the British case and to forget that the strategy the Americans espoused for direct, total solutions was born of European pre-war doctrine to which they had fallen heir as well as their own traditions.

As for the American military and politics in the larger sense, the charge that the American staff was oblivious to political considerations needs to be examined closely. As the war advanced, General Marshall and his planners increasingly recognized that military planning was inextricably involved with foreign policy, and the military chiefs showed growing concern with political considerations. While "the thought of political matters" was "necessarily" continuously on the minds of the JCS, as General Marshall reported to a Senate subcommittee in the spring of 1943, they continued to leave those matters for the President to decide.<sup>6</sup> The fine line between foreign and military policy became increasingly blurred, and the staff sought to close the gaps with the State Department and devise new coordinating links to handle emerging politico-military problems.<sup>7</sup>

As early as the summer of 1944 the JCS advised the Secretary of State: "...the defeat of Germany will leave Russia in a position of assured military dominance in eastern Europe and in the Middle East." "The successful termination of the war against our present enemies will find a world profoundly changed in respect of relative national military strengths, a change more comparable indeed with that occasioned by the fall of Rome than with any other change occurring during the succeeding fifteen hundred years. This is a fact of fundamental importance in its bearing upon future international political settlements and all discussions leading thereto." "After the defeat of Japan, the United States and the Soviet Union will be the only military powers of the first magnitude."<sup>8</sup>

Post-war writers who have stressed the complete absence of political sophistication on the part of the US staff have overdrawn the case. But it is also apparent that from the beginning the staff accepted constraints on their non-military thinking. Whatever modifications the military may have wished for example, on the application of unconditional surrender, they never pushed for them with the vigour with which they argued for a cross-channel operation on a definite target date. Whatever predilections they might on occasion have exhibited in the secrecy of their staff memorandums or the privacy of their own thinking, they left politics to the President and never developed a coherent politico-military strategy of their own.

What, then, may we conclude about the significance of the wartime relationship? The simple stereotypes and generalizations that have become embedded in post-war literature need reexamination in light of the lengthened perspective. The evidence suggests that neither the

President nor the JCS started with a fully developed blueprint. The patterns they fashioned for victory were molded by circumstances, by necessity, by trial and error, and by compromises among themselves and with their allies in the changing context of the war. Despite wartime challenges to the historic division of labour between the "what" and "how" of policy, between principal and agent, American soldiers and statesmen remained faithful to their respective traditions and roles. The successes and failures of American leadership in World War Two, it may be argued, were a product of the American system and its ingrained approach to war and peace. The relationship forged under the stress of war empowered the military to secure the decisive victory FDR wanted. It permitted them to apply the revolution in technology, tactics, and doctrine that had developed between the World Wars to the war of mass and mobility that World War Two turned out to be. Just as the President could play his mediatory role with the allies, the JCS were enabled to balance the three approaches to war with which the American services entered the conflict. Their flexibility in terms of the military strategy they forged among themselves and with their allies has been underestimated. How far the American military had come in the quarter century since World War One was reflected in the transformation of the United States from the junior partner of World War One to its large share in molding European strategy and its preeminent role in directing the war in the Pacific in World War Two. The JCS proved to be a remarkably efficient instrument in waging the first really global war in American history. In the process the military formed close ties with the civilian society and emerged from the war with greater prestige and influence than ever before.

Yet, it may also be argued that in the end the war outran the strategists and the statesmen. Gaps, conceptual and institutional, in national policy began to show up in the last year of the war. Problems of winning the peace began to come up against those of winning the war. Questions of political and territorial adjustments arose for which no solutions had been foreseen. The basic props of Presidential policy - the cooperation of the Soviet Union, the survival of Britain as a strong power, China's elevation as a great power in the near future began to be questioned. Roosevelt died without having decided what to do about lend-lease after the defeat of Germany. He had fought three wars - the wars against Germany and Japan, and in American crusading spirit, the war to end war.<sup>9</sup> He had succeeded in the first two, but the issue in the third was still in doubt. On the military side, the JCS ended the war as they had begun it, approaching war as a technical military game. In the end American leadership sanctioned the use of the Atomic bomb, planning for which had grown up largely outside regular strategic channels, before a military theory or doctrine for it had been developed, or its place in the future of warfare or of international relations been fully comprehended, but consistent with the notion of ending the war as quickly and decisively as possible and with the fewest American casualties.

The world of 1945 was not the world of 1919 or 1939 or 1941. In previous American wars, political and military goals had meshed neatly; thrash the bully who started the war, bring the boys home, and all could return to normalcy. In World War Two, the more the immediate enemy was beaten, the more the balance was upset. The more thoroughly Germany was defeated, the greater loomed the threat of the wartime half-ally, the Soviet Union - in victory more of a question mark than ever. In this uncertain situation neither US Military doctrine nor political experience offered any real precedent. Hostage to American traditions, the President and the JCS had fought the war in terms of absolutes. To the end they saw war and peace in

separate compartments and tended to postpone middle and long range political problems for a general peace settlement that thirty years later had still not materialized.

In retrospect, a number of questions remain. Had the President and the Joint Chiefs really fought different wars - one a military struggle, the other a crusade - - in which their strategies happened on the whole to be compatible? Had the military reached the zenith of professionalism in the successful military war they fought only to find military strategy an outmoded art in the international arena emerging by 1945? Had the President come in sight of the victory he sought only to see danger signs for the brave new world he had envisaged? Was either really prepared for the changes in warfare or in international politics growing out of World War Two - changes that would affect the relations of soldiers and statesmen in the decades to follow?

The war's end exposed the limits of tradition in the American approach to global grand strategy - an area new to national experience. But the military instrument the President had created and the alliance he formed with it had enabled American leadership to marshal national resources more effectively than either the political dictatorship of Germany or the military dictatorship of Japan. The military remained the servants rather than the masters of the state and the tradition of civilian control emerged from the war intact. The harmonious partnership formed by a remarkable group of forceful civilian and military leaders enabled American leadership to remain faithful to the basic precepts of the Founding Fathers and to meet the greatest test in war the nation had ever faced.

In the final analysis, from the American standpoint World War Two may appear to have been the apogee of the democratization and industrialization of war, the climax of the joining of a moral crusade with massive power that let loose forces and expectations that neither American policy makers nor its strategists could by themselves control. It is doubtful if the circumstances for waging total war of the World War Two variety will ever again exist in such effective combination. The United States emerged as a global power, stronger than ever, but with its leaders more conscious than ever of the limits of power. FDR and his military advisers had built a mighty war machine and had converted the United States to serve as the arsenal of democracy. But even in waging the war they found they could not launch a major cross-channel attack as early as they wished. Nor could they support a big operation on the mainland of Asia along with establishing a second front in Europe. And at least through Yalta in February 1945 they called for Soviet help to pin down Japanese forces on the Asiatic mainland before the invasion of Japan. In contrast to the 215 army divisions the military planners had originally proposed in 1941, the nation was able to mobilize only ninety, all of which were deployed overseas at the end.<sup>10</sup> Gaps developed between ends and means that even the world's most industrialized democracy could not supply; shortages of shipping and landing craft plagued allied planners throughout. And, of course, FDR and his cohorts were aware that Russia bore the brunt of the fighting and sacrifice in the conflict with Germany and that without continued Soviet cooperation his hopes for a new international community and a brave new world after the war would be in jeopardy.

Thirty years after the fighting, scholars, statesmen, and soldiers are still wrestling with the problems growing out of World War Two. The need to probe the meaning and legacy of

that conflict for the theory and practice of warfare and statecraft continues. Some "lessons" are clearer than others. Much was learned about raising, training, equipping, supplying, deploying, and commanding forces in action in different parts of the globe - technical aspects of warfare. As in previous wars, military theory and practice were not in full accord. For example, despite the claims of pre-war air enthusiasts the ability of air power to defeat an enemy was not proved. After Pearl Harbour aircraft carriers, not battleships, proved to be queens of the fleet. The Germany-first concept, with which the western allies entered the conflict, was compromised by the needs of the Pacific war after Pearl Harbour - and it proved difficult to keep that war limited; the Pacific war almost caught up with the war against Germany. The planners discovered both in the Mediterranean and the Pacific that forces and resources in being had a way of generating their own strategy. Events almost as often determined strategy as the reverse and Western allied strategy was hammered out in a series of compromises on the anvil of "necessity." Reversing the legacy of World War One, the pendulum of war reverted to the offensive.

Much was learned about planning and waging coalition warfare. In many ways World War Two was a series of wars within wars - and it may be argued that the western powers fought their war and the Russians theirs; that there never was an allied strategy and the two strategies - Russian and Anglo-American - just happened to be compatible; that on a military level their efforts proved successful but their national interests and political objectives were not really meshed; and that the Grand Alliance began to break up before the war was over, when the common bond of danger that had brought the allies together in 1941 began to collapse.

Negotiations with the Russians proved difficult. Despite the postwar criticism of American wartime leadership, it is doubtful whether within the means available any different strategy or policy would have produced a faster decisive victory over Germany and Japan and put the West in a fundamentally better position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, or surmounted the legacy of suspicion with the Soviet partner they had inherited - a legacy that remains with some added scars from World War Two. From the Soviet standpoint, while the allies postponed the second front the Russians suffered twenty million casualties, the figure they now admit. The war ended with dilemmas piling up for the President and his military staff - with political problems in Europe mounting for which neither the military strategy of victory nor the President's policy of postponing political decisions provided the answers. Germany was only half liberated and Poland and east Europe were already in the Soviet dictator's grip. Whatever virtue unconditional surrender had as a war slogan and war aim, it did not prove to be a good peace aim. It cloaked the divergence in national objectives and interests of the allies and offered no basis for reconciling them. World War Two shed no certain light on the motivations and intentions of Soviet policy, problems that have also troubled American post-war leadership. FDR staked much on using the wartime partnership to bring the Soviet Union out of its pre-war isolation. "The only way to have a friend," he once quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson, "is to be one." But at the very end, wary of Russian intransigence over Poland, he advocated firmness in dealing with the Soviet Union - somewhat akin to General Marshall's urging in January 1945 on General Eisenhower a direct approach in treating with the Russians "in simple Main Street Abilene style." But at no point did FDR or his chief military advisers propose to use military power for direct and specific political purposes vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup>

In the perspective of the intervening years, it is apparent that total war brought neither total peace nor total national security. World War Two marked a watershed for American strategy and policy and a revolution in its strategic position. Traditional bases of national security were upset. Traditions have come into conflict with realities. In the uncertain international environment of the postwar world, policy makers and planners have desperately sought to close the gaps among weaponry, policy, and strategy. The quest for national security has ensued in new directions. The search for a viable system of coordinating the political and military spheres of national policy, and for informed, realistic long range planning, underscored by the experience of World War Two, has been continuing and there has been considerable tinkering with, and reshaping of the machinery of national security. Strategy is no longer the simple case of military planning it was before World War Two. Nor can it any longer be separated from national policy, or national from international security. Distances have shrunk and the Atlantic is no longer an ocean but a river. In the age of intercontinental and submarine missiles, the very air above and the sea below have become live frontiers. National security can no longer be defined in terms of American national frontiers as it could in most of the nation's history. The era of "free security", a dividend of the relatively stable balance of power in Europe and the presence of the British fleet in the Atlantic, is over.

The old approaches no longer offer practical solutions. Winning and victory, traditional objectives in American conflicts, have become questionable goals in the nuclear age, goals whose meaning is no longer clear, and whose relevance has become doubtful. Strategy and policy have become twin parts of the art and science of survival - of deterring major war as much as to fight it, should it come. We live in a period that is neither war nor peace, wherein wars are no longer declared and formal surrenders and peace treaties made, wherein problems are not solved but divided - we have two Chinas, two Koreas, two Berlins, and so on. For over three decades the world has been sitting on a tinder box - a by-product of the offensive power based on nuclear energy unleashed at the war's end. But traditions in national security die hard in the nuclear age and the desire for absolute security on the part of the American public persists.

World War Two marked the end of an epoch in the military history of the US and of the world. Under the shadow of the atomic bomb and the ensuing nuclear arms race between the US and the USSR, and the spread of nuclear weapons to other nations, warfare has returned to earlier and more primitive forms -to conventional methods and weapons, to limited and guerrilla wars - fought largely in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Whether World War Two ensured that future wars would be little, or paved the way for an eventual armageddon - or both - only the future can tell. American theorists continue to wrestle with the problem of the future of war. In contrast to its pre-war relative isolation, an aftermath of World War One, the United States has in the aftermath of World War Two become involved in all corners of the globe and has become the leader of free world coalitions. As we have noted, American strategy came into its own in World War Two. In contrast to the few influential strategists produced by the US before the war, American theorists, many of them drawn from intellectual ranks outside the military, have dominated western strategic thought and play on a global checkerboard. US military history can no longer be separated from world military history.

To put World War Two and its "lessons" in proper perspective for the soldier and state man, the historian will have to continue to search for the links between World War One and World War Two - not only for what happened in World War One and its aftermath but what American leaders of World War Two thought had happened. In a sense World War Two may

be viewed as part of the unfinished business of World War One and the post-World War Two era a carryover of the unfinished business of World War Two - a quest for the peace and security that had eluded military victory. World War Two was total but incomplete. The scholar will have to study the Second World War as more than a series of hard-fought battles and campaigns - as conflicts between societies, and the seedbed of great political, economic, technological, and military change, and of a fundamental shift in the international balance of power that would have significant impact on postwar national security planning and organization. For American leadership that war marked an important formative and transitional period, a watershed, in the history of the relationship between the President and his military advisers. It reaffirmed American faith in civilian control even as the historic distinctions between policy and strategy, between the classical realms of the statesmen and the military, became increasingly blurred. And when future historians look back on World War Two and its legacy, that war may appear, above all, as the conflict that propelled the United States into the global age, ended its innocence in world affairs, made it both more powerful and more insecure, and illustrated limits of its traditional approach to war and peace.



## NOTES

- 1 This paper is in large measure an outgrowth of the author's research and writing on American leadership in World War Two incorporated in Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942, with Edwin M. Snell (Washington, DC, 1953), and Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944 (Washington, DC, 1959), volumes in the official US Army in World War II series, and in various essays and articles published in other official and unofficial accounts reflected in the notes below.
- 2 Chester Wilmot, The Stuggle for Europe, (New York, 1952), especially pp. 11, 12, 109, 128, 338, 448. For a review and analysis of Wilmot's thesis see Maurice Matloff, "Wilmot Revisited: Myth and Reality in Anglo-American Strategy for the Second Front," an essay published by the Eisenhower Foundation in D-Day: The Normandy Invasion in Retrospect (Lawrence, 1971).
- 3 For a fuller discussion of American pre-World War II strategic planning and relations between the President and his military advisers between World Wars One and Two, see Mark S. Watson, Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations (Washington, DC, 1950), especially Chapters I-V, X, in the official US Army in World War II series; Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942, chapters I-III; Maurice Matloff, "The American Approach to War, 1919-1945," in Michael Howard (ed.), Theory and Practice of War (London, 1965); Maurice Matloff, "Prewar Military Plans and Preparations, 1939-41," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXIX (July, 1953); and Louis Morton, "Interservice Co-operation and Politico-Military Collaboration," in Harry L. Coles (ed.), Total War and Cold War, (Columbus, 1962).
- 4 See, for example, FDR's expression of personal triumph in early March 1943 to General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, when the invasion of North Africa proved successful. Cited in Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944, p. 68.
- 5 The reorganization of the joint planning system is discussed in Ray S. Cline, Washington Command Post: The Operations Division (Washington, DC, 1951), pp. 234-268, in the official US Army in World War Two series.
- 6 Quoted in Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944, p. 110.
- 7 Cline, 22. cit., pp. 312-332.
- 8 Quoted in Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944, p. 523.
- 9 This theme is developed in Maurice Matloff, "Mr. Roosevelt's Three Wars: FDR as War Leader," Harmon Memorial Lecture in Military History, No. 6, United States Air Force Academy, (Colorado, 1964). This lecture was in part drawn from the same author's essay, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt as War Leader," published in Harry L. Coles (ed.), Total War and Cold War (Columbus, 1962).
- 10 The decision to limit the US Army to 90 divisions in World War Two is treated in an essay by Maurice Matloff, "The 90-Division Gamble," in Kent R. Greenfield, (ed.), Command Decisions (Washington, 1961).

- 11 Samuel I. Roseman (ed.), The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944-45 volume, (New York, 1950), p. 524.
- 12 Various aspects of American wartime policies and relations with the Soviet Union are treated in a number of published American official and unofficial accounts, including the memoirs and biographies of political and military leaders. Particularly useful are the first-hand observations recorded in John R. Deane, The Strange Alliance (New York, 1947), and the contemporary sources incorporated in two official documentaries, The Entry of the Soviet Union into the War against Japan: Military Plans 1941-1945 (Department of Defense Press Release, September 1955), and Department of State, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta (Washington, DC, 1955). For summary analyses of American politico-military relations with the Soviet Union in the war against Japan and Germany respectively, see Ernest R. May, "The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Far Eastern War, 1941-1945," Pacific Historical Review, XXIV (May, 1955); and Maurice Matloff, "The Soviet Union and the War in the West," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXXII (March, 1956).

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### ALLIANCE POLITICS AND ATOMIC COLLABORATION, 1941-1943

Brian L. Villa

The English sculptor, Henry Moore, has given us what is probably the only masterpiece to have been inspired by the atomic bomb. It is located in Chicago where Stagg Stadium once stood, more precisely, on the spot where the first sustained chain reaction took place, December 2, 1942. The small mass of bronze is typically Moore, here highly polished, there penetrated by dark voids. As one draws nearer, attracted by the play of light and shade, the small form becomes clearer. It seems to be a mushroom about to break forth from the ground, rather trite one thinks, but on approaching it more closely, as one moves around it, the form assumes the shape not of a mushroom, but of a skull. It is only after this impression has sunken in that one notices the seemingly insignificant setting for the bronze, the pavement set with stones in concentric circles around it. Then and only then does one realize that in fascination with the sculpture, we have been drawn deeply into the object's symbolic killing zone.

Hopefully it is a work of art, which countless generations will come to admire, but even without knowing the outcome, the work stands as a very precise statement of man's early involvement with atomic energy. At the beginning few, if any perceived the frightening perspectives. What seemed to dominate the minds of statesmen and scientists was the irresistible fascination of a new age dawning, with all its inherent power. General Smuts best expressed it when he was told in 1943 that he was to meet the brilliant atomic physicist Niels Bohr. Smuts gushed, "This is tremendous as though one were meeting? Shakespeare or Napoleon - someone who is changing the history of the world."<sup>1</sup> The sense of overwhelming power was easily aroused in the minds of a generation which remembered the age of the horse and which had now been bedazzled by a seemingly endless string of marvels. Some doubted that the bomb would be revolutionary or even that it would work, but most did not. Fewer still questioned that the project would produce untold benefits to mankind. The British scientist, Marcus Oliphant, wrote to an American colleague in February 1945 apropos of the bomb project:

Although war has brought the opportunity to do these things, and although the immediate result will be incalculable destruction, we know that in the ultimate analysis this aspect will be overshadowed by the benefits wrought for mankind.<sup>2</sup>

This sense of the bomb's importance found expression in virtually every policy paper on the subject from 1941 onwards. The authors of the British Maud report of July 1941, noting that skepticism was no longer warranted asserted that a "super-bomb" was possible. They spoke of it as a "weapon of decisive possibilities" such as no nation could afford to be without.<sup>3</sup> There was no less enthusiasm about the commercial power aspects. The appendix to their report stated that the use of nuclear energy "may affect the distribution of industry over the whole world."<sup>4</sup> But it was clearly the bomb prospects which interested the Maud Committee. It was the same with American scientists and policy makers. Later that same summer the American scientist, Harold C. Urey concluded that "If the Germans get the bomb the war will be over in a few weeks."<sup>5</sup> In October the American President and his Secretary of War discussed the "enormous

possibilities" and the need "to prevent it from being used to conquer the world".<sup>6</sup> James B. Conant, Harvard's President on loan to the American government, noted in the spring of 1943; "The new results when they arrive will henceforth be no laboratory affair, their impact may well be world shattering."<sup>7</sup>

The enormous possibilities were also discussed in Canada at a very early date, most noticeably by the Canadian physicist, George Lawrence.<sup>8</sup> As elsewhere, the first discussions made little effort to distinguish between the possible military and commercial applications. Indeed, the first impressions tended to be rather blurred. When representatives of the British atomic project visited the acting head of the National Research Council, Chalmers Jack Mackenzie, they seem to have made little effort to sort out the various components. Mackenzie, who was responsible for the Canadian government's scientific policy and was destined to become the key Canadian figure, merely noted in his diary: "It is very hush-hush project and they are quite enthusiastic about the practical result."<sup>9</sup> Within a week, however, Mackenzie was helping to convince C.D. Howe, Minister of Munitions and Supply, of the need for Canada's involvement.<sup>10</sup> Less than two weeks after the British visit, Mackenzie was in Washington agreeing with the American project Administrator, Vannevar Bush, that Canada ought to be involved.<sup>11</sup> Within a year the word was out over most of Bay Street that uranium was being studied for the possible creation of the "greatest explosive ever developed."<sup>12</sup> In a memorandum to C.D. Howe of April 1944 Mackenzie noted:

In my opinion Canada has a unique opportunity to become intimately involved in a project which is not only of the greatest immediate military importance but which may revolutionize the future world in the same degree as did the invention of the steam engine and the discovery of electricity. It is an opportunity Canada as a nation cannot afford to turn down.<sup>13</sup>

In forwarding this and related documents to A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council, C.D. Howe referred to their subject as "perhaps the top secret of the war."<sup>14</sup> The Cabinet War Committee minutes described the subject of the additional expenditures as a proposal for the "construction and operation in Canada of a pilot plant for the further development of a special process of the highest secrecy. The product of this process promised to be of the greatest importance to the war effort and its postwar significance was likely to be revolutionary."<sup>15</sup> (Plutonium, it should be noted was the product of the process.) It does little good to try to read back into the record a sense of moral concern for that was still unformed and lay somewhat in the future. Atomic energy was approached by all the great nations involved not so much with trepidation as with eager anticipation. If fear there was it concerned the possibility that Germany might be successful first, but this sentiment seemed only to add a sense of excitement to the race.

