SVEN HEDIN'S
GERMAN DIARY.

1935—1942.

Translated by Joan Bulman, M.A.

Dublin—1951.

SVEN HEDIN'S GERMAN DIARY.

SVEN HEDIN'S GERMAN DIARY

PREFACE

AFTER the upheavals that have followed upon the end of the Second World War there is a danger that historical truth may become distorted and personalities and events shown in the light in which it is in the interests of later ages to present them. It has seemed to me, therefore, that some useful purpose might be served by describing, without embellishment, addition or detraction those things—even though they only constitute small details in the great drama—which I myself saw and heard with my own eyes and ears.

I should like to make it clear that the initiative for my journeys to Berlin rested with no one but myself, and that no one, either in an official or private capacity, stood behind my conversations with the leading men of the Third Reich. At the time of my first visit to Germany after the outbreak of war, on 14th October 1939, I had not met a single member of the Swedish Government for four years. No one had any idea as to my plans. Only twice during the course of the war did I call upon the Swedish Foreign Minister. King Gustaf I kept regularly informed of the progress of my activities.

During my visits to Berlin I was always shown the utmost kindness and courtesy by the Swedish Minister, Arvid Richert, and his staff, for which I should like now to express my warmest thanks. Herr Richert was provided with detailed, word-for-word accounts of the conversations I had had with the German leaders, and I knew that this information was later passed on to the Foreign Office in Stockholm. The Germans were always clearly informed that my visits were made entirely on my own responsibility.

As my aim has been to describe events as they appeared to me at the time, it will be useless to search for references to the Swedish White Papers, the proceedings at the Nuremberg Trials, or the books of Churchill and others. To colour the account in accordance with the tragic events of later years would be to falsify the impressions I myself received in 1940 when Germany stood at the height of her power.

Side by side with the political conversations I have also described the private negotiations I was having at the same time with my publishers in Leipzig and Gotha. This gives the book the more vivid character of a diary narrative. With regard to the fateful progress of the war itself I have only inserted a few brief references here and there in order to make clear the context.

Stockholm, 12th March 1949.

SVEN HEDIN.

The Story of a Book

ON my return to Stockholm on 15th April 1935, after an absence of many years on travels and explorations in Central Asia, I found myself in an awkward financial situation. I had left large debts behind at the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank in Peking in connection with the responsibilities I had assumed towards the Chinese scientists who took part in the earlier phases of the great expedition. Moreover I was in need of a considerable sum to enable me to set in hand at once the working up of the vast material, in the form of collections and notes accumulated during our eight years in Asia by every member of my learned staff, which was now to be published as a series of scientific monographs.

It was for this reason that I accepted without hesitation a generous and promising invitation by Herr Ebner, the Berlin concert manager, to undertake a longish lecture tour describing the work and experiences of the expedition.

Accompanied by my faithful secretary, my sister Alma, and always by one or other of the Drs. Montell, Hummel, Norin and Ambolt, all of whom had taken part in the Asiatic expeditions, I set off at the beginning of October 1935 for the capital of the Third Reich, where, as so often before, we chose the Hotel Kaiserhof as our place of residence.

On 9th October the campaign began with a visit to Field-Marshal Hermann Goering, to whose flat in Leipzigerstrasse I had been introduced by my old friends Eric and Mary von Rosen, Goering's brother-in-law and his wife, and I had and hour's conversation with Goering, who discoursed in his confident and convincing way of the growing greatness and power of Germany.

Suddenly he pulled out his watch and exclaimed: "*Donnerwetter*, it is five to six, and at six o'clock you have to be with Hitler!"

This was the first I had heard of the arrangement. But fortunately Goering's car always stood ready at the door and the distance to the then Old Reich Chancellery was not great. I arrived at the appointed time and was taken in charge by an adjutant who conducted me to the Führer's study. The only contact I had previously had with him had taken the form of a telegram on 16th October 1933 in which he had congratulated me on the fortieth anniversary of my setting out on my first more comprehensive expedition to Central Asia and Tibet. I had scarcely thought about this anniversary myself, but learnt afterwards that my friend and publisher, Hans Brockhaus, had inserted a notice explaining the significance of the day in the German Press. On 19th February 1935, when I was in Nanking, Hitler had sent me another telegram congratulating me on my 70th birthday. Finally on my arrival at the Schlesischer Bahnhof, the last lap of my journey from Moscow and Warsaw on the morning of 14th April 1935, he had sent a few gentlemen to welcome me.

He received me at the Reich Chancellery as though we had been old friends. He was tall and manly, a powerful and harmonious figure who held his head high, walked erect and moved with assurance and control. He did all the talking himself almost the whole of the time, describing in clear and forceful words the objectives of National Socialism and his efforts to raise up Germany and her people from the humiliation that had been thrust upon them at Versailles and from the morass in which they had been struggling under the indolent and weak-willed government of the Weimar Republic. He set forth the principles of the new organisation with incisive emphasis and spoke with evident satisfaction of the determination and enthusiasm with which the young people were being brought up to become industrious and useful members of society. The German people accepted his principle: one people, one Reich, one leader, and no one doubted of a brilliant future. "There is seething vitality everywhere, unemployment is being eradicated—I should like to show you everything myself, but I have to be always at my post and time is short!"

After a few questions about the situation in China and Central Asia he rose and said he hoped to have an opportunity to talk to me later at greater length.

The result of my first conversation with Hitler was that I had my work cut out to appear in time at the Marble Hall at the Zoo, where an audience of 1,400 was awaiting me. Among its more distinguished members may be mentioned Goering, sitting between Count and Countess von Rosen, my old friend Einar af Wirsén, the Swedish Minister, and his charming wife, the Colonial Minister Solf, at whose Embassy in Tokio I had received so much hospitality in 1923 immediately after the great earthquake, Prince and Princess zu Wied, who were then on a visit to Berlin, my friend of fifty years' standing, Professor Albrecht Penck, the Chinese Ambassador Liu Cheng Chieh, and others. The President of the Anthropological Society, Professor Hans Virchow, son of the great Rudolf, made a speech of welcome, and Professor Krebs, President of the Geographical Society, moved the vote of thanks.

After a later lecture at the Philharmonie in Berlin we received a visit at the Kaiserhof from two men whom we were to reckon during the next few years as among our closest friends. They were Dr. Walter Funk, Secretary of State in the Reich Ministry of Information and Propaganda, and Dr. August Diehn, head of the Kali syndicate. The former was a plump, smooth-shaven, pleasant and jovial little man, a sincere National Socialist but open-minded and tolerant of other opinions. Otherwise he could never have been on terms of such firm friendship with Diehn, who did not believe in the new doctrines at all but cherished brilliant plans of his own for the rebuilding, not merely of Germany but of all the world, in happiness and prosperity.

Our conversation was a fruitful one and opened up fresh paths and possibilities for realising my scientific plans. Funk told me that he had all my books in his library and that with their aid he had taken part in all my expeditions. I mentioned that I was anxious to publish an atlas of the whole area covered by our expeditions in Asia and that I hoped the work might be undertaken by Justus Perthes' Geographical Institute at Gotha, which had published the whole of the

map material from my first expedition of 1893-1897 in the form of magnificent sheet-maps without its costing me a penny. Funk assured me that both the German Government and Justus Perthes would regard it as a privilege to be allowed to complete this important work. There was a large institution in Berlin called the Research Association for German Science, that would certainly be glad of the opportunity to support an undertaking of such importance to international scholarship, and it could also rely on Government assistance in so doing.

Funk was as good as his word, and detailed work on this atlas of Central Asia in 54 sheets, to be completed in six years, was begun in the summer of 1938. Three sheets had been issued when the war broke out and slowed the work down, and after the defeat of Germany it was abandoned altogether.

* * *

With Berlin as starting-point we now set out on a frenzied tour from town to town all over Germany, where I lectured 111 times in 91 different German cities and in addition 19 times in the neighbouring countries. In those five months we covered the whole length of the equator, 14,000 miles by train and 11,000 by car. In spite of the heat and the rush we found time to visit many world-famous monuments and centres of Germany's high culture in the form of museums and art galleries, magnificent buildings from by-gone centuries, places in which immortals such as Beethoven, Johann Sebastian Bach, Immanuel Kant, Goethe, Schiller and many others were born and where they ended their days after presenting humanity with some of its finest achievements in science, art and music, and we admired the Zwinger and the museums in Dresden and places in Nuremberg, Wittemberg and Worms associated with the name of Luther, Aachen Cathedral and its emperor's throne and its treasures of inestimable value, the Princely-Episcopal Palace at Würzburg—"fine vicarage", as Napoleon called it, the noblest castle I have ever seen—and we saw many other places rich in memory which only a few years later were to be wiped off the face of the earth by enemy bombs. Little though we realised it at the time, each such visit was a farewell for

ever to some of the most glorious creations of the human spirit.

Everywhere we made interesting acquaintances and many new friends. Among these were four Reich Stadtholders, including Sauckel of Weimar, later condemned to death at Nuremberg. Dr. Goerdeler, burgomaster of Leipzig, an able man who was hanged for his complicity in the conspiracy against Hitler in 1944, gave an unforgettable reception in our honour at the old Town Hall. Baldur von Schirach, the Reich Youth Leader, held a banquet for us and told us that he had six million youths under his banners and that the first principle that was instilled into them was an unswerving faith in God.

I used to sit silent beside the driver on these long car-drives so as to save my voice for lecturing. It was then that the idea came to me to write a book about Hitler's Germany, and by the end of the trip my plan was complete. On 31st March 1936 I went to see Dr. Funk at the Ministry of Propaganda and said to him:

"I am thinking of writing a book about the new Germany."

"Excellent, I am glad to hear it, and both the Führer and the German people will be pleased."

"But so far I have nothing to go on but a jumble of external impressions. I need a systematic survey of the whole of your organisation, and that could only be obtained by a few months' study in Germany under expert guidance."