The impression the documentation from all three capitals suggests is that the biggest poker game of the century was about to take place. Canada had long watched such great power games but largely from the sidelines. Playing the game was very heavy stuff indeed. As the Rowell-Sirois Commission on Federal Provincial Relations noted in 1940, specifically apropos of trade but obviously with wider application:

Canada's position is similar to that of a small man sitting in a big poker game. He must play for the full stakes, but with only a fraction of the capital resources of his two

substantial opponents: if he wins, his profits in relation to his capital are very large, and if he loses he may be cleaned out.<sup>16</sup>

It is perhaps on this limited plane that an evaluation of Canada's early role in atomic collaboration should be attempted.

This essay will primarily attempt to determine what cards Canadian policy makers had to play. It will not attempt to describe, except for a brief period, how Canada played her cards nor what cards were held by her partners. Those questions too must be reexamined in light of the latest archival openings but one can begin the task by looking at Canada's experience.

The first and in some ways largest task is the correction of some misapprehensions concerning Canadian assets. These can be traced right back to the contemporary documents. According to the Cabinet War Committee minutes, C.D. Howe announced in January 1944 that, "Canada was the main source of world supply of this metal (uranium) and it was regarded as essential that its supply and production should be strictly under government control."<sup>17</sup> Mackenzie King seems to have had the same notion for he noted in his diary of August 8, 1943 that "Canada (is) also a party to the development (Anglo-American atomic collaboration). Much of the U (uranium) and H.W. (heavy water) are in our country."<sup>18</sup>

If Canada had held the preponderance of uranium and heavy water stocks necessary for the atomic program that certainly would have constituted a very strong hand indeed. This presumption however raises some very difficult questions. If Canada had so strong a hand why did its officials have so much difficulty in getting supplies from the Americans for the British-Canadian project in Montreal? Why were Canadian scientists excluded from the American plutonium plants? Why did Canada not play a larger role in post-war efforts at atomic energy control? The conventional answer seems to be that the Canadians were outfoxed by their American friends who cornered the supply of Canadian materials, and thus took away the principal cards which Canada had to play.

This standard interpretation is reflected in most Canadian writing on the subject as well as the important British study. Thus C.P. Stacey writes in his brief and very fine account of atomic collaboration, "The Americans were in the driver's seat. Not only was their project now so far advanced that they could go it alone but they had contrived to corner the market on Canadian atomic raw materials."<sup>19</sup> Margaret Gowing, the very gifted official British historian, has written, "The Americans had secured the entire output of the Canadian uranium mines and the Canadian heavy water plant, and if the British finally broke with the Americans on Tube Alloys they would be deprived of their only sources of uranium and any early possibility of heavy water supplies."<sup>20</sup> Dr. Wilfrid Eggleston in his pioneering and richly detailed study, while avoiding comment on just how much uranium Canada had, leaves much the same impression. He has written: "The aggressive and relentless drive of General Groves and his American colleagues had resulted in a series of secret private contracts being reached between Eldorado... and the U. S. Army.... The Canadian government held all the cards of course, in the event of a showdown. As an autonomous power, it could step in at any time... and take over complete control of its uranium contracts with the United States."<sup>21</sup>

Where, then, were these assets in the period from December 1942 to August 1943 when the Americans virtually cut off the British and Canadian scientists from participation in the American atomic work? If the original assumptions about the extent of the assets are correct

it seems very hard not to conclude that the Canadians had been somewhat careless with their resources. Winston Churchill's celebrated remark that C.D. Howe had apparently sold the "British Empire down the river" seems to reflect just such a conclusion.<sup>22</sup>

Alongside the usual Yankee ruthlessness there would seem to be an implication of Canadian ineptitude if not naiveté. Most authors attempt to rescue C.D. Howe from the imputation but somewhat halfheartedly. Eggleston writes of Howe, "He was up to his neck in gigantic enterprises already (before the atomic question arose)."<sup>23</sup> James Eayrs in his important study has written that, "C.D. Howe had not sold the British Empire down the river in any treasonable sense. But he had been more than a trifle careless with its assets."<sup>24</sup> The official British account is milder but in the same vein: "Howe ...was an individualist working in an administration which was at the best of times a very fine-drawn affair, and was consequently trying to do himself far more than anyone could..."<sup>25</sup> C.P. Stacey writes in the same vein, "It seems likely that Howe himself late in 1942 had no technical understanding of what was going on and no real idea of how much material would be required for a serious atomic operation."

The newly opened American and British archives shed much light on how Americans acquired supplies and Canada's place within that picture. The most complicated part of the story concerns the world's largest producer of uranium, the Union Minière du Haut Katanga. Briefly, this company was most anxious to unload much of its uranium which had been relatively worthless in the pre-war era and had been pressing the Americans to take as much of it as they could. (They had made similar approaches to the British earlier.) Already in April 1942 they were pressing the Americans to accept 1,000 short tons of very high grade uranium ore and 2,000 short tons of average grade ore, while suggesting that there were "thousands of tons" of ore available in the Congo.<sup>26</sup> Not only were the accumulated stocks much greater than the Canadian but also Congo annual production was many times greater than the Canadian, anywhere from four to six times as great. In fact, Canada ranked third in world production after the Belgian Congo and the United States. The total production prior to December 1943 was from the Belgian Congo 6,500 tons of high grade ore; from Colorado, 2,000 tons of medium and low grade ore; and from Canada, 690 tons of medium and low grade ore.<sup>27</sup> This ranking, derived from American sources, is corroborated by the British documents.<sup>28</sup> In such circumstances Canadian uranium was critical to the United States only if expected use exceeded the other two sources of supply. Assuming the most wasteful possible use of uranium ore by the United States, that is maintaining all three routes to bomb development simultaneously for the duration of the war (a worst possible contingency since the Americans themselves planned to decide on narrowing the choices by 1944) the Americans had little to worry about. The worst contingency would produce by February 1945 a demand for 4,404 tons of ore, while by that date they would have available just from Belgian and American sources 4,518 tons in ore. An early decision on which route to follow could release an additional 1,000 or more tons of uranium in ore.<sup>29</sup>

This data makes clear that a complete cessation of uranium deliveries from Canada, even for the entire war period, would affect no more than 10-15 percent of the American supplies. The Americans might indeed be considered to be "in the driver's seat" but not necessarily because of the Canadian situation. The administrator of the Canadian project C.J. Mackenzie seems to have had a more accurate view of the situation when he wrote Hume Wrong of External Affairs in October 1945:

The American project, on the other hand, was not entirely dependent on Canadian ore

as they had stockpiled a great deal of Belgian Congo material, and while they valued our present and potential supplies greatly on account of obvious advantages, I think they might have carried out their immediate plans without our material.<sup>30</sup>

It should be added that the American government was aware that Canada had only limited leverage should it join Britain in protesting the new American policy restricting the interchange of scientific information. The US panel recommending that policy in December 1942 noted:

(The) British would certainly be displeased and whether the resulting friction would produce serious repercussions in regard to the supply of materials from Canada or in other areas... is impossible to judge.<sup>30</sup>

While the reviewing committee was not certain of the situation if Canadian ore was stopped, the general tenor of the report was optimistic. The committee certainly did not hesitate, on account of the possible uncertainty as regards the Canadian situation, to recommend to the President the restrictive policies which were to cause Britain such anguish. As Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourne have noted Canadian uranium supplied constituted only "a limited ticket of admission" to high stakes diplomacy.<sup>31</sup> In the ore situation there was no possibility of a Canadian Juggernaut.

Similar findings would appear indicated with respect to the production of heavy water, which had been placed along with the other "Canadian material" in most accounts.<sup>32</sup> Britain in fact controlled the only significant supplies existing in 1942, the approximately 180 kg of heavy water taken out of France by two of Frederic Joliot-Curie's assistants. British officials had much emphasized the importance of this source in their discussions with the Americans, but this amount was barely sufficient to conduct the preliminary experiments.<sup>33</sup>

A significant proportion of future supply was Canadian, but in a sense that needs to be understood. In 1942 Canada did not possess any appreciable quantities of heavy water. The Americans, with some British scientific help, arranged for a Boston firm E.B. Badger and Sons to design and construct equipment according to American specifications to be installed at a plant in British Columbia. That location was chosen because it was a large-scale producer of electrolytic hydrogen, used in the process. The cost of the equipment, construction and first charge of platinum catalyst was to be borne entirely by the US and amounted to approximately \$2.8 million and would entail an annual operating cost of approximately \$700,000.<sup>34</sup> Even during the period of apparent Anglo-American cooperation, the British government had evidenced no desire to share in the venture, nor had the Canadian. When the controversy broke out over the sharing of scientific information, construction had barely begun. The British representative urged the Canadian government to seize the plant, but apparently C.D. Howe never went beyond the exploratory stage.<sup>35</sup> While the documents are silent on the reasoning it seems clear enough; there was no way to compel the American government to turn over the use of the patents, specifications and procedures. Under the circumstances it is misleading, though in some sense accurate, to refer to Heavy Water as Canadian material, for some of the decisive elements of control were lacking.

The supplies, at least those that might be considered purely Canadian, were therefore not as unique or as valuable as has sometimes been suggested. Even if carefully managed they could give the Canadian government little leverage. That observation does not, of course, resolve the question of how unfair American policy towards raw materials was, or was not.

That question needs to be looked at more closely. The imputation breaks down into three parts. 1) That the U.S. contracted for all Canadian uranium for the purpose of leaving Britain no option but to accept American terms, in effect a junior partnership. This charge is to some extent implied or stated in the accounts by Stacey and Gowing.<sup>36</sup> 2) That the Americans made their arrangements at Trail secretly without even consulting the Canadian government. It seems to be implied by Stacey but is most clearly stated by John Holmes and Eggleston.<sup>37</sup> 3) That the Americans secretly developed their own heavy water program, in completion with the British-Canadian effort, holding back heavy water for the Argonne Laboratory near Chicago. This charge also seems to be implied by Stacey, but is again most clearly stated by Eggleston.<sup>38</sup>

Detailed reasons for doubting the accuracy of the various imputations may be found in the archives recently opened. But in some ways the most important ground for skepticism arises from the work Robert Cuff and Jack Granatstein have done, particularly on the Hyde Park Declaration.<sup>39</sup> Everything I have studied about Franklin D. Roosevelt confirms the acuity of their insight. Nothing pleased Roosevelt more than to have Mackenzie King come and ask for more consideration than Canada's strict entitlement. It gave Roosevelt great pleasure to wave his hand with noble insouciance and by a gesture accede to the request. What appealed to him in all this was the creation of lines of dependence, which might well be called feudal, in the strict sense, as described by Marc Bloch. We, of course tend to see in that relationship the notion of superior and subordinate, but as Roosevelt understood such ties, the dependence ran in both directions. Its great advantage was that the relationship tended to run itself, requiring no great effort or close supervision. And of course, having banked good will, he knew he could eventually ask Canadians for a favour in return and know that it could not easily be refused. An apparent magnanimity was the quintessence of his style.<sup>40</sup>

Since this was his style and since he closely controlled all aspects of atomic policy it seems rather strange to see the Americans apparently stealing from the Canadians, rather rudely, what they might have obtained by more straightforward means. If one stops and considers that the Americans had Belgian uranium stocks, all the money for plant construction and some of the best scientific advice which European wars could cast on American shores, it would appear that the Americans had all the cards they needed without recourse to desperate measures. The charges need therefore to be examined more closely, particularly as they seriously obscure the real lines of policy.

The charge that the Americans secretly contracted for all Canadian ore so as to leave no alternatives to Britain and Canada is the most serious. But it entirely ignores the zeal on the Canadian side to sell as much uranium as possible. In the immediate pre-war period Eldorado Mines, the principal Canadian uranium product, had been in a weak position, unable to compete with the Belgian concern either in price or quantity. Eldorado owed nearly \$700,000 in 1939 and had virtually shut down. Not surprisingly it welcomed orders. As Eldorado's President wrote C.D. Howe, "I was of the opinion that it was good- policy to accept all contracts that came our way for the refining of ore..."<sup>42</sup> If anything there was even more enthusiasm at the sales agent's office in New York. Some aspects of this story are rather sad but it would appear that Eldorado's accounting to C.D. Howe of contracts presumably made with the US, which is the source for most of the historical accounts, reports one more contract than existed with the US. It would appear that Boris Pregel, Eldorado's agent, had apparently purchased ore for his own account for resale to the Americans when they could be persuaded to take it, possibly at substantially higher prices.<sup>43</sup> The point is that not all actions ascribed to the American government were in fact taken by them.



Then, too, the Americans had every reason to believe that their contracts with Eldorado were fully approved by the Canadian government. In June 1942 C.D. Howe had proposed to the Americans that Canada quietly purchase Eldorado. Vannevar Bush had encouraged the Canadians and so had Franklino D. Roosevelt. In July the administrator of Canada's atomic project, C A Mackenzie, had assured Bush that "Mr. Howe had started informal discussions with the parties interested and some days ago told me that everything was going nicely and pointed to an early and satisfactory conclusion of the deal."<sup>44</sup> Apparently neither Howe nor Mackenzie reported to the Americans that the secret purchase had not materialized. Even in October 1942 Howe was still optimistically telling the British that it would all be completed in short order. Even Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourne in their very fine biography of C.D. Howe state that "within weeks, Howe had his mine."<sup>45</sup> In fact, by 1944 the government had to abandon the indirect approach and proceed with expropriation of the shares. In late 1942 and early 1943 the Americans were certainly entitled to believe that their contractual arrangements met Canadian approval, and in effect were made with Howe's agent.

Similarly the charge that the Americans kept secret their deal with Consolidated Mining and Smelting for the heavy water plant until after it was consummated seems unfounded. John Holmes has written recently, quite harshly, of the alleged incident, suggesting that the United States "needed some lessons on Canadian sovereignty." But Bush's report to his counterpart, Sir John Anderson, does not justify such an interpretation. Bush wrote.

...my office is just at the present time at the point of closing a contract with a Canadian company. Accordingly I have sent to Ottawa to confer with Mr. Mackenzie... (my representative)... I have taken this step in order that our arrangements with the Canadian company may be fully known and commented upon by the Canadians before the arrangements are closed.<sup>46</sup>

Bush's representative in fact saw Mackenzie for two sessions in which apparently tentative approval was given to the arrangements, subject to Howe's review.<sup>47</sup> Approximately two weeks later, Mackenzie wrote Bush to say that C.D. Howe "confirmed the opinions I expressed to you."<sup>48</sup> All this is admittedly from the American archives, but it does not appear differently in the Canadian. For example, one contemporary letter in Munitions and Supply files addressed to the President of Consolidated notes, "We understand that you are dealing directly with your friends (the US Government). This is wholly satisfactory."<sup>49</sup>

As for the charges regarding "secret" American development of Heavy Water plants in the US, the Canadian were not only informed but the first to be so informed, even before the British.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, in Dean Mackenzie's official files there is a letter from Conant to Mackenzie of March 13, 1943, in which one sentence was underlined apparently by Mackenzie, the one in which the American stressed, "You understand that the point at issue is the size of our program for the manufacture of heavy water."<sup>51</sup>

The worst of the charges seem, therefore, to have been somewhat unfounded. They may be a reading back into an earlier period unhappiness with later American policy, or they may simply reflect more general ingrained suspicion. Be that as it may, the charges seriously confuse and obscure the essential thrust of American and British policy, more particularly the broad political reasons why Canadian involvement in atomic affairs was sought. It was on this larger stage that Canada really had cards to play, much more important than the limited stocks

of uranium or heavy water located in Canada. This is a complicated story, one which certainly cannot be told here in all its complexity. But to anticipate later conclusions, one could suggest that Canadian leaders, particularly C.J. Mackenzie, played the cards rather well during the war, but that one cannot be at all certain that others played these cards as well in the immediate post-war period. Only the outlines of the first proposition can be sketched in this essay.

One has to begin with an understanding of the way the British-American atomic relationship developed. The important part of the story begins, as Margaret Gowing has indicated, with the ardour of American advances to Britain in the fall of 1941 for a joint, integrated atomic project, at a time when Britain was felt to be in the lead. The evidence of American eagerness is rather more striking than even Professor Gowing indicates. The American scientist who was the bearer of a "Private", "Dear Winston" letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt offered on behalf of the American government to foot the bill for research and development, a princely offer indeed.<sup>52</sup> As Margaret Gowing has noted, the American envoy was treated with marked condescension and was subjected to homilies on the superiority of British ways. This and other American overtures were, as she says, generally answered only tardily and in a rather superior manner.<sup>53</sup> However it also emerges from a comparison of the files of Roosevelt and Churchill that one particular letter was never answered. Contrary to Professor Gowing's belief, the "Private" "Dear Winston" letter never received direct reply.<sup>54</sup> The rebuff to Roosevelt was therefore even more complete than was reported.

On the reasons for that rebuff Professor Gowing is brutally candid. She leaves it unmistakably clear that the principal reason for the rejection was a disinclination to share so potent a weapon with the Americans.<sup>55</sup> It is not evident, however, from her account that even in April 1943 at least one of Churchill's principal advisers believed Britain could still beat the US in producing a bomb if Britain made the effort alone. Nor is it evident from her account that the Americans were correctly guessing the reason for the aloofness of the British responses. By peradventure, the Americans had received a copy of a draft of the Maud report giving the reasons for British hesitation, the possibility that control over the weapon might be maintained if the Americans were kept out of the development.<sup>56</sup>

All of this meant that by April 1942, much earlier than has been supposed, the Americans concluded that their offer had been rejected and were fully prepared to go ahead alone.<sup>57</sup> When the British offer to collaborate did come in August 1942, the door had long been shut. Nor was it really an offer to undertake a joint project as one might gather from the British account. It is true enough that Anderson's minute to Churchill, reprinted by Gowing, suggested a fully joint project but what Anderson proposed to the Americans on August 5 had a very different ring.<sup>58</sup> It seemed to signal a collapse of the British effort while demanding a partner's full share in the control of the American project. Of the original American offer it seemed to preserve very little except by implication, the idea that the American government would foot the bill. All of this is relevant because it shows what an impossibly difficult task the Canadians assumed when they attempted to compose Anglo-American differences over atomic collaboration.

Indeed, there was little disposition among the Americans to go very far down the road to compromise on atomic collaboration. Remembering their earlier rebuff, they were now prepared to administer the same policy to Britain. Conant best expressed the mood when he wrote in 1943, "I question very much whether if at some stage we had said we were going to abandon all scientific activity the British would still have been willing to pass information to

us."<sup>59</sup> The briefing Vice-President Wallace received on the controversy was also indicative. He noted in his diary that the "British are trying to play their customary role of getting more than they are entitled to."<sup>60</sup>

Thereafter American policy was directed towards either going alone without Britain so as to achieve a unilateral deterrent, or at most sharing with Britain to the extent that Britain could actually help and only to the extent that Britain could use immediately the exchanged information. Since the British were fast losing their hope of producing a bomb during the war, Bush and Conant could see no valid reason for giving Britain any information, except the moral obligation to make some return for whatever help Britain could really offer. Bush saw no way of doing their other than having British scientists surrender all the knowledge or assistance they could provide and subsequently have it evaluated by the American team. In other words, Britain would have to depend on American good will for a fair return. This course was unacceptable to British policy makers, in part because they knew what a nebulous concept fairness could be having induced the Free French to surrender their scientific assets to Britain on just such terms. The American position was also unacceptable one suspects because Sir John Anderson's advisers understood that what they might have to offer was now, in the summer of 1943, not very much. The corresponding return from the Americans was not likely to be sufficient to give Britain the bomb in the post-war era, now an absolute priority for Churchill.<sup>61</sup>

There was much more behind the rupture. It must be noted that when Bush was seeking advice on sharing information with Britain he was primarily consulting a panel consisting of Vice-President Wallace, Secretary Stimson and General Marshall, as well as Harry Hopkins. These figures were the chief advocates of a cross-channel operation for 1943, which they considered to be the top priority of the war. Churchill's somewhat evasive, somewhat contrary position had brought the Americans to the point of desperation. None of those whom Bush consulted felt particularly disposed to be generous to Britain until there was some agreement on the large question of strategy for the European war. After the most complicated allied negotiations of the war, the issues in dispute were settled on the basis of "quid pro quo" diplomacy. For Roosevelt's quid, a junior partnership for Britain and Canada in the atomic project, Churchill delivered a quo, which included agreement to the revised American timing for Normandy and a partial surrender of Britain's commercial rights in any atomic energy exploitation resulting from joint work.<sup>62</sup> In effect, the bargain gave Britain and Canada the assurance of some role in whatever efforts were made after the war to control atomic energy through membership on the Combined Policy Committee. That membership also gave Britain the outside chance of learning enough of the American project to be able to develop a British bomb in the early post-war era.

Since the bargain struck affected many of the crucial issues of the war and post-war era, it seems clear that Canada's role in the resolution of the controversy must have been relatively secondary. The present literature seems, however, to suggest that there was hardly any Canadian role, certainly none in the early period from 1942 to 1943. Most authors represent Canadian officials as stumbling in and making matters worse. Even Margaret Gowing speaks of Canada as having become involved only by accident of war.<sup>63</sup> Wilfred Eggleston has concluded that "For complex reasons; in which there is no national villain, the uranium research program led for a time to deep seated and acrimonious differences, chiefly affecting the United States and Britain with Canada as a victim to some extent on the side lines."<sup>64</sup> James Eayrs has spoken of the height of the crisis in May 1943 "as a Canadian foreign minister's nightmare-one wherein hinges stick, lynchpins snap and bridges fall into the sea." And elsewhere he notes, "For a time

Canada created more Anglo-American misunderstandings than she was able to conciliate."<sup>65</sup>

The documentation now available however, makes it clear that Canada's involvement was not entirely accidental. It appears that from the very start the United States and Britain hoped to involve Canada in the atomic program, though for somewhat different reasons.

Interest in involving Canada surfaced in American policy papers as early as October 1941, when the Americans were seeking a joint project with Britain and were offering to foot the bill. In that context, the thought was that the entire project should be undertaken in Canada. Bush's memorandum of his October meeting with the President is brief but precise: "We agreed, apparently completely, that it would be best if the job were done jointly in Canada."<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, the Americans decided to open this question by approaching Britain first. As we have seen, Britain rebuffed the overture and Canada missed the opportunity, if we can call it that, of having the multi-billion dollar project centered in Canada and being intimately involved from the start.

The rationale for American interest in Canada, however, is worth examining. The obvious consideration was the fact that the United States was still avowedly a neutral, and large scale military cooperation with a belligerent could best be undertaken in Canada where the spheres of American self-defence and Empire defence overlapped. When the US entered the war this consideration naturally lost much of its importance. But American policy had also been based on a second consideration which remained: concern with the problem of controlling atomic energy after the war. Again the Bush memorandum of his October conversation with the President was somewhat laconic but in the same conversation concerning Canada "we disused at some length after-war control, together with sources of raw material."<sup>67</sup> In that context it was impossible to ignore Canada. There undoubtedly was also present a third consideration, the further thought that Canada's position on matters of international control would be close to the American.

There were thus enough considerations for Americans to continue desiring Canadian participation after Pearl Harbour. Not long after the Japanese attack a conference to review the atomic program was convened in Washington and was attended by the Vice-President, the Secretary of War and Vannevar Bush. The latter recorded:

We discussed the international situation and I presented the present status as I understand it. It is understood by all present that this matter of relationships with Britain is in the hands of the President himself.... Some discussion was, however, held on the desirability of a joint plant in Canada."<sup>68</sup>

Britain's rejection of the American offer, which Bush registered in April 1942, changed most elements in the equation. The Americans now planned their crash program for development entirely within the United States. Curiously enough, only one component was left to be built outside of the United States, the heavy water plant at Trail, British Columbia.

Closing the door to Britain did not necessarily mean closing the door to Canada. In June 1942 Dean Mackenzie, much intrigued by news of the new American program travelled down to Washington and laid before the Americans the Canadian desire to participate and to control uranium supplies. In that context Bush's mind went back to the problem of post-war control. Mackenzie's diary makes clear both Bush's enthusiasm and his motivation:

Bush thinks we should proceed with the acquisition of the property (Eldorado)... He thinks that there should be an international arrangement as between the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada for post war control.<sup>69</sup>

That same day Bush wrote the President, respectfully noting that he had always steered clear of the question of post-war relations which the President wished to control personally, adding,

On one point, however, I would like to be in a position to give a reply. The Canadians are considering quietly purchasing the principal ore source in Canada so that it will be under their government control.... I am inclined to encourage them to go ahead, with the thought that international relationships will be more readily handled if control on the matter is in government hands.<sup>70</sup>

The President agreed entirely, and Bush promptly confirmed his earlier surmise to Mackenzie. Noting that the contemplated purchase is "of course, entirely a Canadian matter," Bush reported that the President was all for encouraging the Canadians.<sup>71</sup>

Though Bush no longer had any immediate place for Britain in his plans and was evading most of Sir John Anderson's proposals, he did encourage that portion which concerned Canada. Bush wrote Anderson on September 1 to say that the establishment of a joint British-Canadian team would be welcomed and "may result in adequate interchange.... You know undoubtedly that we would be quite content if your arrangements result in setting up in Canada a strong group."<sup>72</sup> Bush also notified Mackenzie of American support for Canadian participation and explained his reasons:

I was particularly happy to learn, therefore, that the Canadian organization has now become definite, for I feel that this will be of distinct aid in proceeding with the discussion of the broader phases of the (international) relationships.<sup>73</sup>

At the time this was written there was a growing concern with the prospective post-war dangers, as was reflected in the meetings the President had with the Secretary of War. After one such meeting in October, Stimson noted in his diary, "He and I discussed some of the enormous possibilities and the ways of meeting the ticklish situation after the war with a view to prevent it (the bomb) being used to conquer the world."<sup>74</sup>

In that context American support of Canada's involvement continued despite the growing Anglo-American dispute. When Mackenzie requested the entire first year's product of the American sponsored heavy water plant at Trail, Bush managed to persuade a rather shocked policy committee that such a course was sensible. The measure of Bush's desire for Canadian participation can be found in the fact that he did not raise the question of financial compensation or the \$2.8 million American investment for that first year's production.<sup>75</sup> When it came time for Bush to bluntly tell Sir John Anderson what he had been suggesting since April that the US was going ahead on its own and would not share knowledge with Britain in areas she was not working, Conant made a point of calling Mackenzie first to warn him of the impending announcements. Indeed, this was one of the few instances in the war when Canada was the first to be informed of a momentous crisis in Anglo-American relations.<sup>76</sup>

Bush, in fact, seems to have done everything possible to leave a mediating role to Canada. Though he often threatened the British with refusing to help their atomic effort in

Montreal if they did not accept American terms, he seems not to have made such a threat to the Canadians. Since Montreal was to be a joint British-Canadian project this left Mackenzie with the task of arranging a compromise. It surely was with that thought in mind that Bush assured Mackenzie after the Anglo-American clash that every effort would be made to get the materials needed for Montreal.<sup>77</sup> When Sir John Anderson countermanded Mackenzie's permission for continued interchange with the Americans by scientists visiting the US from Montreal, Conant sought to protect Canadian-American good will. Conant wrote General Groves that the record ought to show clearly that the objections came "from London" not Ottawa.<sup>78</sup> Behind the nuances of American policy there undoubtedly was the expectation that diplomatic support would be forthcoming from Canada. Thus in April, Bush reported to Hopkins:

Dean Mackenzie is on his way to England to discuss this matter (the Anglo-American dispute). I rather think that he agrees entirely that our decision is reasonable and I believe that he will urge the British to withdraw their objections.<sup>79</sup>

The Americans associated with the Manhattan project seemed never to have lost this conviction. Towards the end of the war, Stimson remarked to the President that he felt "in event of any serious difficulty the Canadians will side with the U.S."<sup>80</sup>

Britain's desire for Canadian involvement also began earlier than has been supposed. It grew out of the immense war strain Britain was experiencing. In that context the large atomic program seemed too much to support and much thought was given to getting the least important parts out of the country. Among the latter was felt to be the partly French, heavy water team of Professor Hans Halban. Security reasons also played their part, but more important was the conviction that his most useful work had already been completed as far as the bomb was concerned. In the future his team would most probably act only as a drain on scarce resources. At first it was suggested that Halban should go to the United States, but there was some concern that this might overload the Americans if circumstances made it necessary to ask them to build the British diffusion isotope separation plant. Consideration was then given to getting both Canada and the United States to service the British project. It would be impossible to describe here all the twists and turns the question took. But in general, when the past political unreliability of the Americans was recalled, it was considered undesirable to share the bomb with them while Canada became much more attractive as a place where materials could be had. Canada could also serve as a base from which American resources could be tapped. Thus in August 1941 the scientific advisory panel spoke of the possibility of plants being built in Canada with "the necessary components being manufactured in the United States."<sup>81</sup>

Then when there were the first hints that the Americans were about to launch a major atomic program of their own, which might consume vast amounts of resources, Britain's interest in Canada and Canadian uranium grew. In June 1942 approaches were made to Mackenzie King, C.D. Howe and C.J. Mackenzie. The latter's diary notes: "Mr. Howe has agreed to control raw materials and some mutual arrangements will be made for the project as between the three countries."<sup>82</sup>

As British leaders became aware of the magnitude of the American project and lost all hope of retaining an atomic monopoly, interest in Canada grew, as a means of redressing the balance. Like the Americans, policy makers in London were also increasingly worried about the post-war control prospects. From either perspective it seemed desirable to bring Canada to the table. Thus, in October 1942, when Howe visited London to arrange for the transfer of Halban's

team to Canada he was also presented proposals for tri-national ownership of Eldorado and similar patent control. Howe was not particularly enthusiastic. He seems to have doubted that the Americans would share patent rights equally with Britain and Canada when the financial burden fell largely on the US. For his part he did not particularly like the idea of other nations sharing in the ownership of Eldorado. Thus Howe, a rather rugged nationalist, threw cold water on both ideas. Then and thereafter Howe seems to have been interested primarily in defending Canadian sovereignty and in getting the best price for Canadian resources, much to the disappointment of those making diplomatic policy.<sup>83</sup>

Still another major reason for Britain's interest was some appreciation of the closeness of the Canadian-American relationship, and the possibility that Americans would be more receptive in some cases if things were said by Canadians. Perhaps the classic example was the British High Commissioner's attempt to have Mackenzie protest the American policy of restricted interchange. A very tough letter to Bush had been drafted by Akers, a key British administrative officer, which he asked Mackenzie to sign. What was most revealing about the episode was that the draft merely repeated "arguments Akers had already presented... time and time again," as Mackenzie noted, "Certain that the draft would be recognized as Akers', Mackenzie refused to sign."<sup>84</sup> The desire to prod Canada into defence of British interests and the belief that this could be done successfully must also have been behind Churchill's celebrated taunt that C.D. Howe had "sold the British Empire down the river."<sup>85</sup>

The High Commissioner was successful, however, in getting Mackenzie to visit Washington and act as mediator, bridge, lynch pin or whatever such unhappy souls are called. Mackenzie did this despite his personal doubts about the wisdom of British efforts to be in on all aspects of the American project, even where Britain could make no significant contributions. Moreover, he was inclined to believe the British were exaggerating their possible contributions. But he would try to help and left it that if he found the circumstances opportune he would call the High Commissioner to join him in Washington where they might also coordinate with the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, for a concerted approach to the American policy makers. Howe himself volunteered to visit Hopkins and the army people if Mackenzie found the situation at all favourable.<sup>86</sup>

Looking back over Mackenzie's trip one might be inclined to doubt the ardour with which he upheld the British case. But Mackenzie did not always buckle before American policy. He had not hesitated, for instance to ask and then insist that the first year's product from Trail go entirely to Montreal. He had upheld the British ban on information going from Montreal to the Americans despite his disagreement.<sup>87</sup> But now in Washington he just could not see the merit in the British case. When Bush told Mackenzie that "if any time I thought there was anything really unfair, they would go as far as they could to rectify it," the Canadian hesitated to expend his good will in backing the British case. He returned to Ottawa without calling down either Howe or the High Commissioner.

In Ottawa, Howe and Mackenzie agreed that the support given to Britain would have to be in a low key. They noted that the Montreal project was a "relatively small one cast against the entire U.S. Canadian contacts" and did "not warrant deep involvement in any unpleasant controversy."<sup>88</sup> This position came, no doubt, rather easily to Howe who seems not to have been terribly interested in either lynch pins or bridges.

Nevertheless, Mackenzie continued to try to help the British. In March 1943 he

politely warned Conant that the whole Anglo-American dispute was getting rather tiresome from a Canadian perspective. As he expressed it,

I have been hoping every day that the United Kingdom-United States conversations would clarify so that we could get on with the work, and I still have hopes that the situation which is very unsatisfactory to me will be remedied.<sup>89</sup>

More importantly, whenever he saw Canadian and British interests coincide Mackenzie spared no effort. Thus when the British felt they were being coerced into accepting American terms by the American "strangle hold" on materials Mackenzie made a determined and generally successful effort to release materials, including making another trip to the US where he took a much tougher stance towards the Americans. The briefing paper prepared for Mackenzie's trip suggested that he stress the relative insignificance of the supplies requested as compared with what the Americans were using. The memorandum is interesting also because it indicates that some of the "talking points" were not being committed to paper because they "are so clear to you."<sup>90</sup>

The meeting between Mackenzie and Groves took place on July 6. C.P. Stacey has noted that Mackenzie "assured Groves ...that there was no intention of interfering with the contracts (for heavy water and uranium)."<sup>91</sup> But it would appear that Mackenzie had resolved to indicate to the American General the possibility of agonizing reappraisals in Ottawa. Mackenzie's diary entry suggests the delicacy of the approach:

I told him (Groves that) I realized the firm legal contract with Eldorado but that he also must realize such contracts with private firms in Canada could be easily broken, although he also knew that we would never dream of interfering with such a contract.<sup>92</sup>

However amicable the discussion was, General Groves could not have missed the point. When the reassurances brought back by Mackenzie proved insufficient to calm the High Commissioner, Howe took the next step towards the threatened action. He dispatched a letter on July 28 announcing that the Canadian government was assuming all responsibility for the allocation and distribution of uranium, irrespective of the contracts. "This will advise you," Howe wrote the President of Eldorado, "that the Government of Canada is taking delivery of all uranium ore produced in this country.... From this date your company is instructed to make deliveries solely on order from Dean C.J. Mackenzie."<sup>93</sup> A different but similar initiative was taken by Howe that same day. Having recently learned from General Groves that the US army had engaged firms to survey world uranium supplies, including Canadian, Howe wrote the Minister of Mines to insure that the area in the vicinity of Eldorado was withdrawn from prospecting and exploration and that no further leases were granted.<sup>94</sup> These Canadian initiatives occurred just as the British and Americans were entering the decisive stage of their negotiations and could not help but impress on Bush and Groves the need to compromise.

If Mackenzie and Howe thus gave some substantial support to the British position they also made no less of an effort for the Americans. In April 1943 Conant invited Canadian mediation by suggesting that if Canada took a more active part a satisfactory agreement could be worked out.<sup>95</sup> Mackenzie, it seems, gave the Americans assurance that he would do his best in England where he would see Sir John Anderson. It was at this time that Bush wrote Hopkins that very optimistic letter already quoted.<sup>96</sup> In fact, Howe and Mackenzie had agreed on May 1 that Anderson should be told that in the absence of an agreement with the Americans "we



would not be prepared to carry on with the (Montreal) project here."<sup>97</sup>

Not surprisingly, Mackenzie's session with the Lord President on May 11 was stormy indeed. Anderson, very much the imperturbable British public servant appeared not to be impressed. Mackenzie noted that "He would not believe me when I assured him the U.S. were going very fast and we were in danger of being left out in the cold." Anderson had known as much for months.<sup>98</sup> In the course of the discussions Mackenzie delivered his warning that Howe would "certainly not support a team to compete with the U.S. in this area."<sup>99</sup> The cost to Canada of this mediation was significant for the meeting left much ill feeling in London. But British files show that it undoubtedly had the desired effect. Before Mackenzie arrived, Anderson had optimistically minuted to the Prime Minister that the meeting should "give us an excellent opportunity of clearing up the Canadian end of the business."<sup>100</sup> After Mackenzie's talk Anderson realized that there were certain dimensions which could not be ignored. In a memorandum to Churchill, which reflected the consequences of the Hyde Park Declaration, Anderson noted: In view of the dependence of Canadian war production on American materials etc, - it would clearly be impossible for the Canadians to go back on these (uranium) arrangements.<sup>101</sup> Anderson now recognized that a greater effort to meet the American terms had to be made. When, two months later, Howe and Mackenzie made threatening gestures towards the American contracts, the British were reassured that the Canadians had gone as far as they could and then some. Ten days later, as the Anglo-American accord was being hammered out, Sir John Anderson announced that Canada should be included in the Combined Policy Committee which would have broad powers over the whole atomic field into the post-war era. C.D. Howe, whom Churchill had apparently accused of "selling the British Empire down the river" less than two months earlier, was Churchill's choice to represent Canada.<sup>102</sup>

Howe's nomination indicated that bridges had been built after all. The Americans, who had from late 1941 consistently urged a greater degree of Canadian involvement, were thoroughly pleased. Though Canada was not a signatory member of the Combined Policy Committee, in practice it was fully equal. The north Atlantic triangle had reached its loftiest embodiment of the whole war in the opinion of many. This diplomatic achievement was all the more striking if one recalls the rejection of Canadian efforts to participate in summits held on her territory or the rebuff experienced in seeking membership on the Combined Chiefs of Staff. If one bears in mind that, contrary to common belief Canada had only limited uranium assets, certainly nothing like a monopoly of uranium materials, the result seems all the more notable.

Not the least remarkable aspect of this story was the fact that Canada's "diplomacy" was conducted by non-diplomats, principally by Dean Mackenzie. But it is very difficult for this observer to fault his performance. He worked hard and persistently to instill in his American and British counterparts a sense of fairness and the urgency of getting down to work. Since scientist administrators like Vannevar Bush were also influencing much of American policy, Mackenzie was particularly effective. Indeed, at the height of the Anglo-American controversy, Conant wrote Bush to say that in his opinion,

...this whole controversy might never had (sic) arose if negotiations had been in the hands of the British scientists comparable to yourself and if those British scientists had had the same voice in determining policy in Great Britain as you have had here in the United States.<sup>103</sup>

It would be misleading to suggest that Canadian mediation had alone succeeded in

bringing her two partners together. The sobering effect of the war, the toning down of British imperial attitudes, the growing realism which Professor Gowing has described were all essential to the process. So also was the Anglo-American agreement on Normandy. But Canada's skillful diplomacy under impossible conditions had contributed to the result. When one considers how suspicion laden was the atmosphere, which affected even Mackenzie and Howe, the result was little less than remarkable. Evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of playing for high stakes would come later.

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE RCN AND RCAF IN THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

W.A.B. Douglas

That Canada played such a large part in the Battle of the Atlantic has always been a source of national pride. After all, the nation had only a handful of ships and aircraft and no air or shipping industry to speak of in 1939, and it was an amazing achievement to win responsibility for a major operational theatre - as Canada did for the Canadian northwest Atlantic in May 1943 - after less than three and a half years of experience and expansion.<sup>1</sup> Controlling sea lanes in war demands a plentiful supply of ships and aircraft, working from good strategic bases, manned by sailors and airmen with at least the professional ability to match that of their opponents; and their command must exploit better than that of the enemy the interdependence of land, sea and air forces. Nature provided the nation with some of the raw material necessary for this combination of resources and talents, and the old imperial connection certainly gave Canadian armed forces something to build on, but that does not explain how Canada came to be accepted as a "full partner" in the naval war. The official naval histories only partially explain the phenomenon; by the nature of their commissions the authors wrote only about the Canadian navy, which leaves out not only the important role of the air force but also the vital question of interservice co-operation. There are in addition, serious criticisms of Canadian forces in the Battle of the Atlantic, both in books and in unpublished documents, that need to be examined with care.

"... A fox in a flock of hens" was the way Sir John Slessor described U-Boat depredations in the western north Atlantic in 1942. "It would have been better", wrote Commander Donald MacIntyre, "if the Canadians had pocketed their pride and sailed their ships with experienced escort groups until they were themselves battleworthy." Several British experts in the field of anti-submarine warfare, visiting Canada between August 1942 and June 1943, said that American aerial forces were inadequately trained, poorly equipped and badly coordinated; some said the Canadians were worse. From the enemy came an echo. The Directorate of Sea Warfare at U-Boat Headquarters in September 1942 reported that "The boats which have been operating (in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Straits of Belle Isle) have proven fully successful. Defence was comparatively weak and restricted itself to convoy protection...." This evidence, and more like it, suggests that the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Air Force, until at least June 1943, were weak links in the chain of North Atlantic anti-submarine forces. After that they more than passed muster. Sometimes, as in the case of 162 Squadron at Iceland in 1944, they excelled; and the escort of transatlantic convoys tended to become a Canadian preserve. It is tempting therefore to draw the conclusion that Canadian forces were much more effective than the critics say they were, and that once they were given the chance the RCN and RCAF proved they had come of age.<sup>2</sup>

In the last two years of the European war, however, the U-Boats were technically inadequate to fight any longer on equal terms. Rather than an all-out offensive on the shipping routes, they were conducting a holding action to divert allied resources from other theatres until new types of submarine could be deployed. Furthermore, we now know that convoy routing benefited from reading the enemy signal traffic in this period, and that in the last two years of the war the German Intelligence Service lost the ability to read allied traffic. Therefore we must

look more closely at the earlier period, from 1941 to 1943, in order to assess properly the phenomenon of a small nation making an apparently disproportionate contribution, almost indeed playing the part of a major naval power, in the war against the U-Boat.