"Quite so. Just let me know what you want and I will arrange the whole course for you."

"I wish to be incognito so as to work in peace."

Funk then proposed that I should be given the use of a villa at Wannsee, complete with servants, kitchen and car, and that an expert should be placed at my disposal to accompany me to some of the factories for synthetic products, I. G. Farben, labour camps and youth camps, dockyards, land reclamation areas, concentration camps, schools, and all the other things on which the foundations of the Reich rested. For myself the closing months of the year would be the most convenient.

"Fine! Write and let me know a few weeks in advance and then telegraph the date of your arrival. You will find everything in order."

* * *

I spent the next few months finishing off my book, *The Silk Road,* and in addition had to devote a part of every day to working with my secretary, Docent Gösta Montell, on the big scientific series for the publication of which the 1936 Swedish Riksdag had voted a grant in aid. The only break I had was during the first ten days of August, when I travelled down to attend the XI Olympaid, at which I had been invited to address the youth of the world from the arena of the Stadium: "*Ich rufe die Jugend der Welt*!"[1] On this

[1] "I call the youth of the world!"

occasion my niece Märta acted as my secretary. We saw the last torch-bearer in the long chain of young men who had brought the Olympic flame from Greece come running across the Stadium to kindle the sacred fire on the altar with his torch.

Our seats were between the ninety-year-old Field-Marshal von Mackensen and Dorpmüller, Minister of Railways. The aim had been to follow the procedure at the Games of antiquity as closely as possible. At these it was customary for learned men to deliver erudite discourses to the youthful participants, the discus-throwers and other contestants, and to the spectators round the arena. In Berlin Admiral Byrd was to speak on behalf of America, General Smuts of Africa, Lord Rutherford of Australia, Admiral Saito of Asia, and I on behalf of Europe. But Saito was murdered a few months before the Games, Byrd was at the South Pole, Smuts had a Parliamentary session, and Rutherford had not been in Australia for 30 years. So I was left to represent the foreign contingent alone, which I did with a lecture entitled "The part played by the horse in the history of Asia."

* * *

On 2nd October 1936 we were in Berlin again and were met by Ministerialrat Dr. Ott, a pleasant, middle-aged man of the old school, who drove us out to Villa Alsen, Königs-strasse 4, in Wannsee, where we were to reside until the middle of December. The owner, an industrialist named

Richard Heike, had placed this beautiful and distinguished-looking villa at our disposal complete with servants.

Here my "instructor", Oberregierungsrat, later Ministerialrat in the Ministry of Propaganda Dr. Wilhelm Ziegler, who was to direct my studies in the doctrines and views of National Socialism, appeared the following day. He piled up the table with stacks of books and brochures, marked all the passages I ought to read, and delivered lectures on which I made notes. These theoretical studies were interrupted time and again by expeditions to centres of industry and labour, where we were always shown round by some expert on the spot. I will mention here in all brevity just a few such episodes.

On 6th October the year's great Winter Relief Campaign was opened in the Deutschlandhalle. The enormous hall was packed with 20,000 spectators and a body of 160 standard-bearers stood arrayed round the rostrum. We had an excellent view of both the speaker and the row of ministers seated on the platform.

A fanfare! The Führer entered to a storm of applause from the audience, which had risen as one man to its feet, and 20,000 hands were raised to greet him. As usual he wore a solemn expression and seemed not to notice the acclamation. He took his seat behind the rostrum. First Funk spoke a few words about the purpose of the meeting. Then Goebbels mounted the rostrum and made an oration, the burden of which was thanks to the Führer for the Winter Relief that was going to provide the whole people with bread and clothes. At all the more laudatory passages Hitler made a deprecatory gesture of the hands as much as to say: No flattery, I have heard all that before. Then came his own turn to speak. He did so forcefully and passionately, his voice vibrating with emotion. No difficulties, nothing must be allowed to stand in the way of the people's welfare. Not one of my German *Volksgenossen*[1] must go hungry, cold or homeless. It was the duty of each and all to contribute what they could to the great collection. He hoped and trusted that year by year the sum received would grow by many hundred million marks.

[1] Compatriots.

On 11th October we saw as much as anyone was permitted to see of Krupp's enormous works at Essen. One day we had dinner with Krupp von Bohlen, whose wife was the daughter of the great Krupp.

On 2nd November we were invited to dinner with General von Seeckt and his wife. There we found a quite different milieu from that of the new men. Old-fashioned, solid luxury and refinement, tail-coats and white ties. Among the guests was Beck, Chief of the General Staff, a small, outwardly insignificant man, who sent in his resignation in 1938 in protest against Hitler's war plans, and in 1944, after the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life on 20th July, committed suicide. I knew von Seeckt from the days of Mackensen's campaign in Galicia in 1915, when he had served as Chief of Staff. I had also met him in Stockholm in 1923, in Peking in 1933, and in Nanking in 1935. His attitude towards the new era was reserved and stiff. He had said to me once in Peking that he had a certain respect for Hitler and regarded him as a true patriot with lofty aims for his country. An army must be the affair of the people and the Reich, not of a party.

On the way to von Seeckt's we passed through a part of Unter den Linden where the collection was in full swing for the Winter Relief. Goebbels himself was there with a collecting box. The street was packed with people. A policeman escorted us on foot to the Minister. Coins were pouring in to the large collecting-box, and a fresh one had to be brought out about every other minute. We only had time to speak a word in passing as we dropped our contributions in, and he asked how work was progressing on the new book.

Before we went home in December we took our leave of von Seeckt. It was the last time I was to see this remarkable officer, for he died two weeks later, on 28th December.

The following day I was present, with Professor Albrecht Penck, at a students' soirée at the Oceanographical Museum. It was plain, and one could not help but feel, that the atmosphere was not the same that it used to be. Nearly 50 years before I had been a student myself at the University of Berlin. Things were different then. Then there were teachers of world reputation—Richthofen, Helmholtz, Virchow, Kiepert,

Dames, and others. Now science was only supported in so far as it benefited the new philosophy.

I was further confirmed in this view by a visit to Dr. Rust, the Minister of Education. He was a man of abounding energy and physical strength, a human dynamo, but otherwise insignificant. All knowledge that did not directly benefit the State and the party was unnecessary and could, at any rate for the present, be dispensed with! Only physics, chemistry, agriculture and other useful sciences mattered.

Another Reich Minister whom I called upon was Dr. Kerrl, who was responsible for Church affairs. He was more of a weak and unassuming man. Kerrl declared that is was untrue to say that the National Socialists were godless. Significantly enough he presented me with Mikael Pradin's two masterpieces: *Genghis Khan* and *The Heritage of Genghis Khan*. Kerrl told me that Hitler had read both volumes, which tell how a world empire was established 700 years ago.

I spent the 9th and 10th December with Kaiser Wilhelm at Doorn. Reports were just arriving of the abdication of the new King of England. The Kaiser considered it monstrous and indefensible that a man who had been born King of England and Emperor of India should throw away his crowns for the sake of a woman.

Before we left for home we went up to say goodbye to Goering. Talking about the Winter Relief I told him about my sister's creation, the Flower Fund, and her idea that the, at a low estimate, thirty million kronor that are sacrificed annually in Sweden in the form of flowers for the dead and to lay on graves could be put to a better use if they were given to living people who were in need. Goering exclaimed:

"Thirty million in Sweden corresponds to four hundred million here! People must learn to cultivate sunflowers and potatoes for the living instead of flowers for the dead!" Then he seized a pad and jotted down a number of details and said that next year he would send representatives to Stockholm to study the organisation thoroughly. Nothing was ever heard of them. In actual fact the Third Reich at the height of its glory used flowers on a scale of magnificence never known before.

An Exciting Correspondence

ON my return to Stockholm I set to work at once sifting the material I had brought with me and writing my book about the Third Reich. The work proceeded rapidly and was almost completed by the time Dr. Ziegler arrived in Stockholm by air on 14th March 1937 to hand over certain information and figures that had not been obtainable in time in Berlin. Brockhaus's were having a translation made into German chapter by chapter as I wrote. Dr. Ziegler, who had been our faithful cicerone on our travels in Germany the previous autumn, never made any comment on the more delicate passages in the book but left all criticism to his chief, Dr. Walter Funk. Ziegler, of course, knew the contents word for word as soon as Brockhaus's translation was ready in typescript. On his return to Berlin he handed a copy to his chief.

When Ziegler came to see me in Stockholm for the second time, on 10th April 1937, he had to report that Funk had read the whole book in German typescript and that the work could not in any circumstances be published in Germany in the form I had given it. In a copy which Ziegler showed me Funk had crossed through in red pencil all those passages in the chapters on the Jews, religion, science, the Nobel Prize, and the youth movements that would have to be either deleted or substantially rewritten. Ziegler also told me that Funk had called Hitler's attention to these passages and that Funk's words merely echoed the Führer's. During Ziegler's stay in Stockholm we discussed the problem far into the nights. He also consulted Dr. Meynen, the German Chargé d'Affaires, who was upset about it and wrote to the German Foreign Office that a breach on this point would not improve relations between Germany and Sweden. Two German newspaper correspondents, from the *Kölnische Zeitung* and *Frankfurter Zeitung,* had also got wind of the matter and came to see me.

They were forbidden to refer to it in their newspapers, but when I explained the situation to them they said that millions of Germans thought as I did, but that a book that criticised National Socialism would never be allowed to appear in Germany.

On his arrival in Stockholm on 10th April Ziegler had handed me a letter from Funk in which the latter, after a few introductory words, wrote:

> "First of all I should like to thank you deeply and sincerely for the great and difficult work which you, *hochgeehrter Doktor,*[1] have achieved in completing this book not merely for Germany but for the whole world and for our age. I am firmly convinced that this document, of truly historical value, will contribute in the highest degree towards dispelling innumerable misconceptions about National Socialist Germany and reveal the absurdity of millions of lies and slanders about the German people and the German Government. The book is the work of an objective observer . . . "

[1] "honoured doctor".

Then followed a few excessively flattering remarks about myself and my fitness for the task. He was convinced that the book—"as it now stands"—would fulfil when it went out into the world the purpose for which I had intended it.

After that the qualifications began! He continued in his letter of 8th April 1937:

> "But now there appear in the text—as it lies before me—very considerable difficulties in the way of promulgating the book in Germany, and this for reasons which you probably did not have in mind *a priori* and doubtless would not have understood. The basis of the authoritarian government of the National Socialist Reich is absolute unanimity of will and opinion among the entire population and that this unanimity be rigorously maintained. Criticism of the National Socialist form of government in a country under authoritarian rule such as the German Reich cannot be tolerated, as otherwise the very foundations of the State would be shattered. Now in the various chapters of your work you have not merely described things and people in the new Germany as they are and as you have seen them,

but you have also set out, in lengthy expositions backed by scientific and historical arguments, to show that certain essential elements in the National Socialist philosophy and form of government are false and injurious. Such investigations are above all those that concern the policy of National Socialist Germany with regard to Jews and the Church. No unprejudiced arbitor can or should expect of you, a member of a foreign, even though closely-related and friendly nation, that you should accept without criticism everything you found in Germany or even go out of your way to show it in a favourable light. Quite apart from the fact that we could never make any such demand particularly of you, the deeply respected friend of the German way of life and German science, the value of your work on Germany would also be *a priori* jeopardised if it were published under any such conditions or directives. If therefore you make certain reservations in your estimation of the form of government of the German State and people, there is of course nothing to be said against it, and we would gladly enter into practical discussions with you on these matters, all the more so as we know that your criticism is absolutely well-intentioned and kindly. Such a discussion can, however, in an authoritarian State, be conducted solely and exclusively by the Government, and not by the broad mass of the people. For in an authoritarian State responsibility lies solely and exclusively at the top. Responsibility is thus relegated from below, i.e. from the people, upwards, to the Government and not—as in Parliamentary States —from the upper to the lower layers. For these reasons an authoritarian Government cannot tolerate the publication in Germany of a book that criticises and rejects important principles of its system of government.

" To sum up: I am convinced that your book, if it were to appear in its present form, would fulfil its mission and achieve success. The book cannot, however, appear in Germany in its present form, since it would naturally be impossible to prevent the German National Socialist Press from refuting the arguments with which the author attacks the basic conception of National Socialism. A hostile front would therefore immediately and inevitably be formed

against the book, and that we cannot and will not tolerate. The only way out is therefore either that you should make up your mind to delete from the book all those passages which express criticism in principle of the National Socialist philosophy and system of government—when of course you would remain free to hold an actually divergent opinion —or else that the book should appear *only* in foreign countries, which moreover need not affect in any way the reputation and respect you enjoy in Germany, nor would it prevent us from continuing to promote your other undertakings and offer you effective assistance in your scientific plans and work.

" Oberregierungsrat Dr. Ziegler will on my instructions discuss with you fully the detailed aspects of the reshaping of your book which suggest themselves on the basis of the above explanation.

" I am convinced that your great and admirable work will by some means or other be brought to a felicitous conclusion, and remain, etc. . . .

Yours always very sincerely

Walter Funk."

So the book could not appear in Germany unless my critical comments on some of the basic principles of the National Socialist system were omitted. In other countries, of course, it could be published with impunity. I had already been assured that the German publishers had been in close contact with publishers in all other countries and that the question of contracts with these could easily be arranged by Brockhaus.

To me it was not merely a question of a dispute about opposing views on some of the basic principles of the German system. The question had its financial side too. Brockhaus had offered me the same terms for the new book as for my travel books, i.e. 16⅔ per cent. on the retail price of every copy sold. Funk had given me to understand that in all probability most of the innumerable Reich organisations, *Büchereien,* associations, labour camps, etc. would purchase it. They could not be ordered to, only recommended. So that for me a fortune was at stake, a sum that would have put me in a position to finance out of my own pocket the

publication of those groups of subjects in the expedition's scientific publications series for which the Swedish Riksdag had not granted the money—botany, meteorology and ethnography.

Dr. Ziegler returned to Berlin on 12th April and rang me up a few days later. He was just about to call on Funk to present his report on his Stockholm visit, but I asked him to wait until there had been time for Funk to receive my letter of reply. This letter was dated 16th April and ran as follows:

"When we first discussed my plan to write a book, I stated that I only wished to write according to the dictates of my conscience—objectively, scientifically, and possibly, critically, and you found this perfectly correct and natural. Now I have pointed out in very friendly and moderate terms that the removal of the distinguished Jewish professors who had done humanity great service was harmful to Germany and that in consequence a great deal of agitation against Germany had arisen in other countries. Thus my attitude on this question was adopted in Germany's own interests."

I then said a few words about my personal attitude to the Jews and passed on to the questions of youth and Christianity.

"The fact that I have been disturbed to see how your education of German youth, which otherwise I have always respected and admired, allows young people too little contact with religion and eternity, is also a consequence of the love and sympathy I have for the German people, and as a Christian I feel it my duty to express this openly. I have done so in the conviction that Luther's people, who are religious to the core, will understand me.

"I thank you most sincerely for informing me that the Government, even before its decision of 30th January 1937 (prohibiting Germans receiving the Nobel Prize) was reached, was perfectly informed as to the organisation of the Nobel Foundation. It is all the more incomprehensible, therefore, that an insult originating from a Norwegian Nobel Committee should have been taken as an occasion for reprimanding four Swedish Committees. It was my duty as a Swedish patriot to make public avowal of my own

country's freedom from responsibility for an unjust and unwise act, which here in Sweden could mostly only be regarded as a gratuitous insult and a piece of ingratitude (the granting of the Nobel Prize to Ossietski).

" You explain in your letter with admirable clarity and force that my book, in the form I have given it, cannot be tolerated in Germany. You present me *in amplissima forma* with an ultimatum: (1) Either the passages which you have marked in red in the German text must be cut; (2) or else the book cannot appear in Germany.

" I have never yet capitulated before my conscience and do not intend to do so this time either. I will therefore cut *nothing*.

" I consequently accept your second alternative and the book shall not appear in Germany.

" But this decision must be absolute—without any possibility of compromise. I will not agree to a solution by which F. A. Brockhaus would be allowed to print the book but the Press at the same time forbidden to review it and the organisation's libraries forbidden to purchase it. For in such circumstances the book would be strangled and I am not accustomed to receive such treatment."

I said that I regarded the factual discussion which Funk suggested as objectless, since my attitude was as inflexible as his. I concluded with the words:

" Your letter, *geehrter Herr Staatssekretär,* is so categorical that it would be tactless of me to suppose for a moment that it was not seriously meant from beginning to end."

In Sweden *Germany and the World Peace* appeared on 5th May 1937. Shortly afterwards a few copies of the proofs of the German edition arrived from Brockhaus: I was thus able to establish that the translation was accurate and extremely careful. Even the following passage in the Preface had been included:

" Those Swedes who dream of introducing Nazism in Sweden too forget that we, unlike the Germans, have not fought a four years' World War against overwhelmingly superior odds, have not experienced total defeat, collapse, a crushing peace, inflation, and a fifteen-year period of general humiliation. The conditions necessary for the introduction

of new forms of government and a new way of life do not therefore obtain among us. Our people should thank God that, in a stormy and threatening age, we live in happier and calmer circumstances than any other nation in the world."

On the same day, 5th May, I sent Hitler the first copy of the Swedish edition together with an accompanying letter describing briefly what had happened and commending Funk and Ziegler warmly to him.

A few days later a complete change seemed to have come over the situation and I could not avoid the impression that I had won the trick when Ziegler telephoned from Berlin on 11th May to say that " the Führer had decided that the book was to appear in Germany too ".

This impression was confirmed to the fullest degree when on 17th May I received the following letter in Hitler's own handwriting, dated 12th May:

" *Der Führer und*
Reichskanzler.
Hochgeehrter Herr Sven Hedin!

I acknowledge with many thanks receipt of your letter of the 5th of this month and of the accompanying first copy of the Swedish edition of your new book on Germany. I have had the accounts you give in this book of the work of the Third Reich read to me, and I and the German people are grateful to you for the attempt you have made to describe to your own people and other nations the German will to recovery and to call attention to what has already been done in Germany.

I note with pleasure the kindly recognition you give in your letter to the collaboration of Staatssekretär Funk and Oberregierungsrat Ziegler.

With hearty thanks for your good wishes for the work I have begun and for the future of Germany I remain with kindest regards

Yours sincerely,
Adolf Hitler."

There was not a hint in this letter of the ultimatum Funk had sent me more than a month previously. On the other hand it was noticeable that though Hitler indeed thanked

me both on his own account and that of the German people for the information the book would spread in Sweden and other countries, not a word was said about a German edition. If this was intentional, the wording was in truth diplomatic.

So I felt quite confident about the ultimate fate of the book in Germany. But week after week passed with still no word from Brockhaus about the advance copy being ready. I reminded him that he could not write my contracts with foreign publishers unless he first had a copy of the German book to show them. At the end of June Dr. Ziegler wrote that he had heard from Brockhaus that the book could not be published before the middle of July. When I asked Brockhaus what had happened and why he was dragging the matter out so interminably, he replied evasively and asked me to have patience a little longer. He had evidently received some secret directive which he was absolutely not in a position to reveal to me.

On 10th August I wrote quite briefly to Funk:

"The only thing I now earnestly beg of you, *hochgeehrter Herr Staatssekretär,* is that you will have the kindness to inform me whether my book is to be published in Germany or not. If it is to be published I should be very grateful to know *when* this is to be, and if it is not to be permitted to be published I should be grateful if you would make this decision, and the true reason for it, known through the Press."