In August, 1940, the Chiefs of Staff Committee for the Defence of Canada decreed that in coastal areas the navy, army and air force would be directed by a joint system of command which would operate from a combined headquarters. This system had its origins in the concept for home defence first aired in 1936, when the Joint Staff Committee assumed both coasts would be vulnerable to sea and air attack. The same set of assumptions came to govern plans for the buildup of forces in Canada, detracting from the primary aim of the navy and the air force on the east coast of Canada and in Newfoundland when, after the spring of 1941, the U-Boat offensive extended into the western Atlantic.<sup>3</sup>

There was of course no serious direct military threat to Canada or the United States in 1936 or in 1941, except for that invented and perpetuated as an argument to persuade the Canadian Cabinet to increase the size of the military establishment. Military planning in Canada, indeed, proceeded under certain constraints resulting from the attitude of the Prime Minister to the Chiefs of Staff - "he held these officers", says the official historian of defence policy, "in something very like contempt" - and in his continual search for ways of resisting what he called foreign adventures. The Chiefs of Staff, supported by their Ministers, managed to present a united front to the Cabinet War Committee, but they had to contend with inter-service conflicts at a lower level. Committed to "Canadianization" of armed forces overseas, especially in the air force, and determined that Canada should in this war, as in the last, gain notable battle honours, they had also to concern themselves with the Home War Establishment. This brought them into conflict with senior British and American commanders; and from time to time, when they were able to devote direct attention to forces in the field, they even clashed with their own subordinates. The view from Ottawa, it has to be said, was often clouded.<sup>4</sup>

Using the threat of enemy attack as a reason for more allocations of war material to Canada exposed the Canadian Chiefs of Staff to some ridicule in Whitehall. The air force and navy, realizing the inadequacy of their forces to deal with a growing submarine threat, began early in 1941 to request up-to-date aircraft and destroyers for escort and patrol duties in the western Atlantic. The case for reinforcements was strong, but the submission made through Cabinet emphasized the need for defence against tip and run raids, and this allowed the British Chiefs of Staff to observe in their reply: "We note that Canadian Chiefs of Staff. make no reference to strengthening anti-submarine protection of shipping near Canadian coast". The truth of the matter was that Britain could not have given much help anyway. Not yet being able to determine from enemy decrypts the destination of submarines, Churchill supported the Admiralty's response with the sound argument that "if we were to divert any substantial part of our forces from their present area of operations to cover wider areas where there is admittedly some risk of enemy action, we would only imperil the whole and play into his hands". This was cold comfort indeed, and it exposed the real flaw in Canadian defence planning.<sup>5</sup>

Emphasis on the Home War Establishment was meant to achieve the objective of providing Canada adequate home defence within the framework of a traditional Anglo-Canadian alliance, as the Chiefs of Staff showed in their appreciation of February 24, 1941. Whatever might have been the intentions in ABC-22, the hemispheric defence plan, Canadian planners counted on their own ships and aircraft to defend shipping lanes and bases in Canada and, what was perhaps even more important, looking after Newfoundland, "a highly important

outpost ... in many ways our first line of defence". Yet at this very moment Anglo-American staff talks, the so-called ABC-1 talks, were going on in Washington with no official Canadian representation. The word in Ottawa was that there was an Anglo-American plan afoot to exclude Canada from Newfoundland, and the Admiralty response to requests for reinforcements did nothing to allay those suspicions.<sup>6</sup>

Why was the Admiralty not taking into consideration the great Canadian contributions already made to the defence of shipping? Millions had been spent on anti-submarine vessels, on Fairmile launches for coastal patrols, for aircraft (still in the early stages of production but with great potential for future assistance), for extensive direction-finding facilities, and numerous additional air bases on Canadian territory. Supposing the ABC-1 talks succeeded and resulted in American involvement in the defence of convoys, what was being done to facilitate effective Canadian operations in the same region when they became necessary? What was being done, for instance, about the exchange of codes and cyphers with United States forces, with whom the Canadians would have to co-operate? The answer was, as Ottawa feared, precious little. The answer was, in fact, that both Britain and the United States believed, as President Roosevelt put it, that "Canada is really devoting its war effort to sending as much in the way of men and materials across the ocean as possible". In other words the western Atlantic was, in British and American eyes, an American sphere of influence. That Canadian and American aircraft involved in the Bismark operation in May could not talk to each other exercised the Canadians much more than it did anyone else; by far the greatest concern both in Washington and London was the problem of recognition and communications between United States and British forces in mid-ocean. Throughout April the movement of American military personnel to Newfoundland received very careful attention from Eastern Air Command and the Canadian attaches in Washington. And it was in April that the Permanent Joint Board on Defence began its heated discussion about the whole question of strategic control of forces in Canadian territory.<sup>7</sup>

On May 20, 1941, in response to new developments in the U-Boat offensive, the Admiralty decided to base an ocean escort force at St. John's, Newfoundland. There was some anxiety at Naval Service Headquarters that it might be placed under British command, an anxiety fed by experience with the 3rd Battle Squadron at Halifax in 1939, when there had been unpleasant difficulties about the extent of their authority between the British senior officer afloat, Rear Admiral L.E. Holland and the Canadian senior officer ashore, Captain H.E. Reid. Ottawa hastened to inform the Admiralty that Canada would be glad to take over the responsibility in Newfoundland, and the Chief of Naval Staff urged Commodore L.W. Murray, commanding Canadian ships and establishments in England, to make personal representations to the First Sea Lord. It was of course an offer the Admiralty could hardly refuse since Britain had no destroyers to spare, and the less British presence there was in the Atlantic the more likelihood there was of drawing in the United States. It was indeed with some disappointment that British officers in Washington and London learned a few months later that the Canadians not only needed but had always assumed they would be able to call on destroyers from the Royal Navy to bolster their own forces.<sup>8</sup>

In any case the Newfoundland Escort Force, at least in British and American eyes, was only a stopgap measure. The United States special observer in London, representing the Chief of Naval Operations, in conversation during July 1941 with the British naval staff and Vice-Admiral Percy Nelles, Canadian Chief of Naval Staff, stated the American position clearly.

The Chief of Naval Operations would propose that the British withdraw United Kingdom naval forces from Western Atlantic with the exception of about ten merchant cruisers plus the necessary administrative craft, and that Canada would protect shipping in her coastal zone and also provide twenty or more vessels to augment U.S. ocean escort.<sup>9</sup>

Since this reflected accurately the proposals of Canadian members of the Permanent Joint Board on Defence with regard to ABC-22, the assumptions were natural ones. Circumstances had changed, however, since November 1940, when the Canadian plan had been drafted. Now there was a full-scale "Battle of the Atlantic" to fight and an opportunity for Canada to make an important operational contribution to the war that would not demand sending large numbers of men overseas. The Battle of the Atlantic, wrote Air Commodore N.R. Anderson, sent over to Coastal Command to acquire expertise in anti-submarine requirements, was a more intimate and immediate responsibility for Canada than the Battle of Britain because the western end of the battle zone rested on Canadian shores. Commodore Murray wrote proudly of "the active participation in the war that has been given to our charge in the Battle of the Atlantic."<sup>10</sup>

Directly related to pride in the responsibility was reluctance to accept outside control. When in May 1941 Rear Admiral V.H. Danckwerts of the British Mission in Washington tried to tell Nelles and Air Marshal Lloyd Breadner, Chief of the Air Staff, that the United States expected to have its way in naval matters in the western Atlantic:" ... he was in turn informed by them, in no uncertain terms, that they were entitled to their say in matters, and proper representation in conferences with British authorities prior to final decision being made." The thought of subordination to Americans who had no experience in the shooting war rankled, especially when it appeared at Argentia in August that Churchill was discarding the Canadians like an old glove. And although sailors and airmen did not by any means bury their differences, they united in their indignation.<sup>11</sup>

It was the Anglo-American decision that the RCAF was no longer to escort any ocean convoys. When the news reached Eastern Air Command in September Air Vice Marshal N.R. Anderson, the Air Officer Commanding, responded angrily:

Since Sept 1939 this command has been providing anti-submarine patrols and sweeps in protection ocean convoys often 600 to 800 miles to sea. Many of our personnel have lost their lives in devotion to this the most honourable duty they could perform while serving in Canada....<sup>12</sup>

From Newfoundland two days later, however, Air Commodore Vernon Heakes, Chief of Staff to the Air Officer Commanding, Eastern Air Command, suggested: "all factors present situation not yet known and ultimate situation will evolve from trial and error. If situation handled spirit mutual co-operation and ready assistance RCAF can continue function East Coast in major role as heretofore." This good advice was followed. When the difficulty had been ironed out Admiral H.R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, wrote to the Canadian Chief of Air Staff inviting him "to place such air forces as are assigned to perform ocean escort duty under the command, for this purpose only, of the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, this action to be taken under the authority and subject to the limitations contained in ABC-22..."<sup>13</sup>

The Canadian Cabinet War Committee felt that since the navy was obliged to accept American command for oceanic convoy work the RCAF ought to do so as well. The only

objection that would be considered was one on operational grounds. The Deputy Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal G.O. Johnson, therefore argued that since the RCAF now operated very successfully in co-operation with, rather than under the control of, the RN and RCN there was no need to adopt different relationships with the USN. To this Anderson added the argument that "naval strategic direction must conform with realities of air situation." These were, first that the United States was "still at juvenile stage organisation air power" and secondly that so far "British unified power" had been the best defence against domination of the empire by the enemy. Other airmen added their voices to the chorus. But what Air Vice-Marshal Breadner seized upon was Johnson's point about co-operation, and upon a parallel that Anderson had drawn with the relationship between Coastal Command and the Royal Navy,' in his answer to Admiral Stark. On October 27, when he received a reply from Stark acquiescing in the Canadian proposals, Breadner forwarded it to the Minister of National Defence for Air Services, Mr. C.G. Power, with the notation, "We have held them off, so far!"<sup>14</sup>

Senior Canadian officers, however, had also been thrown out of the British nest, and they evidently felt rather vulnerable. Commodore Murray, faced with a new and unfamiliar relationship -- one that he came to handle very well -bitterly expressed the belief that if the Canadians had not been firm the Lords of Admiralty would have been prepared to "sell us down the river" to the Americans in order to retrieve Londonderry for themselves...."<sup>15</sup> Officers like Nelles, Breadner, Murray and Anderson relied on the Anglo-Canadian alliance. It was not enough that they found the new reality uncomfortable, an irritant, embodying vague threats, the change was taking place just as the war came within flying boat range of Canadian shores and subjected them to the ultimate test.

It so happened that the training, equipment and co-ordination of Canadian sea and air forces raised problems that, if they were not totally insoluble in 1941, were certainly overwhelming. Once again, emphasis on the Home War Establishment put the Canadians at a disadvantage. British and American naval and air staffs expected the Canadians to play an auxiliary role. Insistence on more responsibility in what the British called an inactive theatre was seen as a political rather than a military requirement, and response to Canadian pleas for assistance came reluctantly. Adding to the problem was a sometimes misguided nationalism that led Canadians to spurn certain forms of help. They could ill afford to be proud about such things. Standards of workmanship and technical training were, to say the least, uneven. This was only to be expected when the astounding expansion of naval and air forces placed such a heavy burden on industrial and military organizations built up from nothing in two or three years.

For example in the navy, which had a much less obvious distinction than the air force between home defence forces and overseas forces, corvettes went to sea without adequate training of ships' companies because the Admiralty needed the physical presence of escorts in the relatively quiet waters of the Atlantic seaboard. As soon as key personnel had some experience of convoy work in the Newfoundland Escort Force, the manning depot transferred them to newly commissioned ships in local escort forces not involved with ocean convoy. This resulted in a general lowering of standards as well as morale when the shortage of escorts at Newfoundland gave men almost no time in harbour, imposed unbearable strains on many commanding officers and led to disastrous losses like those endured by convoy SC 42 in September 1941. Qualified technicians were in short supply. This weakness was particularly noticeable in a fleet of vessels hastily constructed in shipyards with no previous experience in this kind of work and plagued by inferior equipment. Canadian-designed radar sets proved

relatively ineffective in operations, and many important new developments in anti-submarine weapons did not find their way to Canadian ships until an equipment crisis in early 1943 shook up Naval Service Headquarters. It was not until November 1942 that the Naval Board permitted major alterations and additions to Canadian ships in British dockyards, on the assurance "that this provision would not discourage Canadian inventive genius, but would take advantage of the vast experience of the Admiralty". The Canadian escort groups were desperately short of destroyers, which were essential to success in convoy defence, but the Admiralty could spare few out of its own resources. This problem might have been reduced had Canada been able to construct its own destroyers. However, the Canadians had rejected out of hand a British suggestion in 1940 that, they go to the United States for technical advice and assistance for this purpose.<sup>16</sup>

There was a direct conflict in the air force between the Home War Establishment and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. The cream of the air force crop went to the BCATP or overseas, yet the RCAF embarked upon expansion at home, determined to create a strong force of forty-nine squadrons. This meant that when a real threat materialized Eastern Air Command was unprepared. Deprived of a good selection of new BCATP graduates, robbed of trained personnel who were sent back to training squadrons or overseas, the Command was always short of trained crews. It was a shortage aggravated by the lack of an operational training unit until 1943 and the failure, in spite of many attempts, to arrange an exchange between crews of Coastal Command and of Canadian squadrons in the western Atlantic. With these personnel problems to contend with, the procurement of aircraft and equipment, the single most frustrating difficulty experienced by all allied anti-submarine air forces, created special headaches for the Canadians.<sup>17</sup>

The RCAF found itself deprived of long range patrol aircraft to a much greater degree than the American or British air forces, and acquiring Very Long Range Liberators turned out to be exercise in humiliation over the winter of 1942-3. Both the British target programme for the Dominions, and the Arnold-Portal-Towers Agreement of June 21, 1942 that superseded it, allowed for "minimum defensive essentials in inactive theatres" and were designed among other things to prevent "the diversion of output from Canada to build up forces not vitally essential to the outcome of the war." By late 1942, however, the RAF delegation in Washington was willing to help Canada become independent on the assumption that Canadians were more anxious to co-operate with Britain as part of the empire than with the United States. It was hoped that Canada would then help the RAF "in this very complicated process of assessing requirements and allocating resources." Even this was of little use because the Canadian Cabinet would not allow a Canadian in uniform to serve on the Combined Munitions Assignment Board, the Minister of Munitions and Supply being loath to turn over procurement to military officers. Canada was therefore completely at the mercy of her more powerful allies for the supply of aircraft, spare parts and new fittings. The result was that Eastern Air Command did not get the best aircraft available, nor the best equipment; and because there was no direct contact between Coastal Command and Eastern air Command crews the Canadians did not know how far behind they really were.<sup>18</sup>

By early 1942 it must be said that they were beginning to suspect. They were left in no doubt at all after several visitors from Coastal Command later in the year had subjected the entire naval and air organization on the east coast of Canada to an embarrassingly frank appraisal. Not only were all forces in the region found wanting - the official historians of the American naval and air forces have left us in no doubt concerning their own shortcomings in

the anti-submarine war - but the evidence suggests that Canadian-US relationships were much less easy than those on the spot have sometimes tried to make out. The organization was absurdly top-heavy, with eight different command authorities (two American and six Canadian), trying to operate amid the primitive communications, abominable weather and physical isolation of Newfoundland. The joint system of command by three separate services was simply unsuitable for anti-submarine operations. Eventually the combined operations room required by a Chief of Staff Committee's decision of 1939 was quietly forgotten, allowing the navy and the air force to reach a modus vivendi at Halifax and St. John's that was not entirely satisfactory but better than nothing. The submarine reporting system set up for the Gulf of St. Lawrence, after that region had been closed to oceanic shipping in 1942, was never really put to the test. Depending as it did upon distinct army, navy and air force communications, this was probably just as well.<sup>19</sup>

The very nadir of Canadian fortunes came in the winter of 1942-43. Consistently heavy losses to convoys escorted by Canadian ships could be ascribed partly to training and equipment deficiencies and partly to the limited range of aircraft from Newfoundland, because the absence of air cover was particularly dangerous for the "inexperienced" Canadian escort groups. Since at this period a critical shortage of oil in the United Kingdom threatened to alter the whole timetable of the war, the Admiralty decided to readjust the convoy cycles. At the same time they would withdraw the Canadian and American escort groups from the western Atlantic, place them on the Gibraltar run where they would have air cover, be reinforced by the seventeen Canadian corvettes loaned for the TORCH landings, and be available between convoys for special training to bring them up to British standards. In the event, after Percy Nelles had registered a mild protest that reflected more a sense of hurt and betrayal than disagreement with the decision, three of the Canadian groups were absent from the north Atlantic run between February and April 1943.<sup>20</sup>

This did not solve the problem of air cover in the western Atlantic. Everyone accepted the need for VLR Liberators in Newfoundland; the Canadians argued long and loud that they should be flying them, rather than bringing in British and American Squadrons without experience of the special conditions of the region. It is true that the Canadians were making do in spite of inadequate aircraft, equipment and training, in spite of the icebergs, extreme temperature and pressure changes, strong prevailing westerly winds and the ubiquitous fog, all of which made anti-submarine operations by Catalinas and Cansos, Lockheed Hudsons and Douglas Digbys in the northwest Atlantic more than somewhat hazardous. Eventually, in spite of caustic remarks from several observers about shortcomings among controllers and squadrons, the word came back from two Coastal Command airmen sent out to report on the situation that "the boys are O.K., very keen and experienced. No one can understand why a squadron of Liberators has not been formed on this coast ...." Soon after this, in March 1943, the British Anti-U-Boat Warfare Committee, under a growing barrage of pleas from Ottawa to the British Chief of Air Staff, Sir Charles Portal, agreed to divert to the RCAF fifteen VLR Liberators from RAF allocations.<sup>21</sup>

A new factor had also to be taken into account. Radio intelligence formed an integral part of anti-submarine warfare, and was indispensable for controlling convoy operations. Geography enabled Canada and Newfoundland to provide important high-frequency intercept and direction-finding stations. With extensive help from the Royal Navy, the RCN formed a so-called 'Foreign Intelligence Section' in Ottawa. In 1941 a fully-fledged Operations Intelligence Centre took shape and was promulgating daily submarine estimates by May 1942. By

September it was manning a Submarine Tracking Room on a twenty-four hour basis. Like OP-20-G, its opposite number in Washington, the Canadian OIC enjoyed complete exchanges of information with OIC in the Admiralty.<sup>22</sup>

Because of the 'blackout' on the German naval enigma code TRITON between February and November 1942, the importance of direction-finding and estimated positions increased, just as the Canadian and American tracking rooms got into full swing. Coincidentally, they began interfering with each other, imposing too heavy a load on the overburdened wireless rooms in small ships. By agreement with London, Ottawa restricted U-Boat tracking to an area north and west of 40 N. and 40 W., but Washington wanted control of the entire western Atlantic. This led to an acrimonious correspondence between Ottawa and Washington, with the British admiralty Delegation supporting the Americans. It was only resolved after Fleet Admiral King and Vice-Admiral Nelles exchanged a series of personal letters, Nelles pressing a separate Canadian command, leading up to the Atlantic Convoy Conference of March 1943.<sup>23</sup>

Fleet Admiral King was the key figure in subsequent developments. Apparently impressed with Ottawa's results in submarine tracking, he was still not convinced of the RCN's ability to handle convoy operations without American help, even after the Atlantic Convoy Conference in March at which he agreed to give Canada responsibility for its own operational theatre. Yet there is evidence that he had come to believe as early as February 1943 that a single Canadian Atlantic command would be desirable.

The facts that the Casablanca Conference had given priority to antisubmarine warfare and that King disliked escort groups of mixed nationality have been suggested by Captain Roskill as reasons for the decision to give Canada her own command, a decision that he says came as a total surprise to British delegates in Washington. We know that Canadian naval officers had encouraged King to relinquish his desire for complete control of the western Atlantic. It has also been suggested that disastrous losses to the tanker convoy TM-I in January 1943, followed by British efforts at Casablanca to "try and winkle some U.S. destroyers" to escort fast tanker convoys on the southern routes, may have planted the seeds of the idea to turn over the northern routes to the British and Canadians. The US Navy could then devote its full attention to more southerly routes. There is on the other hand little evidence to suggest that either the British or the Americans believed the Canadians were now fully qualified to run their own show. In view of the need to embark upon decisive operations in Europe according to the timetable set up at Casablanca and the shortage of escort ships and aircraft that still plagued the allies, there simply was no better alternative. Indeed, giving the Canadians command of the northwest Atlantic in April 1943 was in the nature of a desperate measure.<sup>24</sup>

The temptation to relegate smaller powers to auxiliary roles in warfare is always strong, the more so when survival is at stake, because smaller allies usually need assistance before they can play major roles. Many Canadian shortcomings stemmed from the inability of Britain to provide the kind of military assistance that in less critical times, before and since, has tended to keep the alliance 'sweet'. Britain's desperate need to involve the United States from the early days of the war militated against such measures. But Canada itself, besides the great industrial efforts without which the nation would not have won the right or had the ability to support large naval and air forces, and besides the endurance and the potential ability of the servicemen actually fighting the battles, provided the political and military initiative to preserve the close relations the RCN had previously enjoyed with the RN, and to strengthen the ties



between the RCAF and RAF. By also vigorously asserting their independence - some might say showing their national colours - the Canadians made it easier for the Americans to withdraw from Newfoundland and the northwest Atlantic.

In the final analysis it must be said that Canada's status as a 'full partner' owed less to its navy and air force than to the desperate need early in 1943 to solve the problem of the convoys. It was not necessary to be a major naval power to solve that problem so long as secure bases, good intelligence and sea and air forces adequate to the task at hand were available. They were available, and Canada therefore staked a firm claim to a new role in modern warfare and a new sphere of military responsibility.

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### FRENCH NATIONALISM AT HOME AND ABROAD: AN INTERPRETIVE ESSAY

André Martel

France's military defeat in June 1940 did not merely strike at a European state but rather at a world empire at whose heart lay a long-independent and unified mother country which dominated the colonies she had conquered barely a century before. Despite appearances, it was impossible for the nature of the reactions to this shock and its immediate consequences - the limits placed on France's sovereignty and the change of regime - to be the same in France and overseas. Do they, in fact fall into two neat categories, with a national awakening that tended to contest the German victory on the one side, and a series of demands for independence on the other? In reality, there were a variety of forces which the defeat brought to light and released both in France and in her possessions, and these forces had been there before the war began.

To understand the situation during the war, its mechanisms have to be clarified beforehand, especially so that their interaction, as a function of French power, can be identified. France built a colonial empire at the beginning of the twentieth century because she was already a power at that time, and was able to remain as such from 1914 to 1918 because she still had a world empire. These facts make it easier to understand the reaction of French nationalism to indigenous nationalism at the end of the Second World War.

#### 1- **Setting the Stage, 1919-1939**

France was forged as a sovereign nation in the face of external threats. Successive regimes always used success in war to strengthen their own legitimacy and guarantee France's sovereignty and integrity. The Third Republic was born out of the ashes of the Second Empire. Its mission was clear if never formally stated: to protect France against Germany and to bring her to her feet again after her crushing defeat. The mission was, as it were, hallowed by the conquest of the colonies, but it was not confirmed until the victory of 1918. Could France continue, after the armistice, to stand up to old or new threats in the face of which the nation hesitated, or even seemed to be divided?

The election of the Horizon Blue parliament in November 1919 was less a sign of the exultation of the victor than it was of his fear. Germany was already disputing its defeat, while one of the former allies was identifying itself with a resolution that questioned international order.

In 1870, France became aware of her weakness in the face of a united Germany bent on continental domination. The reaction to this in France was to strengthen the armed forces and seek continental and maritime alliances. This policy enabled France to hold firm in 1914 and win in 1918. Although she wore a mask of jingoistic complacency - which worried her allies - France was tragically aware of her weakness. She had lost a million and a half men, her northern provinces had been devastated and her finances exhausted. She had been unable to dismember Germany, whose economic potential was still intact and which described itself as

unvanquished; for Germany's revival seemed necessary to maintain the balance in Europe. Furthermore, neither the USA nor the USSR nor yet the League of Nations agreed to recognize the Treaty of Versailles. Italy denounced its "mutilated victory"; England kept her distance.

The result of all this was a general policy line that can be described as "national": to prevent Germany's revival or to slow it until the new Reich had been integrated into a diplomatic system capable of containing it, and until France had rebuilt her army and contracted new alliances. While she played at international solidarity at the League of Nations, France's intention was to maintain a strong army, develop a fleet that would be capable of assuming the freedom of the seas, and form continental alliances. Above all else, it seemed essential for France never to cut herself off from England, for only England, through the Commonwealth, could ensure the breathing space necessary in a modern war, and obtain American support. This explains the fact that all of France's leaders rejected the possibility of going to war against Germany without the guarantee of British support.

This policy was implemented differently by two factions. Those who identified with the Bloc National and Poincaré really only believed in military superiority and alliances. They demanded the rigid enforcement of a Carthaginian peace: disarmament, demilitarization, occupation, reparations and sanctions. Their opponents in the Cartel des Gauches thought that the League of Nations constituted the best guarantee. With Briand and Herriot, they believed that Weimar could be bound by "Peace through Law". The existence of the two factions conceals the fact that there were appreciable differences in political temperament, especially on the fringes. There were those who had described themselves as nationals or even nationalists ever since Déroulède and Barrès and who mistrusted the parliamentary system, while others rallied to the crown in the name of Maurras' nationalisme intégral. All accused Parliament of congenital impotence in the face of external threats and the dangers that were undermining French society from within under the guise of social progress.

Because the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) was the embodiment of both of these dangers, it crystallized the national demands and conservative tendencies of French opinion. In order to be accepted as a member of the Third International, which was held in Tours in 1920, the PCF had to accept democratic centralism and cells in the Comintern, as well as act against national armies and colonial domination. By identifying with the Bolshevik revolution - and they were the only ones to do so - the communists shouldered the mantle of Russia's collapse in 1917, the Black Sea mutinies, the refusal to honour debts, and the Hungarian and German revolutions. Following their revolutionary logic, they attempted to set the soldiers against the officers, supported the Ruhr saboteurs, encouraged Alsatian autonomy and supported the struggles of the colonial nations, especially in the Rif. In addition, Rapallo seemed to be preparing a German-Soviet military pact that would strengthen the ties between the Reichswehr and the Red Army.

"Since Lenin returned on a German train, the Bolsheviks, consciously or unconsciously, have been playing Germany's game." Those who accept them as political allies are guilty. Out of this argument a neat dichotomy was born: the conservative right claimed to be the only nationalists, while the left rediscovered pre-war internationalism and pacifism. In both word and deed, however, the communists rejected the socialists and radicals as being in the nationalist camp whether they liked it or not. Nevertheless, the left was united in its denunciation of fascism in Italy, whereas the right saw in it a traditional Latin model of order. Could not Mussolini's Italy become an ally against German imperialism? Its colonial ambitions

made it a rival mainly overseas, where it was threatening the bases of French power.

The concept of empire, which was born about 1890, blossomed forth during the twenties. The First World War had lasted so long and had been so radically different from previous wars that the value of the human, industrial and financial resources of the colonies, dependent on control of the seas, became evident. This awareness was sharpened by the need for oil to mechanize the land, sea and air forces. For the nationalists, this was an argument in favour of a structure built on state authority and the maintenance of ties with metropolitan France. The liberals and socialists used it as an argument for implementing generous reforms within the framework of French sovereignty. For the debate was wider than one about freedom and progress; it was also about demands for independence.

Were these movements national, or was there a world-wide wave that could easily be described as a conspiracy? There can be no doubt that the internationalizing process strengthened each colony's refusal to accept defeat; this, in turn, kept armed resistance alive. Black Africa was still free of this, which left the two other great world cultural groups in the foreground - Indochina and the Arab Muslim world. In the far East, first Japan's victories and then the Chinese revolution fired the imagination. In north Africa, Muslim reform, the Young Turks' revolution, and the alliance between Turkey and Germany awakened the hopes that had been placed on the emancipation of the Arab kingdoms in the near East. The young "évolués" in both of these areas had demanded equality before 1914. They thought that the loyalty that they had shown during the war and their willing sacrifices justified liberal changes. Their demands certainly threatened those who were profiting from colonialism, and also worried those in power in France, for the reformists also invoked the Wilsonian doctrine of the rights of peoples and they haunted the corridors at the peace conference and later in the League of Nations. Was not their final goal independence? On all sides, political hedging placed narrow limits on social and administrative reforms.

The general spirit of revolt spurred two explosions of activity. Traditionalists saw themselves justified in falling back on religious, historical and sociological values and exalting an often mythical past. The intellectuals in Indochina and Madagascar, and the Ulama in Algeria reacted similarly, despite the differences in their civilizations. In this way, revolutionary forces set themselves up as an echo of the call sent out by the Third International to be oppressed peoples. In the colonies themselves, there was already a proletariat in the mines and ports as well as the country. In France, the demands of the war had necessitated sending colonial manpower. Trade unions were formed and communist cells set up, sometimes run by Europeans, sometimes not. Revolutionary cadres were formed, exactly how is still unclear: the Maghreb had Messali Hadj, the far East Nguyen Ai Quoc. Were these men communists or nationalists? Were they making a tactical subordination of their nationalism to internationalism in order to secure Comintern support? Or did they think that nationalism was a necessary step in the march to world socialism? This question bothered the congresses of the Third International and worried the masters of the Kremlin. As far as the French were concerned, their goal was still the same; schism.

The Levantine mandates, Syria and Lebanon, reacted with the spirit of the Mashreq, the cradle of Arab Muslim reform, the hearth of anti-Turkish nationalism and the centre of the coexistence of the Christian and Muslim religious communities. Whereas the British had recognized Egypt and Iraq's independence in 1922 and 1930 respectively, the French dodged their obligations as mandatories out of fear of possible repercussions in their possessions in the

Maghreb. Similar tensions surfaced in the western Mediterranean, such as the Druze uprising in 1925. But north Africa was the scene of more immediate crises: Abd'el Krim's revolt in the Spanish Rif, Italy's conquest of Libya, France's occupation of the outer borders of Algeria and Morocco. In Geneva, Shekib Arslan became the spokesman for this turbulence to the Syria-Palestine Pan-Arab Committee, which had been awakened by the existence of the Jewish National Homeland.

Aware that they were part of the Islamic world, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco saw France's blunders in 1930-31 as provocations. In Algeria, the centenary of the conquest revived the old bitterness. The "évolués", who had been disappointed by the insignificance of the 1919 reforms, had formed, in vain, the Fédération des Elus Indigènes, under the domination of Ferhat Abbas. Their support, already small, shrank before that of the Ulama, who invoked Arab reform in their call: "Islam is my religion, Algeria my country, Arabic my language." In 1931, they joined under the leadership of Ben Badis. In Tunisia, the Congrès Eucharistique de Carthage humiliated the faithful. The Destour, which was demanding a constitution and strict application of the 1912 Protectorate Treaty, increased in popularity. In Morocco, the Dahir Barbère, which truncated internal Moroccan sovereignty, was also seen as a challenge to Arab identity and was instrumental in bringing together the Young Moroccans.

In Indochina, 1930 was marked by the military insurrection of Yen Bay and the workers' and peasants' risings of Nghe Tinh. At the same time, anti-communist repression was sweeping China. The Yen Bay rising was carried out by nationalists who drew inspiration from the Kuomintang to form the Viet Nam Qu8c Dan Dang (VNQDD), while the other risings were claimed by the Vietnamese Communist party, newly created by Nguyen Ai Quoc out of various revolutionary factions that was to become the Indochinese Communist party during the same year. In Madagascar, nationalism carried the day before assimilationism.

The Depression that brought on the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 also speeded the rise of Nazism in Germany. In 1933, Hitler's success was seen in two lights: vengeful nationalism and socio-political reaction, while his antisemitism illustrated the racist foundations of his doctrine that differed in precisely this respect from other fascist systems. In France, as elsewhere, ideologies stressed or minimized one or other of these factors. However, despite the fact that Mein Kampf was hardly known, it was becoming clear that war was coming.

With the later Depression came a deterioration of a socio-political situation already degraded by financial scandals and a presidential assassination. The nationalists denounced parliamentary corruption and the passivity of the Chamber elected in 1932 in the face of German provocation. It was the hour of the Ligues, the inheritors of the Bonapartist and Boulangist right, who reflected the sensibility of a petty bourgeois France that was uncomfortable about the loss of its rustic structures and impregnated with the myth of the veteran. Order and greatness were their demands, yet they remained attached to peace. Various minor fascist groups attempted to break into them: the Camelots du Roi, who set the tone; the more numerous Jeunesses Patriotes, who were close to them; the Croix de Feu, which constituted the stormtroopers who, "united as if at the front" behind their leader, Colonel de la Roque, were believers in solidarity, discipline and authority.

In February 1934, Daladier broke up the anti-parliamentary riots and repressed the PCF's attempted proletarian uprising. Later, the dissolution of the Ligues showed up both the



weakness of the fascistic groups and the need for order. This need was reflected in the increasingly popular Parti Social Français, and the weakness of the fascistic groups in the practice of legislation by decree. In response, the democrats, already brought up with a jolt by the setback to the German left, formed rank. A Vigilance Committee of anti-fascist intellectuals was formed, a forerunner of the Front Populaire, a coalition of radicals, socialists and communists that won the 1936 elections.

As far as the nationalists were concerned, the communists were leading this coalition for the benefit of the Third International - little, indeed, was known about its development at that time. The Comintern, against which Chiang Kai Shek had struck a major blow in China, watched with concern the Japanese attack on Manchuria and departure from the League of Nations, which the USSR entered in 1934. Hitler's consolidation, the new life in the German economy, the rearming of the Third Reich and its withdrawal from the League of Nations all confirmed the existence in western Europe of a political and military threat that went under the mask of a demand for Lebensraum; a threat of geopolitical and geostrategic encirclement that was further confirmed by the 1936 Anti-comintern Pact. In July 1935, however, the Seventh Congress of the Third International had reacted by listing the dangers, hitherto confused, in order of priority. They saw themselves - hence the USSR - as better off with bourgeois democracy, even social democracy, in China as well as Europe, than with German Hitlerism and Japanese militarism.

In France, Barthou elaborated a lucid policy in 1934, in the only framework that Great Britain would accept, that of the League of Nations. In order to give the alliances with Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania some weight, there had to be a military alliance with one of the great continental powers, the USSR or Italy, preferably both. The USSR was worried about German pressure, while Italy, in order to save Austrian independence, had taken strong stand on the Brenner, but was carving out an empire in east Africa and was unhappy about seeing the Franco-Yugoslav Treaty renewed. After Barthou was assassinated, Laval continued his policy as a military alliance, but rather called an end to the PCF's antimilitarism and anti-colonialism. The Franco-Italian agreements left Italy's hands untied in Abyssinia without extracting any real concession in return. The Stresa Front for safeguarding western Europe ignored the USSR.

Only a display of determination on France's part could bring into focus the fears aroused by Germany; but she was unwilling and unable, as was seen in her inactivity when Germany remilitarized the Rhineland. On the one hand, France's armies were behind the Maginot Line, waiting for the Germans to come, worn out by a naval blockade, and be decimated on their defences. At that point, together with the imperial forces and her allies. France would launch a counter-offensive. On the other hand, the Quai d'Orsay was counting on condemnation from the League of Nations and a reaction from the British. This strategic contradiction dealt a moral and military deathblow to the continental alliances, while Italy, fresh from its victory in Abyssinia, was irritated by the League's sanctions. The Franco-British declaration of mutual aid in the case of unprovoked aggression in 1936 went some way to restoring the balance lost by this resignation. It is the key to France's behaviour. At the time of the Anschluss, of Munich, of Prague, Paris was waiting for London to recognize Hitler's actions as unprovoked aggression.

This consistent policy was subtly altered by events in France and outside. The victory of the Front Populaire in 1936 brought to power an anti-Nazi left that was a prisoner of its own

pacifism. The left started to rearm France, voted the necessary credits and provided the country with modern economic structures, especially in the aircraft industry. Overseas, Blum hesitated to weaken the bases of French power with far-reaching reforms. In Spain, he resigned himself to nonintervention in order to accommodate England. How could he say that war was inevitable and had to be prepared for, admit a preventive offensive, when nobody had called for one in March to prevent the occupation of the Rhineland, and openly renounce his pacifist and social beliefs?

The right denounced the strikes and marches that accompanied social reforms. They thought they saw in the demonstrations, over which red flags flew while the Internationale rose, a prelude to excesses similar to those perpetrated by the Frente Popular, which was being supported by the International Brigades raised by the Comintern and sometimes armed by Paris. Of course Hitler was supporting Franco; but less so than Mussolini, and should this paragon of christian Latin civilization be forced to abandon his success to the continental and colonial enemies of France? Would it not be better to set up a Mediterranean bloc of orderly regimes capable of containing German Nazism, even if it did mean allowing it some latitude in the face of the Soviet Union, where Stalinism was sullyng the party image? Anti-Sovietism and anti-communism brought forth a French fascism: the Parti Populaire Français. At the same time, traditional nationalists were shunning an Italy that was exalting the Rome-Berlin Axis (1936), and whose departure from the League was followed by its joining the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact (1937).

The call for Daladier in April 1938 sealed the fate of the Front Populaire. It was a reflection of the national will: a slow-down of social progress, the defence of democracy, and firmness abroad. And it was already a call for a saviour. The veteran of 1914-18, who had saved the Republic in 1934, was seen as the symbol of the General Staff and the Franco-British Alliance. But France expected him to avoid war and acclaimed him when he returned from Munich. Did not his speeches give the impression of a land attached to peace under Law but resolved to defend her security in the face of the Pact of Steel which, in May 1939, ensured Germany of Italy's support and left the Mediterranean to Italy?

Daladier's trip to North Africa in January 1939 illustrates the importance France attached to her empire. The triumphant welcome he received, especially in Tunisia, expressed the loyalty that was soon to be confirmed by the war. But did it reflect an attachment to metropolitan France of the fear of Italian colonization? The fate of Libya did not exactly make the inhabitants of the Maghreb fall over each other in their haste to join the camp of France's enemies, in spite of the fact that they were becoming more receptive to nationalist propaganda. On the other hand, the Franco-Turkish agreement of June 1939 upset Syrian nationalists, who were already disappointed by the refusal of the French Parliament to lift the mandate on the two Levantine countries.

The Depression hit France's colonies hard, through France, their main trading partner. Its effects were beginning to be felt in 1931, when the colonial exposition was held at Vincennes, and they culminated in the Metropolitan and Overseas France economic conference at the end of 1934, which made a real effort to create some political and economic solidarity similar to that which had been established for the Commonwealth at the Ottawa Imperial Conference two years before.

The Slump and the falling prices hit both colonial farmers and native Algerians

without bringing them any closer to each other. Factory closures set off urban unemployment, which was aggravated by the Depression in the mines and ports. The state, consolidating its latent tendency to direct, intervened by making loans and funding special work projects without starting a process of business concentration. The poverty was further increased by the growth in population, and created fertile soil for a revival of the nationalism that the colonial administration had been vigorously combatting before and after the brief truce in 1936. The Front Populaire, which was more aware of Arab-Muslim problems than Indochinese difficulties, was effectively split between its desire for social progress and political emancipation and its reticence to a religious nationalism that could weaken the French position.

In the Levant, the troubles in Palestine mobilized Arab opinion in 1936 against Jewish immigration, which had been speeded up because of Nazi persecution. In this strained climate, France signed a treaty granting independence to Syria within three years, but did not ratify it. In Tunisia, Bourguiba had broken with the Vieux Destour, which was not demanding enough, and created the Neo-Destour in 1934, which combined evolutionary pragmatism with eventual independence. In 1938, however, rioting broke out, which led to the leader's being imprisoned and to a strengthening of his authority. In 1934 in Morocco, the Comité d'Action had demanded strict application of the Protectorate, and recognized the youthful sultan Muhammad Ben Youssef as their leader; henceforth he was to be alive to Morocco's demand for unity, greatness and sovereignty. In 1937, troubles shook Meknes.

In 1936, a congress drew up a Charter of the Demands of Algerian Muslims. It was answered by the Blum-Violette plan which, however, restricted itself to offering citizenship to 30,000 Algerians. Its rejection by Parliament discredited the "évolués", who were still betting on personal integration based on respect for the status of each individual, and isolated the Parti Communiste Algérien, which was run by Europeans. It gave new life to the Ulama's rejection of integration, and opened the way for Messali Had j, who founded the Parti du Peuple Algérien in 1937. A revolutionary movement had been formed from émigré prolétarians which took Algerian nationalism into account within Algeria itself. All that it retained from the Communist International were the methods of its first period.

By contrast, the Parti Communiste Indochinois remained loyal to the Third International, structuring itself alongside the PCF. Despite strong and effective repression between 1931 and 1936, it achieved coherence during the 1935-36 watershed by reconciling communism and nationalism in a class front that located its action in a global context under the cover of the Front Démocratique and the Congrès Indochinois. The guiding force behind this came from the International, no less, which was represented in Yunnan by Nguyen Ai Quoc. He had returned to China after five years of training in Moscow, which had itself been helped by the Sino-Soviet rapprochement in response to Japanese aggression.

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While military negotiations were going on at the beginning of the summer of 1939 between the French, the British and the Russians, the political confrontations in France and the tension in the colonies appeared to be swept aside by the concerted threats of Germany, Italy and Japan. The Third International, the apparent if not always actual ringmaster of these confrontations, was pursuing a policy of appeasement. Its need for a military and diplomatic entente with the bourgeois democracies was reflected in France and the colonies alike in its accepting the demands for war, despite the setback to the Front Populaire and the abandonment

of various social measures.

This harmony in France and the colonies was shattered on August 23, 1939 by the Soviet-German Non-aggression Pact. Moscow, to gain time and protect the socialist homeland, was dealing with Berlin under the pretext of the hesitation and reticence, which were real enough, of the French and the English, who had been paralyzed by Polish and Romanian anti-Sovietism. The PCF justified the agreement, while public opinion condemned it as a de facto alliance with Germany. On the eve of the war, the nation fell apart to the sound of the nationalists proclaiming with a mixture of strategic concern and ideological complacency, "henceforth all France's enemies are in the same camp".

Were they really? The communists voted war credits on September 2, and the PCF was only dissolved on the 26th, after the USSR intervened against Poland. It was a symbolic dissolution, for the communist deputies set up a Groupe Ouvrier et Paysan Français which, on October 1, attacked the "imperialist warmongers" and demanded that "Parliament be called upon to publicly debate the question of Peace". The "opening of an inquiry into complicity with the enemy" did not intimidate the party, which organized secretly and distributed a leaflet on October 16 denouncing "the war imposed upon the French people", "a capitalists' war" that "reserved for the people of France the mission of carrying out the orders of the London bankers". The Union Sacrée, that had been accepted by the socialists in August 1914, was rejected by the Third International in the autumn of 1939.

## **2. A Game of Strength, 1939-1945**

From September 1939 to May 1940, France was bogged down in the phoney war because she was waiting for something to happen: the miracle that would allow her to escape, if not victorious then at least unvanquished, from a war she did not want. France lived in dread of losses like those she had suffered during the 1914-18 war, knowing unconsciously that they would mean the end of the French nation. In the absence of the Russians, she was waiting for the colonial troops, the British Expeditionary Force, the Italians to change their minds, the Americans to intervene, the famine that the blockade would produce in Germany, and the blows which the Baku and Finnish expeditions would strike against the USSR, Germany's supplier. Anti-Sovietism and anti-communism were not so much a class reaction as a desire to tip the balance in the war in the east even at the price of concessions in the west. This loss of confidence and willpower led to the "étrange défaite" that rival nationalist factions either accepted or rejected; at the same time, the colonized peoples in the empire wondered about French power.

By a curious paradox, the military defeat sounded the "call for a soldier". France swallowed the nationalist myth of Déroulès, Maurras and La Roque entirely, by entrusting her destiny to Marshal Pétain rather than acclaiming General de Gaulle. Was this a simple substitution of the man in uniform for the knight in shining armour? The question assumes that there was a confrontation of forces, the sources of which have to sought in the immediate past, even if they appeared to have been thrown up by the situation and the relations between them influenced by the development of a war that brought first one, then another, to the fore.

The régime set up on July 10, 1940 existed solely because of the armistice, which had been demanded on June 17 and signed on the 22nd to avoid the capitulation of the French army. Pétain refused to carry on the war from abroad beside England, as had the other defeated allies,

and he thought that since Germany's victory was already won, its consequences should be mitigated. The French were reassured by the decision of the old Marshal and almost unanimously approved of the overthrow of the Republic; certainly, they were not surprised by it. They had been taught in school that defeats were the punishment for the weakness of regimes. Granted plenary powers by the representatives of the nation, despite eighty dissenting voices, Pétain became the head of the Etat Français. The National Revolution he instituted was less of a surprise than his announcement of collaboration.

The National Revolution is more easily defined in terms of what it condemned than what it proposed. Nonetheless, its inner workings have to be found in the values it proclaimed. Pétain replaced Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité with Travail, Famille, Patrie (Work, Family and the Fatherland). Everything that weakened the fatherland had to be expunged and everything that strengthened it exalted. For this reason, internationalist ideas and the men who defended, represented or embodied internationalism or foreign things were condemned: the wandering Jew, the recently naturalized citizen, the communist of the Third International, and the capitalist who knew no frontiers. The same applied to everything that undermined the hierarchy that the life of the people, just like any army, required: learned societies, political equality, elective representation, revocable power, human rights, and even the very notion of the Republic that was the embodiment of these values. France was to be rebuilt by returning to the traditional order: a rural land ruled by her notables, educated by the catholic church and fashioned by the army, while at its head stood a charismatic leader whose past victories and national support expressed by the Lésion des Combattants conferred legitimacy on him. French fascism? In reality, a regime based on moral order that dared not refer to the monarchy and that came to grief on what it was to become.