Funk replied on 17th August:

"You know that I immediately realised the great difficulties that would arise over the publication of a German edition of your book the moment I had read the text, and that I also explained this to you in full. If now, in spite of that, permission has been granted for the publication of the German edition in the version to which you have considered that you must adhere, this has been done out of consideration of the fact that your unfavourable attitude to certain of the unalterable principles of National Socialist philosophy and government had arisen out of your sincere desire not to injure Germany in these respects but rather to be of service to her. I explained to you some time back that the authoritarian State cannot tolerate such a discussion

of the basic principles of its constitution and government before the German public and that consequently insuperable obstacles must arise in the way of a widespread publication of your book in Germany. Unfortunately you would not then accept my point of view, but insisted that the book must be published with the inclusion of the passages characterised by me as unsuitable.

"Secondly, you have justified yourself in this direction on the grounds that, according to your statement, large editions of the book are to be published in every cultural country in the world. Since, as I said before, your book is inspired by an honest desire to spread the truth about National Socialist Germany over the world, we have welcomed its publication and even—so far as was possible in view of your attitude referred to above—given it our support.

"The condition for the publication of the German edition was, then, that large editions of your book should appear in other countries. Now, however, it appears that the foreign editions, in so far as they have been published at all, are quite small and that in the most important countries negotiations for the publication of the book have not even begun. The firm of Brockhaus has consequently been informed that permission to publish the book in Germany still holds and also that the German text is available for translation into other languages, but that the date of publication and the size of the German edition must depend upon the appearance and sale of the book in other countries. Now we hear to our surprise that in the Czech edition all passages unfavourable to Czechoslovakia are to be cut. In these circumstances I find it quite impossible to understand, *hochgeehrter Herr Doktor,* why you refused to comply with the request I made to you some time ago to cut similarly the passages that are unsuitable for Germany. I understand that Brockhaus are to raise this question with you again. I should be delighted if we could reach an agreement on this point. You may believe me when I say that your refusal to accept some of the basic, and therefore unalterable, views of the National Socialist State has deeply troubled us all here in Germany, entertaining as we do a

high opinion of you personally and of your great life's work, and that we deeply regret that you have not found yourself in a position to enter into a discussion with us once more with a view to clearing these matters up, but rejected my proposals in this direction with the categorical order: 'Nothing is to be cut'. We know that you are a sincere friend of Adolf Hitler's Germany and, in order to preserve this friendship and notwithstanding all the serious obstacles, we have approved publication of your book. On the other hand it would be an impossible situation to have a discussion on these questions arising in Germany as a result of your remarks whereas in other countries the book was only published in small and consequently ineffective editions or else in a form that had been specially adapted to the requirements of the various countries. I shall be happy, now as always, to do anything in my power to bring about perhaps in the end a happy and satisfactory solution of this conflict, and ask you to accept my assurance that your great and highly important scientific work will always receive every possible support in Germany.

"With the expression of my undiminished esteem and respect I remain

Yours sincerely

Walter Funk."

"Stockholm, 25th August 1937.

"*Hochgeehrter und lieber Herr Staatssekretär,*

"Many thanks for your kind letter of 17th August.

"In your letter of 8th April you stated that criticism of Naional Socialist views could not be tolerated in an authoritarianly governed Germany.

"In your letter of 17th August you write that Herr Brockhaus has been informed that 'permission to publish the book in Germany still holds' . . . but that the date of publication and the size of the German edition must depend on the size and sale of the editions in other countries.

"Now other countries are moving very slowly in the matter, however, as all of them know me as an out-and-out friend of Germany's and they do not want a panegyric about Germany from my pen. When I had the honour of

calling on you on 4th April 1936, you told me that you had connections with various publishers in all countries, even Spain, and I have consequently paid little attention to the question of foreign editions until quite recently.

" Your comments with regard to a Czech edition in which certain passages are to be cut and your conclusion that certain passages could equally well be cut in the German edition are not altogether logical, since the book is about Germany and not about Czechoslovakia, and the passages in question relate to the Sudeten Germans and the unjust frontiers laid down at Versailles. The brief references to Czechoslovakia are of no significance. But I am more than willing to make it *a condition* for any Czech publisher that *not a word is to be cut.* I am writing about this by the same post to Herr Brockhaus. The result will in all probability be that the book will not appear in Czech.

" On 4th April 1936 I told you that I intended to write objectively and scientifically, which you then regarded as self-obvious.

" If my book were to be published in Germany in a version adapted for German readers, I should be making things impossible for myself for ever more in Sweden; and in other countries too—in particular Germany—I should be despised and rightly regarded as a miserable, characterless specimen. It distresses me that you can consider me for a moment capable of thus abandoning my conviction and my duty.

" More than four months have elapsed between your two last letters and we have not got an inch further.

" The conditions you raise, namely that the date of publication and the size of the edition must depend on the success of foreign editions, I interpret as a pretext for preventing publication of the book in a manner calculated to be as little wounding and insulting to me as possible. It would be more frank and straightforward to say that a book that presents the philosophy and basic principles of National Socialism as false and wrong cannot be tolerated in an authoritarian State—as you wrote in your letter of 8th April.

" As I now fully realise that my book is not desired in

Germany, and is not intended to appear there—or rather that permission for its publication has been made dependent on unheard-of and impossible conditions, I will now, when the constant questions are asked regarding the delay in publication of the German edition, no longer regard the affair as a secret. But I will, of course, treat the matter with the utmost tact, mention no names, and merely state that certain of my views could not be tolerated in Germany.

" In reply to your ultimatum of 8th April: that either certain passages in the book must be cut or else a German edition could not appear, I stated on 18th April that I accepted the second alternative, and that the book consequently should not be published in Germany. I added that I would not agree to the book being printed by Brockhaus—but the newspapers at the same time forbidden to review it and the organisation's libraries similarly forbidden to purchase it.

" That a political book by me should be banned in Germany is a matter against which I can raise no objections, as it is a question of German domestic policy, and the supreme German authorities have not only the right but also the duty to ban such writings as they consider injurious or dangerous. On the other hand I cannot tolerate that such a book should be approved and published and then hampered, checked and suppressed. I should regard such a development as a personal insult which I wish at all costs to avoid.

" There are therefore only two solutions to this situation: (1) either the book must be published now forthwith in my version, i.e. without any conditions, or (2) the book must be prohibited in Germany now forthwith.

" In the event of your deciding in favour of the second of these two alternatives, I need only add that the feelings I have manifested for Germany throughout the whole of my long life remain unalterably the same, and that my admiration for National Socialism remains undiminished even though I fear that some of its theories are dangerous and calamitous for Germany."

This was the last letter I ever wrote about the German book, and it was nearly four months before I received a reply:

" *Hochgeehrter Herr Doktor,*

" Unfortunately I have not had an opportunity until to-day to reply to your letter of 25th August 1937. I have been prevented by a number of circumstances from again devoting myself to the question of your book, *Germany and the World Peace*. These were above all my absence abroad for several months and my appointment as Reich and Prussian Minister of Finance, which has taken up a great deal of my time, but apart from that there were certain questions connected with your book which had to be settled and have been partly responsible for my delay in replying.

" I should perhaps deal first in my reply with the end of your letter. I accordingly repeat to you that a prohibition of publication of your book in Germany has never come into question. The publisher has also been informed to this effect. Certainly, as I have already pointed out to you several times, a German translation in the existing version might be characterised as undesirable, as in it you raise questions which in Germany must be regarded as settled and the discussion of which would be completely unfruitful and unsuitable. I proposed that you should undertake certain alternations, and we also held discussions with your publisher, F. A. Brockhaus, along these lines. The publisher has also been assured time after time that it was merely a question of your deciding in favour of certain alterations in your mode of expression in various places. I have never thought or suggested that your book should appear in Germany in a form specially adapted for German readers and it has equally never entered my head that you could act contrary to your conviction and your duty. But I was and still am of the opinion that the questions under discussion can affect neither your conviction nor your duty.

" You must only realise, *hochgeehrter Doktor,* that permission for the publication of your book has not in any way been made dependent on unheard-of and impossible conditions. If in existing circumstances you intend, according to what I have heard, to dissociate yourself altogether from the publication of a German edition, this would certainly seem for the moment to be the best solution,

although I remain always of the opinion that this should not remain the final fate of your work, which moreover will undoubtedly prove informative and productive of sympathy in the world at large.

"I know that our differences of opinion with regard to your book will in no way affect your attitude to the new Germany, and also that our admiration for you and your work will remain undiminished. The fact that you consider certain aspects of the system on which the new Germany is based to be dangerous and calamitous, will never be allowed to detract from the regard which the new Germany entertains for your works and undertakings.

"I should indeed have wished that the question of your book might have found a more satisfactory solution."

With this the fate of the German edition was sealed. I refused to cut a single word, and *Deutschland und der Weltfriede* never appeared. General Franz Ritter von Epp, Reich Governor of Bavaria, who came to see me in Stockholm in October after an elk-hunt, thought it monstrous that the book should have been banned. He deplored the mistakes so often made by the Government, of which there had never been more flagrant examples than in the twelfth hour of the previous war. Why had Hindenburg not prevented the Kaiser from escaping to Holland? Why had he not kept Ludendorff in check? Why had the mutineers in Kiel not been arrested? The leaders should have been executed and it would have been the easiest matter in the world to put the rising down.

Dr. Frick, the Minister of the Interior, was the guest of the Swedish-German Society in October. He thought that the ban would be interpreted everywhere as a sign of weakness. Professor Hans Wahl, creator of the new Goethe Museum in Weimar, who was later the guest of the same society, said to me: "If you had given way and cut the offending passages, you would have done for yourself in the eyes of the people of Germany."

Dr. med. Eddy Schacht, brother of Hjalmar Schacht the Reich Bank Director, and his wife came to see me on one occasion and asked why the book had been banned. When I explained that they had tried to persuade me to cut certain passages, in particular about the Jews, they exclaimed: "Well,

and what did you reply?" "*No,* of course!" "*Gott sei Dank*!"[1] they cried delightedly.

[1] "Thank God!"

The English version was published by Hutchinson's in London and was reviewed impartially and correctly in the English Press. Some of the reviews were critical but always in a dignified and restrained manner. I later met many Germans who had read the book in Swedish, English or some other language. Their attitude towards the ban was always the same. Undoubtedly my firmness had impressed even the German Government.

Of Walter Funk my impression was that at heart he thought and felt as I did, but that in consequence of his position he had to obey orders from above and adopt the attitude expressed in his letters to me. I learn with sorrow and disgust that he, in common with other "war criminals", is now repining under inhuman conditions in Spandau prison.

Another book about Germany, which I began in the late autumn of 1937 and which was published by Brockhaus the following year, aroused no misgivings among the authorities. It was entitled: *Fifty Years of Germany,* and consisted simply of my personal reminiscences of the past and not a word about the present. As usual, I sent it to a great many of my German friends. The dedications were written on loose sheets of paper and sent to Leipzig, wher they were pasted in to the various copies. Among the letters of thanks I received was one from the aged Field-Marshal von Mackensen, whose guest I had been during the campaign in Galicia in 1915. He wrote among other things:

> "The manifold duties with which my countrymen overwhelm me and keep me at work even up to my ninetieth year, have prevented me until now from immersing myself in your book. Every chapter is eloquent of your love and friendship for Germany. I thank you for the pleasure you have thus given me. Verbally I should be glad to follow up various points, and I hope that we have not met for the last time. May Germany prove capable of retaining not merely the power and greatness she has recovered but also the prestige in the world that was

established by the Hohenzollerns and most recently by Kaiser Wilhelm II, the greatest of modern martyrs, as well as by Germany's fighting men during the World War, who were also the foundation for Adolf Hitler's brave deeds! The, to me, incomprehensible acts and events of recent times leave me troubled as to the future. The danger of a new world war is not yet past; but 'world history has a conscience.' For these words of yours I thank you, honoured friend! They will carry me on into the approaching New Year . . . "

My letter of reply to von Mackensen concluded with the following words:

"As far as the present situation is concerned I agree in every respect with your Excellency. The events of November (the violent attacks on Jewish shops etc.) filled me with dread. Just because my heart beats warmly for Germany I cannot help seeing the future in dark colours. After her brilliant and incredibly magnificent ascent to undreamed-of power and greatness come these deeds that fill the whole world with indignation, hatred and disgust, and do such terrible injury to Germany's name and prestige in other countries and make Germany's position so difficult in every direction and in every field, commercial, cultural, scientific, political. Every true and sincere friend of Germany must ask himself: What is the New Year going to bring to Germany and the whole world? Only God in Heaven can answer that fateful question and the only thing we poor, weak humans can do is to commend ourselves to His mercy.

"I hope most warmly and sincerely that it may be granted me to meet your Excellency personally once again in this life. It would be too wonderful to discuss with you in peace and quiet the problems of our stormy time. . ."

Our hope of meeting again was never fulfilled. In the final hours of the war he had anticipated with such great uneasiness the aged Field-Marshal was taken prisoner and died as a British prisoner-of-war at the age of 96. British chivalry doubtless granted him all the privileges and consideration to which his age and distinction gave him the title.

The German version of my fifty-year reminiscences of his

country was a great success. The first edition alone brought in 70,000 kronor, or enough to pay the whole costs of publication of two meteorological volumes in our series of publications. And later editions made it possible to publish still further volumes.

* * *

In July of 1938 I spent a few days in Germany in consultation with my publishers. The calls I paid on the two Ministers, Funk and Rust, were directly connected with these consultations.

After a visit to Gotha, where the plans for the atlas of Central Asia were taking concrete shape, we moved on to Dresden, where our old friends Hans and Suse Brockhaus had a "country estate" in the middle of the town with two pleasant villas situated in the midst of wooded groves and heights, and with even a cheerfully running stream. In their company we visited once more the picture galleries, Raphael's Madonna, the Zwinger and the Green Vault and other famous edifices whose days were numbered. The learned and energetic Frau Suse was just then engaged in making a selection from my letters to Albert Brockhaus, Hans Brockhaus's father, and his to me. From 9th August 1892 until Albert Brockhaus's death in 1921 we had exchanged hundreds of letters. From the beginning until 11th January 1938 I had written 869 letters to Albert and Hans Brockhaus and the number of their letters to me was almost as great. Frau Suse's book is a volume of 350 pages.[1] There are letters there from Peking, East Turkestan, Tibet, and Persia, and above all from Stockholm, while Albert's replies are dated Leipzig or Dresden. For upwards of fifty years my private finances were largely dependent on my royalties from Brockhaus. We discussed everything together, both new travels and new books, and Albert and Hans Brockhaus always gave me good and valuable advice. Throughout the whole of his life Albert was my closest confidant in this respect, and apart from that he was an outstandingly fine, charming and educated man. This relationship of intimate friendship was transferred later to his son Hans and Frau Suse. The correspondence con-

[1] *Sven Hedin und Albert Brockhaus. Eine Freundschaft in Briefen zwischen Autor und Verleger.* F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1942.

tinued after 1921 with the same intensity as before, and the plans for many new books were evolved between us.

On our visit to the Brockhaus's at Dresden referred to above, the former Mayor of Leipzig, Dr. Goerdeler, was also present. About a year previously he had taken a week's absence from office and his deputy had seized the opportunity to remove Mendelssohn's statue from the Concert House. On his return Goerdeler had demanded that the statue be restored to its former place. There was a struggle about it and the matter was referred to the Government, which supported the deputy, whereupon Goerdeler was removed from office and obtained a position in the offices of Krupp's works at Essen. In the summer of 1946 the Russian administration restored Mendelssohn's statue to its former place, but tore down the victory monument for the war of 1870-71.

Goerdeler was no friend of the new system, and he feared that its policy was leading Germany straight into a second major war. But at the same time he had a blind faith in Germany's tremendous power and military strength. He also believed that the German Air Force would prove insuperable in a future war. I threw out:

" Yes, but if events follow much the same lines as before and America comes to Great Britain's aid, would not the enormous resources of American industry be a great danger to Germany?"

He replied: " Germany will be surrounded by a ring, a barrier of aircraft, against which all enemy aircraft will be smashed to pieces before they have crossed our frontiers."

Goerdeler was later selected for the post of Reich Chancellor in a Fourth German Reich. He was taken prisoner and executed by the National Socialists.

In the summer and autumn of 1938 discussion was rife in many quarters as to the possibility, indeed the probability, of a new war. On 5th July 1938 Reichsminister Walter Funk remarked to me: " We may have war within two years."

Lord Londonderry and Lord Dawson of Penn

AT a lunch given by the Prince and Princess Victor zu Wied on 12th March 1939 I had an interesting conversation with Lord Londonderry who, accompanied by his wife and daughter, had flown in his own aircraft to Stockholm. Just thirty years previously I had met his father at Lord Morley of Blackburn's, who was then Secretary of State for India. The younger Lord Londonderry had strong German sympathies and considered that Europe and the whole world would be happier if England and Germany could understand one another and talk together as friends. The existing (1939) world situation he characterised as lamentable and stupid. He said:

"All that is needed is that two strong, wise and sensible men, one English and one German, should meet together and thrash things out, and all the delicate questions could be cleared away and a firm and enduring peace established."

Two days later he sent me a copy of his book, *Ourselves and Germany,* published in 1938. In this he describes his own impressions of the Third Reich and his conversations with Hitler, Goering and Ribbentrop. He had formerly been Secretary of State for Air, but his visit to Germany was made as a private individual and not in any official capacity. He recalls in the Preface that " Herr Hitler had repeatedly solicited the goodwill of England and the friendly co-operation of the German and English peoples. . . . " " It is my earnest prayer now that no further opportunity may be allowed to slip by, as so many have done in the past, and that we may join hands with Germany before it is too late, if not in complete co-operation, at least in friendly understanding."

On 4th February 1936 Lord Londonderry had had a conversation with Hitler in which the latter spoke very openly of his anxieties about Soviet Russia. Germany's position was

precarious. To the west, political and financial insecurity and weak governments that were constantly changing. To the east, Russia. Hitler said:

"Against this decay in continental Europe stands the extraordinary development of Soviet power. Soviet Russia has not only become the greatest military power, but at the same time the embodiment of an idea. How such ideas had worked when combined with great strength we know only too well from the French Revolution. And Germany has learnt but a few years ago, from the example of its own body politic, the monstrous danger of contagion that Bolshevism brings with it. Thus we see ourselves in a position which is extremely dangerous. Pictures of distraught insecure governments on the one side, and the gigantic Soviet block, which is territorially, militarily and economically enormously strong on the other side. The dangers which arise from this are perhaps at the moment not clearly recognised by all, and have not yet come into the light of day with such clarity as they have here. But if this evolution goes any further, if the decomposition in Europe becomes more pronounced, and the strengthening of Soviet power continues at the same rate as hitherto, what will the position be in ten, twenty, or thirty years?

"Then, said the Führer, the fears which he had expressed would not have been proved imaginary but founded on undeniable facts. He summarised these facts as follows: (1) In Russia one has to deal with a nation of 180 millions. (2) Russia is territorially immune from attack. (3) Russia can never be overcome by a blockade. (4) Its industries are safe from aerial attack, as the most important industrial centres are from 4,000 to 6,000 kilometres from the frontiers."

Five years later Hitler was to have the opportunity of putting to the test the truth of the statements he had made to Lord Londonderry, and it is strange that he did not himself take heed of his own warning.