This "France seule", however, still belonged in an international system where she had been a great power. Before regaining this place through lengthy demographic, moral and institutional reform, she had to find a place in a new European, hence world, order that was characterized by German domination. Who could resist Germany after France's defeat? The English had no army, the Americans were closeted away in their isolation, the Russians had become Germany's ally. All that remained was to take second place in German Europe, and not to leave that for Italy. Just as Greece had conquered Rome, France would civilize the Germans. Since England's useless resistance was delaying the peace, the hardships of the armistice had to be alleviated, the fate of over one million prisoners of war softened, the demarcation line between occupied and free France made more flexible, and the financial burden of occupation lightened. Both long and short term considerations justified the offers of collaboration that Hitler, reluctantly, accepted; reluctantly, because his intention was to use the peace once and for all to break France, whose submissiveness he did not believe. At the same time, he had to accommodate Italy.

Why did he not do it at once? At this stage of the war it seemed better to neutralize France without provoking the fleet, the empire and the overseas armed forces to go over to the English. These concessions turned out to be dangerous once the struggle continued, for they constituted arguments for those at Vichy who were translating collaboration into action. Two men took turns in running French policy with Pétain: Laval, the politician, and Darlan, the sailor. After his eclipse from December 1940 to April 1942, Laval was in charge. He declared total willingness to collaborate, even if it meant accepting the consequences. Darlan, strengthened by the loyalty of his navy, accepted limited military collaboration which he justified by British aggression but which he thought would include France in the final

settlement, not among the conquered but among the conquerors. Twice he granted facilities to the German forces in Syria and Tunisia (Berchtesgaden, May 11, 1941).

In contrast to them stood General Weygand, the archetypal anti-German conservative officer who understood 1940 in terms of 1918. He demanded an armistice so as to avoid having the army capitulate, prevent a Bolshevik revolution and prepare for revenge. He was firmly committed to the National Revolution, but was preparing the army to take up arms again against Germany in two or twenty years, as the situation dictated. Under his protection, the officers kept the English informed, concealed weapons, prepared for mobilization and raised replacement forces. But, like him, they were waiting for Pétain to give the order to start fighting again. This was partly because of the military code and partly with good reason, for they thought that no shots should be fired until the time was ripe; that is, until the United States had intervened. For this reason, they refused to follow de Gaulle and resisted the English and Free French so as not to give the enemy an excuse to occupy north Africa.

Over and against these men were the ultra-collaborationists around Brinon, Deat and Doriot in Paris, who denounced the double game and the belated nationalism of the Marshal's entourage despite Laval's return. Germany's invasion of Russia lifted their last remaining ideological objection. The new Europe was to be cemented through the struggle against communism both at home and abroad. Vichy approved the creation of the Légion Antibolchévique to fight on the Russian front; and, in order to repress the resistance, which was likened to communist terrorism, the Ordre Légionnaire, soon to become the Milice. But, like the Milice, the LVF fought more in defence of christian western Europe and French traditions than for a new order. And when the allied Landing in 1944 set off the flight to Sigmaringen, the unquestioning supporters of Nazi Germany inclined to the Waffen SS, in its police or military form, and assembled all the helmeted dreamers in the Charlemagne Division.

Of all the names borne by the organizations and men who opposed Pétain and gathered around de Gaulle, the most meaningful was France Combattante - for this clearly indicated that they had rejected the armistice. Rather than being the rejection of a man or a régime, however, their decision expressed their will to continue, or resume, the fight against a conqueror who was only temporary. It was their struggle that entailed the condemnation of Vichy's policy of collaboration long before it led to the uneasy gathering around the first man to say no.

De Gaulle first denounced the armistice on June 17, then on the 18th. Like him, many of those who rallied condemned the parliamentary system. Their analysis, however, was radically different from Pétain's. France had lost a battle but Germany had not won the war. The conflict was world-wide. England and the Commonwealth - which the USA would not sit by and allow to sink - were able to resist. France's recovery, therefore, did not depend on a National Revolution but on continuing to fight until final victory. This was a geostrategic approach that set the continent against the ocean. Nonetheless, it did have two drawbacks: could England resist in the immediate future? What would Russia do?

The Free French forces fought wherever their limited numbers and total logistical reliance on others would permit: in west Africa, the Sahara, the Channel, the Atlantic, and the far north or Russia. What mattered most to de Gaulle was to prevent the Free French forces from being absorbed into the British army; instead, they were to be the symbol and guarantee of national sovereignty. Without hesitation or qualification, he set himself up not as a military leader, but as the holder of national sovereignty, and this in the face of the allies, who

challenged whether he represented France and who doubted that country's future. For Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt, the man who held legal power and authority was Pétain, for he had been invested by Parliament, acclaimed by the French, and was obeyed by the armies. No major military leader and no major colony had answered de Gaulle's appeal; indeed, Dakar, Gabon and Syria had rejected it, although the Pacific territories and Equatorial Africa had certainly rallied to him, and his forces were growing and had distinguished themselves at Bir Hakeim and Koufra. But how could it be known if the resistance, then organizing in France, would accept him as its leader? Above all, what would be its role?

Before openly engaging in combat, the resistance was to be seen in its opposition to the occupation. Its military actions were either slowed or prevented because of the difficulties of communicating with England, Soviet behaviour, US isolationism, the existence of two zones on which the weight of the occupation was different, Pétain's charisma and the ambiguity of the National Revolution. But the resistance very soon took on a political color in both the occupied and Vichy zones. The abolition of the Republic, the racist and corporatist measures, and the moral order mobilized the hard core of the left. When the nationalist right weighed the consequences of collaboration, which denied them their basic option, they were bound to condemn both the Etat Français and Pétain. The struggle against Germany presupposed fighting against Vichy and preparing new institutions.

Some members of the resistance joined the intelligence networks or even helped in the Deuxième Bureau and the Intelligence Service. Others founded movements that combined intelligence, propaganda, occasional action, and training for future collaboration with the allied forces. In the northern zone, the German presence hindered the formation of groups, but in the southern zone, three major movements took shape that eventually coalesced into the Mouvements Unis de la Résistance. Their leaders' intentions were to co-ordinate their activities without losing their individuality, and to associate themselves with the resistance outside France and benefit from allied aid, without placing themselves under de Gaulle, for their determination had not been born out of the June 18 appeal, even if they had drawn some comfort from it.

In June 1941, the PCF brought in its resolve and experience. Its intervention re-established the coherence among its members that had been broken by the Comintern demands between 1939 and 1940. PCF militants had been persecuted by Vichy and were often already in the resistance. For the first time they reconciled their patriotism and proletarian internationalism. By fighting for France, they were fighting for the USSR, and the struggle against the Nazi occupier was preparation for the world revolution. The PCF Francs-Tireurs and partisans favoured an immediate renewal of action everywhere, aimed at drawing the masses into a general popular uprising that would bring to power the Front Populaire which they were trying to infiltrate, though with much less success than in other countries where the Third International was finding it easier to control matters.

The resistance in France needed de Gaulle just as de Gaulle needed it. One man played a dominant role in this meeting of two forces that had been thrown up separately out of a common national reaction. He was Jean Moulin. His past as a Front Populaire deputy typecast him as a rallying point in the tradition of Jacobinism - which the left had rediscovered and de Gaulle had taken up. Between January 1942 and June 1943, he succeeded in uniting in the Conseil National de la Résistance (CNR) not only the mouvements but also the old parties and trade unions from the Third Republic, and in having them recognize de Gaulle as their leader.

This recognition became decisive when the attentiste faction among the nationalists took up the struggle again after the allied landing in north Africa and the occupation of the southern zone, which in turn led to the fiction of a captive Marshal acting through silent delegation.

In November 1942, the Anglo-Americans had ignored the Free French in favour of the African army which at worst was weak and at best merely wanted revenge, a desire symbolized by General Giraud. And they slowed his arrival so as to limit his rule. Darlan, who happened to be in Algiers, became the leader since Pétain had designated him his successor. The French forces joined in the fight alongside the allies and fought well. At the same time, the scuttling of the fleet and the dissolution of the army left Pétain's authority intact in France. In the desire for military efficiency, the allies resigned themselves to Darlan, who rallied the empire and who, because of his past, could take no part in politics in the future. His timely assassination on December 13 1943 set off a crisis, lasting almost a year, about who was to succeed him - Giraud or de Gaulle.

Unlike Darlan, Giraud was politically irreproachable, and had the advantage of symbolizing and justifying the Weygand aspect of Vichy: the resolute, vigilant wait of an army that wanted only military revenge, disdaining politics, and that was already fighting in Tunisia, Italy and Corsica. De Gaulle wore the halo of the June 18 appeal, which was witness to his grandeur and political astuteness. The constitution of the CNR in May 1943 proved decisive: it gave de Gaulle the recognition and forces he lacked. The Comité Français de Libération Nationale, founded on June 3, 1943, was confirmed by the Assemblée Provisoire in September that revived Parliament and laid the foundations for the Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française that was set up on June 3, 1944.

The loyalty shown by the colonies during the war left France ill-prepared for the violence of their demands in 1945. The defeat, the break between the État Français and the Free French, the crisis of November 1942, and the isolation of Indochina, of course, explain this lack of perception. Basically, however, it seems that the nature of the changes that had taken place in the world simply had not been understood in Vichy, London or Algiers. All of the European colonial powers had suffered humiliating reverses. Temporarily, they had been replaced in the world hierarchy by Germany and Japan, and were to be by the USA and USSR, on which the two factions in the decolonisation movement were already leaning. In August 1941, the Atlantic Charter had stated the Wilsonian doctrine of the right of each people to choose the form of government under which it wanted to live and the legitimacy of re-establishing the "sovereign rights" that had been abolished by forces. The principles were adopted by the United Nations in 1944.

The French Levantine mandates, enclaves in a zone of British influence, suffered the after-shocks of the German and Italian drive toward the near East, the objectives of which were Suez and Baku. In order to free themselves from English and French tutelage and eradicate the Jewish homeland, which had been strengthened by emigrants driven out by the Nazis, Arab nationalists hoped, at one time, for a German victory. In April 1941, Iraq rose against the British, and Iran and Egypt appeared ready to follow suit. The logistic facilities in Syria, which Vichy had agreed to place at the disposal of the Germans, provided the English with the long-awaited excuse to intervene in the Levant. The Free French took part in the operation in order to uphold France's rights on behalf of the League of Nations, but they immediately undertook to implement the 1936 independence agreements, on condition that they maintain a military presence.



In Damascus and Beirut, representative institutions were set up; in Lebanon, they reflected a difficult compromise between the religious communities. The English supported those who were preparing for the elimination of the French presence, which they regarded as incompatible with the future of the near East. London, in effect, redressed the military situation and then, after May 1941, played the independence and Arab unity (under British influence) cards. From this point on, the nationalists were convinced that the allies were going to be victorious and threw in with them. There followed conferences and congresses, and in September 1944, an Arab League was set up to be officially proclaimed in May 1945. The future of the west concerned it just as much as that of the near East.

In north Africa, which had remained loyal to Pétain, the military leaders were preparing their revenge, thereby off-setting the loss of prestige caused by their defeat. Various factors made their work easier: the military order symbolized by Pétain, Weygand and Nogues was regarded as more just than the parliamentary system that had been imposed on the colonials. There were echoes of antisemitism. Germany's reticence was not seen as a strategic move aimed at temporary neutralization of the Maghreb. Nonetheless, the events in the near East were still common knowledge and foreign propaganda, whether American or German, still commanded attention. In Vichy, the Conseil National gave Muslim Algerians equal representation with the French in the colony. This encouraged Ferhat Abbas to renew his demands; the measures taken against the Ulama and especially the PPA since 1939 had left the field open to him. The brief which he sent to Marshal Pétain in May 1941 revealed the permanence of the ill-feeling and the hopes, and the latter were still formulated within a French framework.

The Anglo-American landing shook the colonial structure. Unable to repel the Americans, the French joined them, claiming to be their "poor relatives". The campaigns in Tunisia, Italy, Corsica and France certainly showed the wartime loyalty of the Maghrebins and France's military revival; but political power was in the hands of the Americans, while the French, who were fighting for power locally and in France, cancelled themselves out.

Encouraged by R. Murphy, Abbas wrote a "message to the responsible authorities", both French and allied, at the end of 1942, in reply to the appeal to support France and the peoples' liberation struggle. The message was developed in the Manifesto of the Algerian People, produced in February 1943. Its very title showed that economic, social and administrative demands had been left behind and that the former assimilationists had brought Algerianism to the fore. Without severing contact, General Catroux contained the latent agitation in 1943. On December 12, de Gaulle, who was in Constantine, dusted off the Blum-Violette plan and made it his own: easy access to citizenship without forfeiture of personal status; increased Muslim representation in local assemblies; administrative recruitment and economic reform. These liberal, decentralizing moves were confirmed by the Brazzaville Conference in January 1944 and set in place by the order of March 7. Immediately, there was created an Association des Amis du Manifeste du Peuple Algérien, which was a means for the Ulama and the PPA to re-enter politics; for them, liberalization was only a means towards independence. In March 1945, Messali's claims for a parliament and government at the First Congress of the Friends of the Manifesto defeated those of Ferhat Abbas for an autonomous Algerian republic federated with France. The PPA, which was helped by a socioeconomic climate that had deteriorated as a result of two years' poor crops, became involved in carefully planned clandestine operations that supplemented its propaganda and intensified the agitation.

On May 8, 1945, on the very day when there were mutterings in Beirut and Damascus about the relief of the French troops, which was interpreted as a refusal to evacuate, insurrection broke out in Algeria, prematurely so, since it was limited to the region around Sétif. In the Levant, a British ultimatum paralyzed the French forces. In Algeria, the military repression was thorough, aiming at the general uprising, abortive though it was, instead of the one place it had occurred.

The two neighbouring protectorates avoided open crisis. Nonetheless, the ways in which they, too, were changing (their pasts and the ways in which the war had affected them set them apart) also betrayed the rise of nationalism. In January 1943, Roosevelt had promised Sultan Muhammad Ben Youssef support for his aspirations towards sovereignty. The Anfa meeting persuaded the nationalists of this, and they set up the Istiglal, the Independence Party, around Balafrej. The manifesto of January 1944 was unambiguous: Moroccan independence and integrity under the Sultan and the establishment of a democratic regime similar to those in the eastern Muslim countries. In the face of intransigence in the GPRF, the Sultan kept in the background, out of tactical considerations, but the Istiglal, despite the arrest of its leaders, continued to act. Fez and Rabat were torn by riots in February 1944, and the reforms undertaken later that year did not stop the group, which demanded Moroccan admission into the United Nations in March 1945.

In June 1942, The Tunisian nationalists found support in Moncef Bey. The crisis of November 1942 took place in a tense atmosphere made tenser by Italian action. The Regency, which had been spared by the Anglo-Americans, suffered German intervention. This was supported by Admiral Esteva, who was loyal to Vichy, but was fought by his forces, who joined Algiers in its fight against the Axis. The ambiguous attitude of the Bey's family and the compromise of certain supporters of the Destour with the Axis powers revealed that the real goal was Tunisian independence after France's final defeat. The allied victory in May 1943 led to the destitution and deportation of the Bey, the abolition of the Italian colony and the dissolution of the Neo Destour. Its leader, however, Mr. Bourguiba, had not fallen into the trap of collaborating with Italy and returned, offering his services to France. The party leader was still there, even if his party, now banned, was suffering from both the rise of the Vieux Destour, again and the growing support for the Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens. On 26 March 1945, Bourguiba sailed secretly for Cairo and the Arab League.

East of Aden the situation was based on the Japanese threat, even if it was merely hypothetical insofar as the Indian Ocean was concerned. The authorities in Madagascar, like those in Indochina, remained loyal to Pétain, and the blockade forced the country to turn in on its traditional economic structure; this was to be beneficial. The island passed relatively soon under British control. They took Diego Suarez in May 1942 and the entire colony in September, later to turn it over to the Free French. The nationalists were helped by France's defeat, conquest and internal dissension, and set up the Mouvement Démocratique de la Révolution Malgache."

In Indochina, the Japanese had demanded on June 19, 1940 that the Chinese border be closed and the port of Haiphong come under military control. After a vain appeal to the British and the Americans, General Catroux demurred. Then, disowned by Vichy, he went to London. His successor, Admiral Decoux, was obliged on June 28 and September 22 to acquiesce to new demands for Japanese presence and control. In this way, Indochina was occupied by the Japanese without any resistance, simply because of France's defeat in Europe. In January 1941,

the Japanese imposed territorial arbitration which, although they had been repulsed by force, was favourable to the Thais. All this took place before the dramatic attacks in December 1941 that still further enhanced the prestige of the Empire of the Rising Sun.

Decorum, like Noguès, had a policy of openness to the Indochinese elites and put forward a legitimate descendent of the Emperors of Annam, Bao Dai. The Japanese, thinking it better to hold the country indirectly, respected French administrative and military structures. Compared with Indonesia or Malaya, France was at an advantage until the situation triggered off by the events of 1943. Without repudiating Pétain, Decoux accepted a representative from Algiers and ignored any resistance which he was not in charge of. On March 9, 1945, the Japanese crushed the French forces so as to prevent them from attacking, and systematically humiliated them. In answer to the wishes of the pro-Japanese nationalists, they had Bao Dai proclaim Vietnam's independence and the sovereigns of Cambodia and Laos, hitherto protected, imitate him. On August 15, Japan capitulated. North and South of the 16th parallel, the Chinese and English were occupied with watching over their evacuation from Indochina, where the French Far East Expeditionary Forces was preparing to land.

Within two weeks, the communist party completely reversed the situation, thus bringing to a close textbook revolutionary process. In November 1939, like all the communist parties under the Comintern, the PCI had condemned the (French) imperialist war and ordered the struggle against (Japanese) fascism. It supplemented these international orders with: "win back independence". The heavy repression that followed the 1940 insurrections ensured the success of the progressive line laid down by Nguyen Ai Quoc, who linked the development of urban political structures with the establishment of bases in northern Tonkin and had the Doc Lap policy adopted in 1941, under which social reforms took second place to independence. Around this policy, the Viet Minh developed, and in the Viet Minh the communists ensured that they were the exclusive leaders.

The Chinese, however, demanded that room be made for nationalist organizations close to the Kuomintang: the VNQDD and the DMH, and for two years they held Nguyen Ai Quoc in prison. He re-emerged in 1944 under the name of Ho Chi Minh. Served by a party which controlled the personality cult better than elsewhere, he ensured his authority through his ability. Putting the brakes on a general uprising, he enlarged the "liberated bases" in northern Tonkin, created an Armed Propaganda Brigade parallel to the clandestine militia as a core of regular forces, and ensured himself above all, through intelligence and guerilla activities, of the support of the Americans, who were determined not to allow the return of the French colonialists.

On August 15, the Viet Minh came out of hiding everywhere and came down from their liberated bases and China. Moving faster than the VNQDD and DMH, and outmanoeuvring them, they called for a general insurrection on August 19, 1945 and, on August 25, obtained the abdication of Bao Dai, who handed their representatives the seals of the empire. On September 2, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was officially proclaimed. Before the French had resumed power, independence had been acquired de facto, and had been given historical legitimacy.

The old colonials regarded this situation as temporary. On December 8, 1943, the Comité National had traced out the framework for the future status of Indochina some days before the Constantine declaration. By so doing, they had set out the real destiny of the empire:

France was willing to reform it but not to abandon it. It was her intention to give the Indochinese people a new political status within a federal organization. Freedoms in the various countries in the union would be extended at the same time as economic, social and administrative measures would ensure equality and progress. In this way, France intended to continue, through free and close association with the Indochinese people, her mission in the Pacific. France's Indochina policy did not change on March 4, 1945. In Paris, the GPRF clarified: "the five countries will maintain their own character within the Indochinese federation." This was a rejection of Vietnamese unity and independence and the charter for the reconquest that started at the end of September.

The empire was to remain. This had been solemnly affirmed in January and February 1944 at the Brazzaville Conference: "the aims of France's civilizing task in the colonies preclude any ideas of autonomy and any possibility of evolution outside the French imperial bloc. The eventual, even distant, constitution of selfgovernment in the colonies is precluded."

During the year between the recreation of the Comité Français de Libération Nationale and the Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française, that is, between June 1943 and June 1944, the national fabric, rent asunder by the defeat and the ideological confusion, was rewoven. Once again, there was a national consensus based on the identification of the enemy, or rather the re-identification of Germany as that enemy. Nazi excesses probably contributed as much as the allied victories to the general resumption of open or clandestine fighting, a struggle which was led in Italy by the armed forces of the empire, and in France by the FFI. De Gaulle, who had left London for Algiers, had been the leader of a parcel of sovereign French territory since then, thus achieving what had been his aim since 1940. Whatever reservations might have been prompted by his past or his character, and despite the attachment that many Frenchmen both in France and overseas still had to Pétain, he was the acknowledged leader of France.

This support, whether it was spontaneous or well-considered, bolstered his authority to pursue the policy from which he had never deviated and which was in the best French tradition: sovereign independence and international greatness. It is impossible to understand the actions of the GPRF until September 1945 in their totality unless these two objectives are seen as complementary. It was not enough for France and her empire to be liberated: French forces had to take part in liberating them. After driving the Germans from France and the Japanese from Indochina, they had to take part in the final battles so that they could sit with the victors, for they would decide on the new balance in the world. Hence the need for an army made up not of auxiliary forces working or fighting for the benefit of the allies, but of large units equipped with modern weaponry and led, within the coalition, by French generals.

The new French army was built up, in the tradition of the Revolution, through a successive amalgamation of the Free French forces, the African army, colonial troops and the FFI. Its mission was not only to fight the enemy but also to be the instrument of the sovereignty of the GPRF in the face of the allies who still did not legally recognize it, and of members of the resistance who were trying to share in its authority. Bluntly speaking, its mission was to stop the Anglo-Americans from imposing a provisional allied military government on France, and to prevent a possible seizure of powers by the communists.