In a letter written to Herr von Ribbentrop from Londonderry House on 21st February 1936 Lord Londonderry expressed his gratitude for the courtesy, hospitality and goodwill that had been shown him everywhere in Germany, particularly by Ribbentrop, Goering and the Führer, even though his

visit had been quite unofficial. He invited Ribbentrop to London and hoped that he himself would have an opportunity of returning to Berlin in the future, though the political situation changed quickly and no one knew what the future might bring. He also said that, in spite of all the valuable information he had acquired from these three persons, he had realised on his return that he had no very clear picture in his mind of their desires in Europe itself, nor of the actual reasons which controlled their internal policy in relation to the Jews and also in relation to religious bodies.

In the course of the ten days during which I was in contact with Lord Londonderry either personally or by letter, his attitude towards Germany underwent, for very natural reasons, a radical change. On 12th March 1939 he had still been a Germanophil. Only a few days later Germany marched into Czechoslovakia, and on 20th March he wrote me a letter from London condemning Hitler's breach of faith in the strongest and most uncompromising terms, and declaring that he had broken with him for ever.

I replied on 22nd March:

"My sincere thanks for your kind letter, and I understand perfectly your feelings in the face of the latest events. Yet a world war would be worse, since it would involve the most terrible suicide in the history of humanity and I hope before God that it will be possible to prevent that and establish a more reasonable *modus vivendi* in Central Europe.

"Your book, *Ourselves and Germany,* which I have just finished, is admirable—sensible, clear and humane. If other statesmen had the same sound and healthy views as you, no wars or misunderstandings need ever arise in the world.

"It is my greatest hope that developments in the near future will be such as to make it possible for you to return to the views so well expressed in your valuable book.

"I preserve the happiest and pleasantest memories of our meeting on 12th March and remain, etc. . . ."

The hopes I expressed in my letter were brought to shame. Since then the past ten years have run their devastating course over the earth. How different everything might have been if only Lord Londonderry's views had found a hearing both in

London and Berlin—agreement between Great Britain and Germany!

* * *

Two months later a large group of German industrialists calling themselves " Deutsches Studien Büro " came on a visit to Stockholm. Among them was our friend August Diehn, head of the Kali Syndicate, with whom I had an instructive conversation. His views could be summarised as follows: " If there is a major war now—and it hangs by a thread—it will last for seven—perhaps even thirty—years, and will mean the end of Western civilisation. In Europe nothing but ruins will be left."

War hung in the air, and one had the oppressive feeling of an approaching storm. But at the Lingiad, which was held at the end of July 1939, both Germans and English took part on the same terms of comradeship as at the Olympiad three years previously. On 21st July the steamer *Wilhelm Gustloff* arrived in Stockholm with a large contingent of young German sportsmen under the leadership of Reich Sports Leader von Tschammer und Osten and Dr. Karl Diem, who had been General Secretary of the XI Olympiad. On the 25th I had invited the two last-named, Prince and Princess zu Wied and a few Swedish friends to dinner at my home. On the day before the dinner-party I was called to the telephone.

" Hallo, who is speaking?"

" Lord Dawson of Penn. I hear that you have invited my two German friends, Tschammer und Osten and Diem, to dinner to-morrow. Should you have any objection to my inviting myself as well?"

" No, on the contrary, it would be a great pleasure and honour for me if you would come!"

" May I bring my secretary, Miss Spafford, too?"

" By all means. You are both heartily welcome."

In my speech of welcome to my foreign guests I spoke of the pleasure it gave me to see them sitting in brotherly accord at my and my sisters' table, and said I regarded it as a symbol of the friendship that ought to exist between their two great nations in the world at large, a friendship that could mean more for the whole of humanity than any other single factor.

After dinner we went into my study. There Lord Dawson led me out of earshot of the others and said to me calmly and quietly, but with emphasis on every word:

"The moment Germany occupies Danzig—whether peacefully or by force of arms—we shall definitely and without hesitation declare war on Germany!"

I readily admit that I was, to say the least, surprised at this categorical ultimatum. I asked:

"A world war for Danzig's sake? Danzig is a German city and it is time the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles were revised."

He answered: "It is not so much a question of Danzig itself, but Danzig means the Corridor and after the loss of Danzig and the Corridor Poland would lose her access to the sea, wither away and suffocate. That is what Germany wants, so that she can treat Poland in the same way as she did Czechoslovakia. After that it is only a step to Rumania and her oil-fields, the Black Sea, the Dardanelles, the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal, one of the principal arteries of our Empire. So that if Danzig falls, the British Empire will be at stake. We know that we may find ourselves involved in another world war for Danzig's sake, but we will take the risk!"

I: "Are you prepared to assume such a responsibility?"

Lord Dawson: "We know that nothing would be left of civilisation, but we should not hesitate a moment."

I: "Is that the general opinion in England?"

Lord Dawson: "All Englishmen think as I do. England is in a state of violent excitement over the threat to Danzig and Poland, and we will risk anything."

I: "Then the prospect for the immediate future looks black."

Lord Dawson: "It does, all the more so as our position in East Asia is also threatened. If Japan occupies Hongkong, we shall make war in East Asia immediately. We know that that too is a frightful risk—but we shall take it."

The conversation was interrupted there. I did not for a moment doubt either the sincerity of Lord Dawson's words, or England's remorseless determination in face of the Polish question. The background to what Lord Dawson had said was probably the same as had led to Lord Londonderry's

change of attitude, namely Hitler's move against Prague, which was manifestly mainly responsible for deciding England's later attitude. In spite of all last-minute attempts to prevent the outbreak of war, the German armies on 1st September 1939 broke over the frontiers of unhappy Poland.

I find in my diary, under the heading " 5th September ", the following entry which reflects my own attitude to the war that had just burst out in full flame:

" In such a situation it is the duty of the Swedish Government to stand firm by the policy it has once and for all declared, the only correct one, of unswerving neutrality, and it is the duty of the Swedish people, each in his place, faithfully to support the King and his councillors and to defend our neutrality to the uttermost should we be attacked by a foreign Power. For us the task is to defend and protect our own land and our own homes even though all Europe should crumble."

A defeated England I regarded as an immeasurable misfortune, for the British Empire had for centuries been the firm barricade of iron and steel that had given security and order to all the coasts and seas of the earth. Without its inspired organisation the world would fall into hopeless disorder and disintegration. A defeated Germany meant in my opinion the opening of the floodgates to the unnumbered hordes of limitless Asia and consequently the downfall of Western culture. I saw in this latter alternative the greater danger for Sweden and her people. I therefore hoped and believed to the last that the Germans would succeed in defending their independence on the smoking ruins of their blasted, bleeding and paralysed realm, and that it would be given them at some future time to resume their rôle of protective barrier against the dangers from the East.

Another expression of my thoughts on the threshold of the Second World War is to be found in my book, *Chiang Kai-shek, Marshal of China,* p.290, the Preface to which is dated 3rd October 1939:

"A new World War! It *cannot* be true! Is it possible that the peoples of Europe have learnt nothing from the last one, is it conceivable that white, Christian people, who ought to set an example to coloured peoples and heathens, should

celebrate the 25th anniversary of the hell we then had to endure with another infinitely more terrible, a human slaughter which, when the heroes have wearied of killing one another and taking the lives of women and children, will leave no more trace in its tracks of this high culture that has been built up for thousands of years than heaps of ruins, desolation, and homeless hordes of wild, starving and ragged refugees!"

On 30th September 1939 I received a visit from a young English businessman on a trip to Finland. He regarded war between England and Germany as the sheerest lunacy, a madness that could lead to nothing but the destruction of both countries. He had therefore conceived a highly original plan. He would go to Berlin and talk to Hitler, and I was to prepare the way for him! Once there, he would say to the German Reich Chancellor:

"Fly to London, appear before the British Cabinet and say: 'I am here. This is a stupid and irresponsible war. Let us shake one another by the hand and come to a sensible understanding'."

"All right! But suppose the British Government puts him in prison and keeps him there till the end of the war?"

"Never! The British Ministers are sportsmen. They would be so impressed by Hitler's boldness and courage that they would rush to grasp him by the hand and immediately draw up the outlines for a peaceful agreement."

I tried to explain to my guest that Germany and the Reich Chancellery were closed to British visitors now and that the whole plan, sensible as was its underlying intention, was absurd. But he clung to it with the obstinacy of fanaticism.

Conversations with Goering and Hitler

ON 9th October 1939 Russian troops entered Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At the same time Paasikivi was sent to Moscow to open negotiations, at Russia's invitation, with Stalin and Molotov.

On 13th October I was seized with a sudden impulse to go to Berlin to discuss with Hitler the position of Sweden and Finland in the catastrophe that now threatened to overwhelm all Europe. I consulted no one, completed my passport arrangements with all speed and was given a *Grenzempfehlung*[1] by Prince zu Wied, who had wired to the German Foreign Office. Tickets were obtained with equal ease both for the night train to Malmö and for the aircraft that was to leave Bulltofta the following morning for Berlin. We accordingly landed there, my faithful secretary-sister Alma and I, at about midday on 14th October, and were met by Ministerialrat Dr. W. Ziegler and an official from the Foreign Office.

We had barely had time to take off our outdoor clothes and go into our sitting-room, a corner room in the Kaiserhof which looked out over the Wilhelmsplatz and the Reich Chancellery, when the telephone began to buzz. I picked up the receiver and asked:

"Hello, who is there?"

"Goering! Fanny[2] has just telephoned from Stockholm to say that you were coming to-day. I am here at Carinhall to rest and sleep for a couple of days. I absolutely must see you so as to explain the general situation to you before you meet the Führer the day after to-morrow, on Monday, that is. I have two times to offer you: either we could meet in Berlin on Monday morning or else you could come out here

[1] Frontier pass.

[2] Countess Fanny Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, Goering's sister-in-law.

to Carinhall to-morrow, Sunday the 15th."

"It would suit me admirably to come to-morrow as I am free for the whole of Sunday."

"Good, my car will be outside the main entrance to the Kaiserhof at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Excellent. Alma is here as well, may she come too?"

"Of course, she is very welcome."

Before ringing off he shouted: "I must tell you a wonderful piece of news. A German U-boat has sunk the British 29,000-ton battleship *Royal Oak* in Scapa Flow! Sensation all over England! *Auf Wiedersehen* to-morrow then!"

That evening I had a visit from a Legation Counsellor who merely came to inform me that my interview with Hitler was to take place on Monday and that I should be told further particulars in good time. He added:

"I come straight from three hours' duty in the Führer's Chancellery. He is overwhelmed with work but is imperturbably calm and as cold as ice."

Just before 10 o'clock on Sunday 15th October we were informed that a captain was waiting at the door with Goering's car. We hastened down and drove away due northwards at top speed through endlessly long streets and through yellowing avenues in the country districts. After we had been driving for an hour we came to the little lake on the shores of which stands Carinhall. Lt. Goering, a nephew of the Field-Marshal's, received us and took us into a pleasant room.

After a while we were escorted by another adjutant to our host's reception room, where Goering himself showed us to two armchairs beside a large window. In his original costume, jacketless but with a very thick leather waistcoat and coloured shirtsleeves, fat, prosperous and jovial, he looked more like a peaceful farmer than a Field-Marshal at the height of a war.

We plunged at once into conversation about the storms from the East that had raged over Europe in centuries past, and I mentioned in this connection that I was just bringing out a book about Chiang Kai-shek, though in view of my Chinese sympathies it would not be allowed to appear in Germany. Goering laughed and nodded. This book was an account of the ravages of Genghis Khan and his sons and of

Batu Khan in eastern and central Europe.

After a few remarks of mine about my fears that the war would develop into a world war, and about the dangerous position in which Sweden would then find herself, Goering spoke of the anti-German attitude adopted by Sweden and the Swedish Press.

He also referred to the Polish campaign, which had been brilliant and victorious and had been completed within 18 days. The Germans had lost 10,000 men fallen, the Poles half a million and 700,000 prisoners.

Germany's friendship with Russia was firm and stable. The Russians had kept all their undertakings and Hitler and Stalin had exchanged cordial telegrams. The fact that the German Army had gone no further than it had promised and had evacuated such places as were later to fall to the share of the Soviet had been gratefully acknowledged by Stalin. The Polish campaign should have shown the whole world what the German armies could do.

He was convinced that, if it came to active war with France, the campaign would follow the same lines as in Poland. There was a weak stretch 60 km. long in the Maginot Line just opposite the Saar, where the German armies would have no difficulty in breaking through and after that would occupy the whole of France. The war would then be continued against England, and he believed that the Empire was in danger.

" If we can only sink five British battleships, the British will come to their senses and we shall be able to dictate the peace we want."

Goering continued:

" If the war develops into a trial of strength in which life and freedom are at stake, then I fear that the neutrals will go under. Owing to their unfavourable geographical position Holland's and Belgium's days would be numbered. The fate of the small Baltic States is already sealed. Finland will be incorporated with Russia, which will also occupy Rumania. Yugoslavia will be dissolved. Turkey's position is precarious, since Stalin, like other Russian statesmen before him, wants the Dardanelles and the Turkish Foreign Minister Sarajoglu

is at this very moment in Moscow. The Iranian Foreign Minister is also there, which indicates Russian interest in the route to the Persian Gulf and India."

Here I interrupted to remark that Russia could never attack India by sea without a strong navy and that the danger to India was overland via Russian Turkestan and northern Persia, as it had been 60 years before in the days of Skobeleff, Komaroff, Annenkoff and later Kuropatkin.

Goering was displeased with Franco, who had shown his gratitude for German assistance in the civil war by now declaring strict neutrality, and he thought that the day might come when Spain would have reason to regret this attitude.

" With Japan we will preserve firm friendship in the hope that war will break out between her and Great Britain in East Asia, which would spell relief for us in Europe. Chiang Kai-shek's China does not interest us at all. We have sent him war material in the past, but will send no more now."

" Thanks to your family relationships you know Sweden better than any other of the German leaders. Tell me honestly what you think and feel about Sweden's position in this war."

" Yes, that is not such an easy question to answer. You know what I hope myself. But when we are in the midst of a great war which may involve the whole of Europe, it is impossible to predict just where the various fronts may come to lie. For the present I can say that Sweden is the least threatened country in Europe because it lies outside the main strategic lines, and the same applies also to Norway. But you are by no means safe. We follow carefully all that is said in the Press, though so far we have shut our eyes."

To my enquiry how Germany was placed for fuel and other important raw materials Goering replied:

" We have ample supplies of all the raw materials we need for the war. Petrol we get from Galicia and we make synthetic oil. Later we shall obtain more from Rumania. We need 12 million tons a year, of which 2½ million are home-produced. We help the Russians in the organisation of everything and we hope soon to be able to form a military alliance with them, when we shall also provide them with aircraft and other war material. As to Poland, we have

nothing against a Polish State which the Jews could be sent to."

"Is there no possibility of a conference between German, British and French representatives?"

"Yes, of course! And although we are ready for anything we desire a peaceful solution. But Chamberlain's latest speech slammed the door in our faces and we shall not reply again. Everything possible ought to be tried to prevent a crisis. Perhaps the King of Sweden, who is respected and honoured by everyone, could call a peace conference in Stockholm."

"Would it be worth talking to Daladier and other leading Frenchmen?"

"Yes, certainly, everything ought to be tried."

I got the impression that the good-humoured, phlegmatic Goering would have preferred to pass his days peacefully in the magnificent residence he was just fitting out for himself, his wife and his little daughter, rather than face the violence and uncertainty that are always associated with a war. "But if war is inevitable, we shall be victorious and then Germany will be the greatest and strongest Power in the world."

Towards the end of the interview my sister put in a word for the Jews. She felt that all those unfortunate people who had been turned out of their homes ought to have some place made available to them where they could organise their lives under tolerable conditions, and she had been in correspondence with a Norwegian engineer who had drawn up a plan for the irrigation of Mesopotamia on the same scale as in Babylonian times. Would not not be possible, with international help, to make a home there for the Jews? After a little reflection Goering said:

"It is an interesting and practical plan. I would gladly give it my support. If anything comes of it, I will do all in my power to help."

After 2½ hours' conversation we rose, and Goering showed us a number of enormous rooms that were then in course of preparation. He piloted us between scaffoldings and piles of lumber, swaying planks and boards, and we could only guess at the luxury we were to see in its completed form on a later occasion.

Then he took us out into the park and showed us a marble statue of his first wife, Carin Fock, under the shadow of which he said goodbye while his nephew accompanied us to Carin's grave, a simple, dignified vault where the beautiful Swedish woman slept her deep sleep in German soil.

At about 10 o'clock on the Monday morning, 16th October, the Legation Counsellor rang up to say that the Reich Chancellor was expecting me at 12 and that he, the Legation Counsellor, would come to fetch me just before that hour. He came, and we drove the few hundred yards from the Kaiserhof to the main entrance of the Chancellery, where we passed between soldiers who stood at attention and gave the Hitler salute. At the further end of the small courtyard we climbed the red-carpeted stairs to the vestibule where footmen in livery took our outdoor clothes, and where I was received by Dr. Meissner, the Minister of State, and a few officers. I had known Dr. Meissner for many years past. The first time we had met was in Poland during the 1915 campaign, when he was a lieutenant in von Woyrsch's army. Afterwards I had met him again in the service of Ebert and Hindenburg. He had been head of the Chancellery under the latter too, and was always the first to receive one when one went to see the old Field-Marshal and Reich President. He had stood firm at his post under the Empire, the Weimar Republic, and now the Third Reich.

Meissner took me now by the arm and we passed through the Festhalle, decorated with German marble, where foreign Ambassadors were generally received, on through the rotunda and the 512-ft. long "Great Gallery". Barely half-way down it we swung to the right and entered a waiting room with a round table and several armchairs in the middle. When the clock struck twelve Meissner went in to the Führer's reception room next door, and came back at once to fetch me.

The large, oblong reception room was furnished with sober and solid good taste but without any unnecessary luxury. The left-hand, lengthwise wall ran along the Great Gallery, on the right were the huge windows. Beside the nearest window, and standing out at right-angles to it, was a long sofa. After greeting me warmly Hitler invited me to sit down in the left-hand corner of this, the corner nearest the window. He him-

self took an armchair, so placed that he had the daylight behind him while I had the light on my face from the window on my left. Meissner sat in another armchair and Hewel, the Legation Counsellor, on an ordinary chair. Meissner and a Foreign Office representative were present at all interviews with Hitler. Presumably they acted as witnesses in case distorted accounts of what Hitler had said should be published after an audience. Besides that, Meissner had a phenomenal memory and could sit down at the end of the interview and write down everything that had been said straight off the reel. These notes were afterwards preserved in the archives of the Reich Chancellery.

One can hardly say that there was a connected thread running all through our conversation. Whenever a fresh idea occurred to him Hitler would suddenly switch over from one subject to another and start off on some completely different tack. But he always answered the questions I put to him clearly and straightforwardly. The statement that is often made that when he gave an audience he did all the talking himself, and his visitor was merely expected to listen patiently and quietly while he held forth, is probably true enough. He was dictator, he decided everything and there was no other will in Germany than his. His Ministers, who were supposed to be his advisers, each in his own special branch, were merely there to obey orders. And if he received a stranger his policy was to inform him how he wished things to be—what the stranger might think and feel did not interest him in the very least.