For these reasons, the Commissaires de la République were appointed before the liberation, in the spring of 1944, while the offensives carried out by 2 DB and I Army were conducting the liberation and supporting the national insurrection. At the same time, the

immediate presence first in Normandy and then in liberated Paris of the Head of the Provisional Government, who rallied all the vital forces of the nation to him and hence obtained legal recognition from the allies at the end of October 1944, meant that the liberation itself could be exploited. France's national revival was seen and symbolized in three decisions taken at that time: the nationalization of the major companies, so as to meet the requirements of social justice and future development; the Franco-Soviet alliance, that was designed to counterbalance Anglo-American influence in the immediate future and the post-war period; and the creation of a Far East Expeditionary Force to re-establish the integrity of the empire.

By repressing the Constantine uprising and then by landing troops in Indochina, France seemed at the close of the Second World War to be denying the ideals of her own resistance, to be running counter to the world-wide movement towards decolonization, and to be overestimating her strength. This sort of attitude deserves an attempt at explanation - one without the benefit of hindsight. It would not be enough to talk about the weight of private interests or the attachment of France's leaders to the past - even though these were true. At the risk of falling into a contradiction, France's liberation and the independence of the colonies have to be seen as being fundamentally opposed to each other, no less.

France had become aware of her weakness at the price of defeat: loss of independence, territory sliced away, occupation, despoilment, repression, and social and political regression. However, not all of those who were members of the Fighting French in 1945 had reacted at the same time and place or for the same reasons, and even though there was general support for the restoration of parliamentary democracy, social progress and colonial reform, they had differing political and social motives. The only common denominator was the fight against the occupying power, that is, the struggle to liberate France and restore full independence. This had been clearly understood by the Third International, which baptized all the movements it created or tried to infiltrate: "Front National".

France's lesson from the war was that the salvation of the nation was dependent on reserves apparently tied to the empire. It was the empire, or rather that part of it that had rallied to the Free French, that had enabled de Gaulle to remain free of total subjection to the English or the Americans. It was the empire that had made it possible for those seeking revenge on Vichy to resume the struggle. It was the empire that had provided a sovereign French base for the CNR and the GPRF and the bulk of the landing forces. Once the empire had been reformed and liberalized, could it not assist in France's rise, bear witness to her generosity and guarantee her a place as a world power?

This kind of interpretation appears to leave out the Third International and the role assigned it in our approach, which aims at being systematic, and would be impossible had the PCF refused to share the responsibilities of the Provisional Government and the Fourth Republic until 1947.

### **Bibliographical Note**

This essay does not include a bibliography. This is the result of living among major monographs and history and political science journals, as well as of reading as yet unpublished works made accessible to me through my participation on thesis committees or University Consultative Committee specialized commissions.

Nonetheless, mention should be made of the essential writers in the field and of some of the more recent and more standard works. For the details see the Suggestions for Further Reading which follows the essays.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### MOBILIZING ENGLISH CANADA FOR WAR: THE BUREAU OF PUBLIC INFORMATION, THE WARTIME INFORMATION BOARD AND A VIEW OF THE NATION DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

William R. Young

"We are planning a whole-page layout under the heading: BOY SOLDIER LEADS CANADA'S ARMIES," began a satire of a wartime ceremony. "We understand," it continued:

that you were mentioned in despatches during the last war for gallantry during hand to hand combat in a maison tolérée near Bethune. While natural modesty may move you to try and suppress such matters, the public has certain claims. Nothing is more important for morale than implicit faith in our military leaders; such incidents are of great value in inspiring confidence....

Our Promotion Department is at present arranging an elaborate bit of pageantry to take place on Parliament Hill.... At this ceremony, Mickey Rooney, on behalf of the International Boy Scouts Association, will present a gold-plated pea-shooter to Canada's Army as a symbol of all-out warfare.... you are the proper person to receive this token on behalf of the Army.

Mr. Rooney will be escorted to the dais by the Wichita Harmonica Band, playing "Waltz me around again, Willie" in delicate compliment to our Prime Minister. After receiving the pea-shooter, you will fire the first pea from it in the direction of the Vichy Ambassador, who will occupy a box to your right. A salute of 21 guns will then be fired, the carillon in the Peace Tower will break into "Roll out the Barrel", a flight of R.C.A.F. planes will drop peanuts to the crowd and a detachment of Commando Troops will seize the Prime Minister and carry him shoulder high to the Chateau Beverage Room. The whole ceremony should be a magnificent symbol of Canada's undaunted determination in the fight for liberty....<sup>1</sup>

This satire on official propaganda, written in 1942, accompanied serious critiques of the whole propaganda effort. Since 1939 the Bureau of Public Information worked to build a national wartime consensus of opinion in English Canada in a hortatory manner reminiscent of the Great War. The Bureau always used the war itself as a national unifying symbol and to emphasize the contribution of all Canadians "sharing together in common experience, working and striving in great causes...."<sup>2</sup> Following the lead of Canada's political leaders who all remembered the previous conflict, the Bureau began by painting the war as a fight to the death against an implacable aggressor. In the second instance, official propaganda played up Canada's material and military contribution to the allies. The final thrust of the Bureau's activities from 1939 to 1942 aimed at creating a sense of 'Canadianism' that would encompass ethnic groups in the English Canadian community. All these efforts, hoped the propagandists, would cement English Canadian attachment to the nation, eliminate domestic conflicts and mobilize the population in support of the war policies. This analysis applies to English and not to French Canada, although the propagandists' aims in Quebec remained analogous. Because the problems of French-English relations do not have a bearing on positive efforts to mobilize English Canadian

opinion for war, they will not be discussed in this essay.<sup>3</sup>

The Bureau's successor, the Wartime Information Board, organized different means of creating a national view after 1942 but these too enjoyed incomplete success. The sustained criticism of the Bureau's preaching led the Board to incorporate a feeling of the diversity of opinion and to stimulate the democratic process. In contrast, this approach did not come from the top, from the politicians, but was devised by adult educators and social scientists who believed that support for the war effort would grow from a sense of national social goals. Convincing Canadians that the government respected the differences between workers, soldiers and businessmen, for example, became the basis of this effort to create a stronger attachment to the country. Criticism had less to do with the Board's failure in consolidating national sentiment than the agency's presentation of the objectives of the nation in terms too similar to those of the governing Liberal party.

Shortly after war broke out in 1939, the newly-established Bureau of Public Information sought to waken a sense of patriotic fervour in order to minimize divergent opinion within the country. The Bureau portrayed the enemy as the antithesis of real 'Canadianism'. Blame for the war rested on the shoulders of Hitler and later on Mussolini and the Japanese autocrats who were "aggressive, violent, deceitful and possessed with a lust for conquest." The dictators had taken power, gained total dominance over their peoples and turned their countries into military machines. As they pursued international glory, they relied on 'Force' and destroyed 'Reason' to dominate by "brute force". In conquered territories "unspeakable tortures" ended the opposition to the master races, the Germans and Japanese. Nazi massacres and induced starvation served not as "incidents in the heat of battle" but as "deliberate instruments of Hitler's racial policy." The war, a struggle of biblical proportions, became an eschatological battle that reduced the latitude for public questioning of Canada's participation. "If we do not destroy what is evil," Prime Minister King warned, "it is going to destroy all that there is of good."<sup>4</sup> Because the Nazis abandoned humanity, American playwright Robert Sherwood told Canadians, only the "spiritually diseased" in democracies could sympathize with them. All human beings hated the "inhuman oppressor."<sup>5</sup> As the anti-enemy themes moved away from their more hysterical beginning, the thirst for conquest became the pre-eminent explanation of enemy motives. Canada was a prize of war, intoned the soundtrack of the film Geopolitik: Hitler's Plan For Empire, and the Germans would keep fighting until they realized their ambitions. "There is no portion of the globe", it continued, that Hitler "would be more likely to covet than this Dominion...."<sup>6</sup>

'Canadianism' involved more than putting forth a common view of the enemy, but also creating pride in Canada's role in both the military and international situation. From the Bureau's first efforts until the surrender of Japan, the propagandists always emphasized that Canada had declared war in her own right and conducted it on her own behalf. In order to keep Canada's effort to the fore, the information agencies tried to publicize Canada's position before other allied sources could contradict or overshadow it. Recognizing that international conference exerted little impact "save through a press relations policy,"<sup>7</sup> information officers tried to make certain that they played up Canada's contribution, even though it might be minimal. They feared that the loss of a sense of public participation in international meetings might ultimately lead to a decline in public support for national policies.<sup>8</sup> After American newsreels almost provoked riots in Canadian movie theatres by showing the Dieppe raid as a predominantly American venture, Canadian information officers renewed their determination to publicize native military operations. By publicizing the participation of Canadian forces in the invasion of



Sicily in July 1943 and by releasing a statement by Mackenzie King before the other allied leaders, the propagandists ensured greater coverage of Canada's role. This set the example.<sup>9</sup>

Government publicity always emphasized Canada's distinct interests vis-à-vis the allies. For a while, the British example provided a strong symbol for evoking English Canadian responses. The National Film Board documentary, The Second Year of War, for example, showed dramatic scenes of the flickering light cast by blitzed London on the dome of St. Paul's cathedral. This could not but bring chills to most Canadians of British ancestry. At the same time, government publicity constantly repeated the essential importance of Canadian aid to British survival and the gratitude of the British people.<sup>10</sup> In English Canada, mention of France tended to deal with the role of the French resistance just as Victory Loan broadcasts dramatized the assistance of individual French people, to Canadian airmen who had been shot down and needed to escape the Germans.<sup>11</sup> For Russia, the publicity gradually evolved into a reiteration of Canada's desire to build "lasting goodwill" with Canada's northern neighbour which had been able to continue to fight because of Canadian assistance.<sup>12</sup> The "common interest" of Canada and the United States provided the main axis for the Canadian interpretation of the Americans' place in the war. Although Canadian publicity always mentioned the joint nature of North American defence and economic agreements, some Canadian releases included a sly criticism of the United States by pointing out that before the US went to war, Canada had fought for the whole of North American civilization. After the Americans joined the fray, Canadian material spoke of the relatively grander proportion of the Canadian war effort and stated that Canada remained "the only one of the co-belligerent nations that has not found it necessary to accept lend-lease from any source." Mackenzie King pointed out that Canada's unique place as the lynch pin between the United States and Britain should always be "a legitimate source of pride to all Canadians."<sup>13</sup>

The final element of English Canadian propaganda meant defining a 'Canadianism' that integrated the ethnic community into a 'Canadian way of life.' Afraid of possible foreign subversive influence undermining the war effort of alienated ethnic groups, the Bureau of Public Information began sponsoring radio broadcasts and pamphlets called Canadians All. Apart from warning of possible communist or fascist influence in Canada, these told English Canadians of the loyalty of the ethnic community, even of enemy aliens. Native born Canadians should "never assume that our fellow Canadians are by nature (sic) unworthy of our sympathy, respect and goodwill...." The English and ethnic communities were urged to integrate so that out of the war "the golden metal of true Canadianism will emerge." For a truly strong nation, the broadcasts preached, English Canadianism will emerge." For a truly strong nation, the broadcasts preached, English Canadians had to "widen the range of our nation-building to include ... a fuller knowledge of your fellow Canadians and particularly those who are not part of your race or creed."<sup>14</sup> Along with this, the Bureau sponsored an advisory group, the Committee on Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship, which pushed the Bureau's emphasis on Canadianism even more strongly. In order to eliminate barriers between eastern Europeans and English Canadians, the Committee became involved in trying to settle inter-ethnic disputes between the right and the left-wing factions of the ethnic community.<sup>15</sup>

By the mid-war years, these traditional appeals, in many ways Great War leftovers, had obviously failed to express a satisfactory national view. Many English Canadians remembered the hysteria of the Great War and remained skeptical of any identifiable propaganda. The public reaction to the invasion of Sicily in mid-1943 highlighted a schizophrenic reaction to the emphasis on Canadian participation in the war. Angry that other

allies and particularly the United States did not mention the role of Canadian forces, English Canadians still did not like the massive publicity build-up in Canada. "And they say the Americans bray," commented an observer.<sup>16</sup> The audience, critical of brouhaha and victory parades, felt that they heard only what the government considered good for them. Glowing news reports of military campaigns, followed by stories of reverses and the to deums that attended some small local success had only led to apathy.

The English Canadian public failed to agree even on the national interest in the allied cause. Anglophones complained that the discussion of Canadian military participation led to a belief that Canadian troops were being sacrificed on the battlefield to save the lives of British soldiers. Anglophiles voiced the opposite view. In their eyes, "Britain seems to be the common target for fault.... She is slow, she is run by fools..."<sup>17</sup> Efforts to create a national view of Russia did not work either. Most Catholics and businessmen remained skeptical of the USSR's bona fides and objected to any sympathetic propaganda. Other Canadians, however, questioned whether the government's earlier antagonism to Russia had been based on the truth.<sup>18</sup> As for the United States, some Canadians identified so strongly with the common North American cause that they resented any criticism of the United States and believed that Canada's ultimate destiny lay in some kind of union. Others resented the overshadowing nature of American participation in the war.

On the other hand, the very success of the propaganda in convincing Canadians of the righteousness of the war caused some disunity. Public opinion surveys showed that English Canadians were "well sold on the war: they want the Axis defeated...."<sup>19</sup> But the drive to create unity on the basis of an anti-enemy sentiment always remained a double edged sword. Anti-Nazi sentiments grew so pronounced mid-1940 that some English Canadians threatened to begin a witch hunt for Nazi sympathizers. In one broadcast, Allister Grosart repeated the story of a "drunken Nazi" who had called the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to curse at a patriotic message. "I'll take you ... through the gates of a camp where you'll find a lot more Nazis like yourself.... They're in there wondering why Der Fuehrer is such a long time coming to get them out."<sup>20</sup> In 1942, private citizens in Montreal established the Canadian Column to publish contradictions of rumours planted, they believed, as part of Hitler's plan to subvert the morale of the democratic nations. These private patriots, however, got out of hand. The Canadian Jewish Congress complained that the Column's denial that Jews ran black markets in rationed goods had only supported the allegation. Afraid xenophobia and paranoia like that of the Great War might seriously damage relations between various sections of the Canadian public, the government quietly worked to keep it under control.<sup>21</sup>

Preaching about 'Canadians All' did little to eradicate the prejudices of either the ethnic community or of English Canadians. Under the influence of red baiters, Tracey Phillips and Watson Kirkconnell, the Committee for Cooperation in Canadian Citizenship encouraged anti-communist publicity that alienated moderate elements in the eastern European ethnic community. The organizers of the Victory Loan reported that the eastern European settlers in the Canadian west registered an extremely low response to the loan drives. Finally, the Wartime Information Board abandoned efforts to integrate the ethnic community when it failed to convince the government to fire Tracey Phillips from his new position in the Nationalities Branch of the Department of National War Services.<sup>22</sup> As for English Canada, propaganda did nothing to diminish anti-oriental sentiments that led to the forced resettlement of Japanese Canadians inland, away from the British Columbia coast. A public opinion survey in 1945 found that English Canadians continued to express dislike of all 'foreigners' and did not believe

that citizens of an ethnically different origin could indeed become "good Canadians."<sup>23</sup>

These failures inspired influential Canadians arguing for the government to adopt a different propaganda approach that expressed Canadian nationhood less traditionally. As early as mid-1940, a group of public servants, members of Parliament and academics, all participants in the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, lobbied for recognition that "a democratic spirit must infuse the wartime instruments of regimentation or the war will be lost on the home front...." They suggested that Canadians needed motivation to resist the destructive force of the war. For Canada, they concluded, "the dynamic can be found in a common national purpose to create a genuinely democratic society."<sup>24</sup> Great War tactics led, they believed, to public apathy especially when the United States joined the allies and most Canadians foresaw eventual victory. Across Canadian society, they began to see the idea of a 'people's war' catching hold, the belief in the futility of war unless it resulted in a better post-war life for all.<sup>25</sup> Another group with influential connections, the Canadian Association for Adult Education, urged recognition of this public mood and wanted to build "a more dynamic popular conception of the war effort... in terms of the new world which can emerge from the war if there is an enlightened and effective national will to that end." By abandoning its preoccupation with patriotism, propaganda could educate the population about "the process through which a better society might evolve."<sup>26</sup>

Support built up within the Wartime Information Board, which superseded the Bureau of Public Information, for a similar view. John Grierson, appointed general manager of the Board in early 1943, derided the earlier approaches. The "patriotism is enough" period when "the flags flew and the bands blared" had long ended. The following "finger of scorn period", which "bullied the population" into supporting the war effort by comparing Canadian with allied efforts, had lost its effect. The subsequent "back the attack approach" that emphasized war events and revenge would, Grierson believed, leave the population facing the peace with unrealistic expectations.<sup>27</sup>

The most effective agitation for new information policies came from middle-level, Liberal members of parliament like Brooke Claxton, Parliamentary Assistant to the Prime Minister, who argued the political benefits. Fearing the threat of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation which had adopted the idea of wartime change as its own, younger Liberals began speaking about the 'people's world' that would follow the 'people's war.' The government could only mobilize support for the war effort and Liberal policies, Claxton pointed out, if it convinced voters that "something better will come from victory."<sup>28</sup> Finally, progressive Liberals told the government to worry about social unrest unless the population could agree on a vision of the future. Edgar Tarr told his Liberal friends to use "the pressures of war to bring about commitments which will lessen the chances of reactionaries gaining the day and keeping the world in an unholy mess." Polarization between left and right would occur as long as the war organization remained "largely an organization of the classes asking the masses to respond without giving them any say."<sup>29</sup> For his part, Claxton warned that "outmoded conceptions of the place of the common man don't stop the changes but they do make them explode in different directions." The government must work to build up a consensus to convince those Canadians "in a restless search for advance" not to forget current achievements and to see extremists "for what they are, that is as masters of prejudice and intolerance who are going to use those weapons in an effort to steal political power." Claxton's ideal citizens stood firmly in the political centre "doing the fighting not the talking".<sup>30</sup> Naturally, they would all vote Liberal.

Somewhat reluctantly giving in, Prime Minister King gradually authorized Grierson and the Wartime Information Board to design a new set of propaganda programmes that would form a national consensus around a new set of issues. Grierson's officers believed that citizens would not support policies unless they could link the war to the fulfillment of basic needs, such as working conditions, health services and housing. This course, they felt, would promote common purpose and an individual appreciation of a relationship to the total national effort. "Mere oratory," warned Board psychologist J.D. Ketchum, would not convince the population. Canadians required graphic and detailed explanations to envision the "permanent challenge." The Board's officers believed that, although Canadians' ability to absorb masses of facts remained limited, this restriction did not apply to information specifically requested. The government could make use of the public's demands to put forward its view of national policies.<sup>31</sup> The Board's public opinion surveys reinforced these philosophical assumptions. By 1943 the surveys revealed that Canadians' highest priority lay in working out post-war plans. Interest in the armed forces and in war production had reached a saturation point. The population, concluded the survey analysts, demonstrated curiosity about broader questions and were no longer "fooled by injunctions to win the war first before talking about the peace." At the same time, Canadians showed willingness to continue wartime sacrifices - as long as these were demonstrated to be both essential and equal.<sup>32</sup>

Using these findings, the Board prepared publicity to build up a sense of nationhood by convincing individual citizens of their participation in national life. To neutralize the skeptics' belief that centralized bureaucracy exercised undue influence, the Board did not just reiterate the Four Freedoms, the Magna Carta and the British North America Act in civics course fashion. Instead, pamphlets specifically explained to citizens how to manipulate the political system. The Board pointed out that except for the publicly-owned radio system, a few men controlled the newspapers and broadcasting. In practical terms, ordinary Canadians had to form well-organized groups that neither the media nor the government could ignore. "Organized public opinion" could reduce the passivity of individuals and the "comradeship learned in war" could accomplish things in the spirit of democratic change. During the 1930s "society had no vision. Society saw no meanings, held no ideas...." But the war provided opportunities that could rekindle "the flame of a great and prosperous Canada."<sup>33</sup>

In order to expand this sense of national belonging, the Board prepared specific campaigns as defensible and as factual as possible. An educational campaign to explain the merits of economic controls, for example, began when support for these policies declined in 1943. The campaign emphasized the "concept of participant citizenship and social responsibilities of the individual" in an attempt to secure co-operation with wage and price controls. The Board also dealt with "the citizen in his relationship to his local community, his responsibilities as a member of that community and the things he can do locally to help fulfill the national purpose."<sup>34</sup> Since both the Depression and wartime controls themselves had given the public a "very personal connection" with government economic intervention, the Board argued that only a frank and open approach would succeed in consolidating support. The public, therefore, should be told the basis of the cost-of-living index and its use as an indicator of inflation and the gauge for wage and price increases. The major campaign brochure even explained the real reason for the government's economic policy: fear of civil unrest if economic stabilization measures failed. Appealing to a sense of common outrage, the pamphlet explained that inflation left the majority with a reduced standard of living while speculators made exorbitant profits. If this occurred, "everyone would suspect others of profiteering," general distrust would wreck national unity and war activities would suffer from bickering and class

rivalry. A successful policy, pointed out the pamphlet, would "leave Canada in a position to meet the problems of post-war reconstruction with far more success than if inflation were present." Since no one wanted to relive the 1930s, economic stabilization policies remained an essential national goal for all Canadians.<sup>35</sup>

Following its philosophy, the Board explained in detail that both government and public had more money to spend. Despite taxes and voluntary savings, disposable income had risen from \$4,200,000,000 in 1939 to \$7,000,000,000 in 1943. Floating around in competition for scarce goods and services, this money constituted an inflationary threat. While some unjustified price rises occurred because of this excess income, most other prices increased in a controlled fashion to allow for higher production costs. The cost of imported materials, however, could not come under the government's control nor could the prices of their substitutes. Even labour costs pushed inexorably higher as the result of factors such as absenteeism, high employment turnover and employees' inexperience. Despite these imperfections, the campaign assured Canadians that the government had strictly supervised mark-ups and wage increases to assure overall stability. The controls, therefore, prevented the "hardships and injustices of inflation" by taking "into account everyone's ability to pay" and by distributing the "burden of war finance fairly." Canadians with fixed incomes would not get caught in the squeeze of rising prices and would not allow others to use a rise in prices "as an excuse" to demand higher incomes.

For a favourable impression, the publicity initially emphasized the benefits of price control. These restrictions obviously protected the consumer who paid lower prices and distributed the price increases over the whole tax-paying public.<sup>36</sup> Wage controls, the bugbear of organized labour, the Board argued, prevented upward pressure on the cost-of-living and yet provided for adjustment of wages to alleviate hardship. Since wages accounted for an average of two-thirds of production costs, regulation was essential in order to control prices. The tax system, an equitable way to collect money, produced more social equality and ensured that corporations paid their proportionate share. The whole structure, the argument concluded, proved that national "equality of sacrifice" underlay the government's economic policy.<sup>37</sup>

In a quintessential example of their mid-war view of nationhood, the information officers demonstrated the common interest of all economic groups in the success of controls. Since labour, manufacturers, landlords, farmers and salaried workers each appreciated the ceilings on the others' incomes, each "in turn must accept controls on their own products for the common good." Posters depicted a circle of men each pointing to his neighbour and saying "sure inflation control is well for him." If one profession got a raise, the message reiterated, "everyone would want more and would end up with no comparative advance." To produce a sense of "joint effort and joint responsibility in a common cause," the Board warned that "selfishness on the part of any single group will jeopardize not only the welfare of the Canadian community ... but ... will inevitably react against the interest of the group responsible." Four years of war had shown that planning for maximum efficiency in all sectors had achieved "a stability in the living of Canadians who, under the impact of the war's demands, have learned that there is no independence in a working democracy." This realization would lead toward peacetime cooperation and sharing in "a common objective" of working out reconversion, "national in its scope and international in its responsibilities."<sup>38</sup>

As they developed their arguments, the strategists geared the economic stabilization information campaign to different economic interests and changing wartime conditions. The

first simple advertisements in January 1944 suggested not wasting energies on chiselling and trying to circumvent economic controls as practical responses to the wartime economy. The second series of pamphlets pictured controls as practical responses to wartime economic conditions. The third wave presented an "inflation is poison" theme, and preceded the special appeals to various sections of the population. Workers received publicity about the war labour boards that gave workers a say. For farmers, the message repeated that economic controls helped to modify cost increases and provided an assured income. For businessmen and manufacturers, any deflationary period in the post-war situation would leave goods on hand that could fetch less than cost. The final stage of the campaign related the need to control inflation to the post-war future. The inflationary problems which had caused strikes and unrest in 1919 "must not happen here again."<sup>39</sup> After September 1944, when certainty of victory threatened to sabotage controls, the campaign dropped its emphasis on wage controls and concentrated on the need for stable prices to avoid a drastic rise that would lead to a public outcry.

Apart from bolstering national economic policies, the Board worked to integrate alienated groups, particularly workers and soldiers, into a national consensus. Labour expressed discontent during early 1943 in frequent strikes and in questions about economic policies and post-war programmes. The Wartime Information Board felt that it must respond or absenteeism and industrial unrest would cause increasingly serious difficulties. Many government and industrial figures found this interpretation difficult to swallow. The Department of Munitions and Supply, for example, believed that the best propaganda reiterated patriotic themes that shamed workers into more efficient production. "So long as self-interest (sic) is the dominant factor in war work," this school believed, "dissatisfaction will be greatly magnified in the minds of the workers." These men also wanted to deal with morale problems in specific plants rather than to aim propaganda at working men in general. Public contempt for absentees and praise for the sacrifices of the armed forces would do the job. But because workers walked out of these meetings by the hundreds, the Wartime Information Board ultimately gained authority for the opposite approach.<sup>40</sup>

To increase the sense of participation by workers, the Board spoke proudly of labour's accomplishments nationally and internationally. Labour had overcome the tremendous initial German advantage in armaments in one of "the greatest military and INDUSTRIAL (sic) achievements in history." To overcome alienation, the Board strongly promoted the merits of factory labour-management committees, "joint ventures for the promotion of their common purposes." Continuous consultation between workers and managers would increase workers' sense of importance and lead to efficiency, reduced absenteeism, better employee welfare and increased output. The Board also tried to heal rifts among workers, prejudice against women for example, by praising their accomplishments.<sup>41</sup> In one very important service, the Board worked to reduce tension between workers and other Canadians. Soldier-worker exchanges proliferated. Encouraging military praise of labour's accomplishments and pledges of support for workers' post-war demands, the Board quickly published the remark of one enthusiastic worker that "It's one job and we're all trying to build a better world from now on." The radio testimonials to the quality of Canadian military equipment mitigated any hostility towards the output of industrial workers. The Board tried to convince those outside industry that the work of "John Smith, civilian,... is vastly important...."<sup>42</sup>

Similar aims guided publicity for the armed forces since, by 1943, the Board believed that "only if they have something beyond fighting to fight for" would soldiers continue the battle. Existing sources of news had not adequately kept the troops abroad in touch with

Canada. Cynical troops refused to believe publicity that made "everything back home look rosy" and greatly mistrusted government in general.<sup>43</sup> An information programme specifically tried to involve soldiers in the political process by immersing them in discussions on specific national issues. Disarming the cynics meant avoiding high-sounding phrases, striking to the facts, and presenting different sides of issues, as well as stimulating debate on 'real problems'. Accordingly, the armed forces programme demonstrated that "the serviceman's future depends on the nation's future." The discussion of events fell between the vocational and the popular. Apart from general news, each issue of Canadian Affairs, a monthly pamphlet, filled in knowledge about one single aspect of Canadian events, particularly civilian wartime accomplishments and the interest of the home front in servicemen's wellbeing. Editions of the overseas edition of Canadian Affairs dealt with the various geographic areas of Canada, health insurance plans, housing proposals, the role of immigration, of women and of various occupations. Creating "citizen soldiers" with a grasp of their community responsibilities meant reducing the importance of "over-salted porridge" and turning attention towards national issues in the hope of encouraging awareness of social problems and discussions of solutions. Generally, the Board worked to stimulate the discussion of changes such as social security that increased equality of opportunity and reduced prejudice.<sup>44</sup>

Ultimately, the Board linked all these views of nationhood to the post-war future of the country. Specifically, Canadians were assured that government reconstruction plans provided for assistance to veterans' civil re-establishment, facilitated an economic reconversion that protected workers and provided insurance for all against unemployment, sickness, old age and special disabilities. Pamphlets dwelt on the important role of the federal government and the need for the retention of some wartime powers to bring about a more equitable peacetime society. The editors, for example, reported that "servicemen as a whole realized this (maintaining an adequate standard of living) through government action was a problem for everybody and were prepared to discuss it with a view to arriving at the best solution for all and not just each man for himself."<sup>45</sup> Publicity concentrated on the work of the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction, chaired by Principal F. Cyril James of McGill University, which advocated government economic planning. Business, the James report concluded, must accept the fact that government had an inescapable role in post-war economic life and could not avoid using its taxing powers to promote full employment.<sup>46</sup> The Board also promoted the role of the new Department of Reconstruction in coordinating public works. When the Minister of Reconstruction, C.D. Howe, tabled a white paper setting out government plans, the provisions were related to national employment and opportunities. The Board emphasized that the government was working for a smooth orderly transition and a high stable level of employment.<sup>47</sup>

Although controversy surrounded the proposals to expand post-war national security, the government allowed the Board to publicize them as "a considerable part of the reconstruction programme. Dr. Leonard Marsh's report on social security presented to the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction in March 1943, proposed children's allowances, contributory survivors' and funeral benefits insurance, extended unemployment insurance, health insurance, income maintenance for the disabled, and contributory and non-contributory old age pensions. To reduce opposition, the Board presented its publicity as "simply an analysis" and noted that "without special measures calculated to maintain employment, the proposed social insurance structure will have no solid foundation."<sup>48</sup> When the government announced the institution of family allowances, monthly sums payable to all Canadian mothers for the benefit of their children, the Board aided the new Department of National Health and

Welfare to argue that the allowances would ensure that children of large, low-income families would not suffer disadvantages. Children's needs should have "a special claim upon the nation." Releases to editorial writers, teachers, ministers, health care workers and influential citizens related the scheme to post-war progress as "a simple, fair and effective way to ensure a greater measure of well-being to Canadian citizens of the future." This nationally-based argument accompanied more personal appeals that pointed out instances of children remaining away from school because they could not afford shoes.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, the Board tried to assist in the reintegration of servicemen in the national social fabric. Explaining the mechanical provisions for jobs, allowances, unemployment insurance, medical care, pensions, land grants and retraining, the Board sponsored a booklet, Back to Civil Life, as well as a radio comedy series the Johnny Home Show, by Johnny Wayne and Frank Schuster to fill the gaps in public knowledge. To defuse the 'repats' resentment of civilians' easy lives, publicity frankly admitted the comparative comfort of life in Canada but pointed out that this meant easier readjustment. The Board also tried to quiet veterans' fears that their place in the community was in jeopardy by citing the unanimous desire of civilians to assist. Specifically, the Board encouraged citizens' committees, CN programmes for women and special appeals to share housing with veterans.<sup>50</sup> Avoiding the sob-sister approach, the Board discussed the psychological adjustment that servicemen had to undergo. This meant avoiding too rosy a picture and telling the returnee that this "romanticized anticipation" would not fit "the more tawdry reality." Families of returned men also had to consider that years in the services would change soldiers' values and expectations.<sup>51</sup>

This new official propaganda enjoyed a mixed measure of success after 1943 in building up a sense of nationhood that recognized English Canadian diversities. Throughout the life of the economic stabilization information programme, public opinion surveys indicated that support for this national policy had stabilized. Some problems with labour and agriculture remained and surveys in April 1945 indicated that public support for wage controls lagged behind that for price controls. And yet, 87 per cent of those surveyed indicated a belief that the government had done a better than fair job. Significantly only 61 per cent of the respondents believed war profiteering had been controlled. A final survey in July 1945 indicated that a majority of the population favoured permanent regulation of the economy. At the same time, the Canadian cost-of-living rose only 3 per cent from 1941 compared to a 30 per cent increase from 1914 to 1918. Perhaps the success of the controls and not the propaganda had the greatest impact in ensuring this public support. As for the labour information programme, undoubtedly, it did expand the range of knowledge available to the working man. Labour leaders expressed their satisfaction with the new services, and the keen demand by unions and the labour press for the industrial information publications indicated that these had struck a responsive chord. The public view of unions shifted a bit in January 1944; 60 per cent of those who responded to a survey (70 per cent of the workers) believed that absenteeism was not totally the workers' fault. Nonetheless, many government officials and businessmen remained unsympathetic to the Board's job and blocked some of its programmes. A further survey in the early summer of 1945 showed that the public shared these misgivings. Most Canadians believed that unions needed no more power and displayed a very high level of ignorance about the role of labour. As for servicemen, the Board felt its publicity to the armed forces had managed to defuse much resentment. The circulation of publications gradually climbed, and the editors believed that these had helped to overcome the servicemen's feeling of isolation from civilian and home events. They attributed this change to the emphasis on nationhood and to the educational tone.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, the real effect of the propaganda carried out since 1943 lay not as much



in its building a sense of nationhood as in its political results. The Cabinet only allowed the Board to follow through with its 1943 changes and to set forth a 'new national point of view' for mainly political reasons. The Liberal government, while worried about the possibility of social unrest, also greatly feared that Canadians might choose the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation as the most compatible political party to govern the country in the post-war years. Any information effort, therefore, which could identify the existing government with national goals could not but strengthen the public image of the Liberals as the national party best able to achieve them. When Mackenzie King called a general election for June 11, 1945, the party chose as its slogan the theme which the Wartime Information Board had promoted for two years: Building a New Social Order for Canada. At the polls on election day, the Liberals won 41.3 per cent of the vote compared to the Conservatives' 28.5 per cent and the CCF's 14.7 per cent.<sup>53</sup> In an election post-mortem, Davidson Dunton reported that the Board's sources attributed the Liberal success to the government's convincing Canadians of the sincerity of its national economic and social policies for post-war stability as well as the solidity of its wartime accomplishments.<sup>54</sup> While the Board's programmes intended to recognize the diversities of a democratic society, the practical results showed that the propaganda benefited the governing party and failed in its original purpose of defining a non-political and popular sense of nationhood.

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- 52 WIB Records, Vol. 4, "WIB Survey," 60 (April 1945); WIB Records, Vol. 12, file 8-2-1, "Report of a Survey of the Canadian Labour Press," 15 July 1943; D. Petegorsky, "Industrial Information," April-July 1945.
- 53 For a full description of the election campaign see J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 396ff.

- 54 PAC, W.L.M. King Papers, 31 series, Vol. 381, p. 341213, memo: A.D. Dunton to members of the Cabinet, 18 June 1945.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The literature dealing with the Second World War is voluminous and still growing. Analyses of the national experience, however, are still needed for most participants in the war. The interested reader can pursue this theme by first referring to the sources used by the authors of the various essays in this book. The following "Suggestions for Further Reading" are only intended to indicate additional available material and to emphasize certain aspects. The editor is grateful to all the contributors who provided the information and observations on the readings.

### Britain

The British national experience of the Second World War has been the subject of a lively and fruitful debate among historians. The official History of the Second World War is a natural starting point. It contains a Military, Popular Military, Civil and Medical Series. Both general and specific issues are debated in the following books, with few of the authors sharing the same point of view. Arthur Marwick's voluminous output on the subject includes: Britain in the Century of Total War (London 1968); War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century (London 1974); The Home Front, The British and the Second World War (London 1976); and "People's War and Top People's Peace?" in Alan Sked and Chris Cook, eds., Crisis and Controversy: Essays in Honour of A.J.P. Taylor (London 1976). Dissenting views are contained in Paul Addison, The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War (London 1975), Henry Pelling, Britain and the Second World War (London 1970), and Angus Calder, The People's War (London 1969).

### Yugoslavia

Wartime Yugoslavia remains a topic of increasing interest which will be further intensified with the death of Marshal Josep Tito. Among the more useful books are Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg, eds., British Policy Towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece (London 1975), Proceedings of a Conference on Britain and European Resistance 1939-1945 (Oxford, (mimeographed) 1962), F.W. Deakin, The Embattled Mountain (London 1973), Milovan Djilas, Wartime (New York 1977), M.J. Milazzo, The Chetnick Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance (Baltimore 1975), Walter R. Roberts, Tito, Mihailovic and the Allies 1941-1945 (New Brunswick 1973), and Jozo Tomasevich, War and Revolution in Yugoslavia 1941-1945: The Chetnicks (Stanford 1975).

### Norway

The literature on the Norwegian government's wartime history is not very extensive, and there is little available in English. A post-war parliamentary commission of inquiry published its report in 1947. The evidence on which the report was based, a comprehensive survey of activities and events, appeared as Den Norske Regjerings Virksomhet under krigen, fra 9 april 1940 til 22 juni 1945. Departmentenes meldinger, 4 vols. (Oslo 1948). This should be read in connection with the important collection of documents, Regjeringen og hjemmefronten under krigen (Oslo 1948). The most important memoirs are those by Trygve Lie, Med England i ildlinjen (Oslo 1955), the same author's Hjemover (Oslo 1958), Paul Hartmann, Bak Fronten (Oslo 1955), and Nils Hjelmtveit, Vekstar og vargtid (Oslo 1969). Two brief, popular accounts are by J. Andenaes, M. Skodvin and O. Riste, Norway and the Second World War (Oslo 1966),

and O. Riste and B. Nokleby, Norway 1940-1945: The Resistance Movement (Oslo 1970). N.M. Udgaard, Great Power Politics and Norwegian Foreign Policy (Oslo 1973) is an important study, as are the relevant articles in European Resistance Movements 1939-1945 (Oxford 1964), and Proceedings of a Conference on Britain and European Resistance 1939-1945 (Oxford, (mimeographed) 1962).

### United States

The subject of American leadership in World War Two has been intensively studied and the findings are scattered in official and unofficial accounts. James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt The Soldier of Freedom (New York 1971), and Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History (New York, rev. ed. 1950) gives an overall picture of President Roosevelt's wartime career. The memoirs of three members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff - William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York 1950), Ernest J. King, Fleet Admiral King, A Naval Record (New York 1952), and Henry Arnold, Global Mission (New York 1952) - and the biography of a fourth, Forrest C. Pogue, George C. Marshall, vols. II - III (New York 1966, 1973) are all helpful. Illuminating accounts of wartime diplomacy and political-military relationships include Herbert Feis, Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought (Princeton 1957), William H. McNeill, America, Britain and Russia, Their Co-Operation and Conflict (London 1953), John L. Snell, Illusion and Necessity, The Diplomacy of Global War, 1939-1945 (Boston 1963), and Gaddis Smith, American Diplomacy During the Second World War, 1941-1945 (New York 1965). Detailed study of strategy from the Washington perspective can be found in the official United States Army in World War Two series. Two brief distillations are presented in Samuel Eliot Morison, Strategy and Compromise (Boston 1958), and Kent Roberts Greenfield, American Strategy in World War Two: A Reconsideration (Baltimore 1963). Walter Millis, Harvey C. Mansfield and Harold Stein, Arms and the State: Civil-Military Elements in National Policy (New York 1958), and Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (Cambridge, Mass. 1957) examine civil-military relations in decision making during the pre-war and war years. Finally, Richard Polenberg, War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945 (New York 1972) is an insightful survey of domestic policy and the home front.

### France

Wartime France has kept a generation of historians busy debating a complex national experience. A useful bibliographical guide can be found in J.B. Duroselle, "Les Relations internationales de 1918 à 1949", Historiens et géographes, Revue de l'Association des professeurs d'histoire et de géographie de l'enseignement public, no. 275, Sept. - Oct. 1979, pp. 47-68. The same author's La Décadence 1932-1939, and Histoire diplomatique de 1919 à nos jours (Paris, 7th ed. 1979) are valuable, along with the studies by Pierre Renouvin, Maurice Beaumont, and the more recent work of H. Poidevin, J. Bariety, P. Milza, P. Guillen, S. Berstein and H. Carrere d'Encausse. For World War Two, Henri Michel, La Seconde guerre mondiale, 2 vols. (Paris 1977) is still fundamental; as are his previous La drôle de guerre (Paris 1971), Pétain, Laval, Darlan, trois politiques (Paris 1972) and Le Procès de Riom (Paris 1979). L. Mysrowicz, Autopsie d'une défaite (Paris 1973) is an in-depth analysis, while Marc Bloch, L'Étrange défaite (Paris 1946) remains interesting. A basic guide to French nationalism is R. Remond, La Droite en France (Paris, 2nd ed. 1963), which can be supplemented with M. Cotta, D. Dupeux, E. Goguel, and A. Siegfried. On Pétain see the work by A. Conquet; G. Groussard on the resistance inside France; and Charles Tillon on the communist resistance. The

communist view is given in publications of the Institut Maurice Thorez by G. Bourderon, J. Ellenstein, F. Hincker, V. Joannes and G. Willard. A variety of historians, including P. Mus, R. Grimal, P. Guillaume, J. Valette and X. Yacono, have analyzed colonial nationalism and decolonization. Other relevant monographs are J. Ganiage, H. Deschamps and O. Guittard, L'Afrique au XXe siècle (Paris 1966), Charles M. Julien, Le Maroc face aux impérialismes, 1415-1956 (Paris 1978), Charles R. Ageron, Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine (Paris 1979), and J. Chesneux, P. Devillers, J.P. Huard, Le Thanh Kwoi and P.R. Feray, Le Vietnam au XXe siècle (Paris 1979).

## Canada

Still in an early stage of exploration, the Canadian wartime experience is analyzed in C.P. Stacey, Arms, Men and Governments: The War Policies of Canada, 1939-1945 (Ottawa 1970), J.L. Granatstein, Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-1945 (Toronto 1975), the same author's The Politics of Survival: The Conservative Party of Canada 1939-1945 (Toronto 1967), and W.A.B. Douglas and Brereton Greenhous, Out of the Shadows: Canada in the Second World War (Toronto 1977). Relevant biographies include J.W. Pickersgill and D.F. Forster, The Mackenzie King Record, vol. I, 1939-1944, vol. II, 1944-1945 (Toronto 1960, 1969), and Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, C.D. Howe: A Biography (Toronto 1979). Industry or business studies are regrettably lacking; as are published analyses of wartime propaganda. There is no full-length examination of French-Canadian opposition to conscription, but the question can be followed in J.L. Granatstein and J.M. Hitsman, Broken Promises: A History of Conscription in Canada (Toronto 1977), R. MacGregor Dawson, The Conscription Crisis of 1944 (Toronto 1961), and the personal testimony in Andre Laurendeau, La crise de la conscription (Montreal 1942). Foreign policy is documented in official collections which can be supplemented by R. MacGregor Dawson, Canada in World Affairs: Two Years of War - 1939-1941 (Toronto 1943), H. Gordon Skilling, Canadian Representation Abroad: From Agency to Embassy (Toronto 1945), F.H. Soward, Canada in World Affairs: From Normandy to Paris, 1944-1946 (Toronto 1950), and James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada, vol. III, Peacemaking and Deterrence (Toronto 1972). The pioneering study, from the Canadian perspective, on atomic diplomacy is Wilfred Eggleston, Canada's Nuclear Story (Toronto 1965). This should now be supplemented with John Holmes, The Shapin of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1947, vol. I (Toronto 1979); and with Margaret Gowing, Britain and Atomic Energy, 1939-1945 (London 1964), and Martin J. Sherwin, A World Destroyed: The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance (New York 1975) for the Anglo-American context. An examination of Canadian air and naval policy can begin with the official accounts by Gilbert Tucker, The Naval Service of Canada, vol. II (Ottawa 1952), and Stanley W. Dziuban, Military Relations between Canada and the United States, 1939-1945 (Washington 195). Joseph Schull, The Far Distant Ships (Ottawa 1952) is a necessary introduction to the subject of naval operations, but there is no similar official analysis of Canadian air operations in the Battle of the Atlantic. Leslie Roberts, There Shall be Wings (Toronto 1959) is a brief, well-written story of the RCAF. Military men in Canada have been surprisingly reticent, particularly the airmen. The best naval memoirs are Alan Easton, 50 North: An Atlantic Battleground (London 1963), James Lamb, The Corvette Navy (Toronto 1977), and Harold Lawrence, A Bloody War (Toronto 1979).