I had already had sufficient contact with Hitler to have a pretty clear idea of his mentality and make-up. We had been thrown into a somewhat delicate relationship, as I have already related, over the question of my book, *Germany and the World Peace*. He knew very well what my attitude was with regard to the policy on the Jews and the Church, and carefully avoided bringing these questions under discussion. Now that we were meeting for the first time in the new Reich Chancellery for a more exhaustive talk, which from my point of view was to be mainly concerned with the neutral countries, I made up my mind that I would set myself from the start to break him of his habit of only talking himself

and never listening to the views and opinions of his interlocutor. So as soon as we had sat down, I broke the silence and said:

"*Herr Reichskanzler,* at home in Scandinavia we feel increasing uneasiness at the interest Russia shows in Finland."

Hitler: "My conviction is that neither Finland nor Sweden has any occasion to fear the outbreak of any serious conflict between Russia and Finland. I believe this because the Russian demands on Finland, so far as I know, are moderate and by no means so far-reaching as the demands that have been made on the Baltic marginal States."

I: "But if Finland, contrary to expectation, should nevertheless be attacked from the East, what attitude would you adopt then, *Herr Reichskanzler*?"

Hitler: "In that case Germany would always preserve strict neutrality. But I do not believe that such a situation is likely to arise."

I: "But if Sweden, on the basis of her six-hundred-year-old connections with Finland, were to intervene to help her either officially or voluntarily if she found herself in a desperate situation, how would you regard such intervention?"

Hitler: "I should still remain neutral, but I do not believe that Swedish assistance in a really serious situation would count for much. I have not very much use for your Scandinavian countries. The newspapers of Sweden, Norway and Finland have vied with each other ever since my accession to power in hurling insults and lies at me personally and my work. There has been nothing too foul and scandalous for them to fling at me. I certainly have no reason to entertain any friendly feelings towards States whose Press treats me so abominably. As to Finland, I consider that, since Germany sent von der Goltz's corps to help her throw off the oppressor in 1918, we might have expected more gratitude and consideration than we have received.

"In Denmark Germany has nothing to complain of. Denmark has behaved absolutely correctly and I have raised no demands for the areas awarded to Denmark under the Versailles Treaty and I do not intend to take any action now for the sake of those few square miles."

Then Hitler switched the conversation over to the far East and asked me a number of questions about my views on Japan and her war with China and her intentions with regard to Great Britain. In this connection I told him one or two incidents from my travels in Japan in 1908. He also touched upon the Indian problem.

After that he turned to England and sharply criticised Chamberlain, Duff Cooper, Churchill and Eden. They were political adventurers who did not understand the great world-political problems and had no proper conception of the new age that had dawned for Germany. England was still marking time on the same spot where she had stood a hundred years ago.

"The British think they can conquer Germany. I have organised our supply problem down to the smallest detail and we have had ration cards even in the remotest villages since the very first day of the war. We have enough rubber, petrol and all other raw materials to last five years—there is no one in the world who understands these matters so well as I do. Germany cannot be starved out. We have every means of breaking a blockade. With our new U-boats and our Air Force that is incomparably better than the British we will give England thrust for thrust, blow for blow."

He counted up the German losses after the British raids on Wilhelmshafen and other places, which had been inconsiderable.

"Why do they fight, they have nothing to gain? They have no definite objectives. We want nothing from Great Britain or France. I have not a single aspiration in the West. I want England to retain her Empire and her command of the seas unimpaired. But I must have the continent. A new age is dawning in Europe. England's control over the mainland of Europe has had its day. It is over now. We will show that there are other powers than England that have a voice in the affairs of Europe. Even if we Germans have to make certain reductions in our daily diet, we shall not suffer any want on that account. If I can do without coffee, so can the whole German people."

I: "If Germany and the Western Powers fight on for years until they have brought one another to the verge of

collapse and the war ends in their general exhaustion, would not the whole of Europe be exposed to the danger that Soviet Russia might extend her dominion over the whole of Eastern and Central Europe and so open the door to World Revolution and the Bolshevisation of Europe?"

Hitler, who was very anxious to do nothing in violation of the Pact with Russia concluded barely two months previously, replied:

"I regard such a development as absolutely out of the question. Besides, Germany will *not* be exhausted, though England will, and what may happen then in the way of the Bolshevisation of England is another matter. As far as Germany is concerned, I do not consider that Russia's ideology should be allowed to stand in the way of our pact of friendship with her. Moreover, Stalin has given up every thought of World Revolution."

I: "Do you not think, *Herr Reichskanzler,* that America may turn out to be a dangerous opponent for Germany as she was last time? If the war is prolonged America will have time to complete her rearmament."

Hitler: "The war will be over before America has time to come in."

I: "If Britain is hard pressed by Germany, is it not possible that the British might then agree to discuss peace proposals?"

Hitler: "Yes, but then it would be we who dictate the peace terms."

I: "Do you think, *Herr Reichskanzler,* that it would be worth while trying to bring about a peace conference?"

Hitler: "For my part I am ready to make peace at any moment, but I do not believe the British are in the mood to listen either to mediation or conferences."

My next question, for which I had as little authority as for any of the others, and of which I had never spoken to the King, followed quite unpremeditatedly as a natural sequel to this reply.

I: "Without any authority and entirely on my own initiative I take the liberty of asking you, *Herr Reichskanzler,* whether you would agree to a peace conference negotiated by the King of Sweden?"

Hitler: "Yes, provided England abandoned her mad idea of the restoration of Czechoslovakia and secondly that England recognised that the adjustment of the Polish question is a matter that only concerns Germany and Russia. In this connection I may tell you that it is my intention to restore the Polish State—but solely and exclusively in such a form that it can no longer be a danger to Germany and Russia. To determine the form and frontiers of this State will be a matter that concerns Germany and Russia alone. I am grateful for the friendly attitude of the King of Sweden. But I cannot believe in the efficacy of any conferences."

I: "Have you, *Herr Reichskanzler,* said your last word and has England said hers?"

Hitler: "Yes, there is nothing more to be done."

I: "So that means war, continued and intensified?

Hitler: "Yes, war! We Germans have learnt a great deal, a *very* great deal from our experiences in the First World War and we are fully prepared, both militarily and economically, even for a long war."

The conversation had lasted for over an hour when the Führer indicated his intention of rising. I then told him the anecdote about the young Englishman who had come to see me in Stockholm and suggested that Hitler should fly to London and beard the lion in his den.

"*In die Schakalengruft!*" he exclaimed laughing, and added: "*Ach, diese Engländer, diese Engländer!*"[1]

The conversation had been lively and continuous, and Hitler appeared surprised and amused by the fact that I occasionally interrupted him. He was perfectly calm and self-possessed, and only raised his voice a little when he spoke about the Scandinavian Press and about England.

Minister of State Meissner asked the Führer whether he wished the audience to be mentioned in the newspapers and Hitler in turn asked me whether I had any objection to a notice appearing about it. After saying I had not I took my leave, and we went to the door that led out into the Great Gallery. As soon as Meissner had closed the door he said to me:

[1] "Into the jackal's den! Ah, these Englishmen, these Englishmen!"

"Ein sehr wichtiges und gelungenes Gespräch. Das bedeutet sehr viel!"[1]

It was only a few steps to Meissner's private apartments, where he prepared a first draft of the announcement for the Press. Then we sat down, and placing a pencil and writing pad before me on the table he said:

"Write now from my dictation. Everything that I am going to dictate you can communicate to the King if you wish. No one else must know anything about the contents of the conversation."

I quote here his highly abbreviated version, as it may be of interest to know what the German Government considered it important for the King of Sweden to hear:

"The Führer did not believe that it would come to a serious conflict between Russia and Finland, since the Russian demands, so far as he was aware, were very moderate and did not go so far as against the other marginal States.

"If, however, it should come to a conflict Germany would observe strict neutrality. But the Führer did not believe it would. If Sweden should intervene militarily in such a conflict, he did not think much would come of it.

"He was prepared for peace at any moment but did not believe that England would agree to any mediation or conference. Asked whether he would agree to a peace conference negotiated by the King of Sweden the Führer answered yes, provided England abandoned her mad idea of the restoration of Czechoslovakia and, in the second place, recognised that the adjustment of the Polish question was a matter between Germany and Russia alone.

"Hitler then declared that he intended to restore a Polish State, but only in such a form that it could no longer be a danger to Germany and Russia. To determine this form and the frontiers of this State was a matter for Germany and Russia alone.

"The Führer rejected absolutely the idea of a successful British policy against Germany. Germany's war potential could not be damaged by a shortage either of food or raw

[1] "A very important and successful conversation. That means a great deal!"

materials. ' We Germans have learnt much from our experiences in the First World War and are fully prepared, both militarily and economically, for a long war.'

" The Führer was convinced that Britain would be subdued by heavy blows (aircraft and modern U-boats). The British could not defend Scandinavia."

The sharp outbursts against Britain were a consequence of the British declaration of war. Before the war Hitler had entertained no hard feelings towards England, but both in *Mein Kampf* and in his speeches had emphasised his desire that the two countries should form an alliance, which should have been all the easier in that their interests did not clash. Yet he had on certain occasions cast jibes at Britain's eternal endeavours to Balkanise Europe. Britain saw further ahead than Hitler believed and feared that his plans stretched out over the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Against France he had no aspirations at all. He wanted to keep peace with France.

The "News Chronicle" Interview

MY first few days in Stockholm were a whirl of telephone calls, letters and visits from Swedes, Germans, Finns, even Ukraineans. All of them were worried and uneasy about relatives and friends to east and south and most of them wanted to know whether there was any vestige of a hope of peace.

Among others the Stockholm correspondent of the *News Chronicle* rang me up and asked whether he might interview me. I replied that if it was about my conversation with the Reich Chancellor I was unable to help him, but that if he was interested in my own personal views on the world situation he would be welcome. Of course I ought to have said no at once, it would have saved both him and particularly myself a great deal of trouble. Interviews are dangerous things. They often give rise to complications and misunderstandings that it is sometimes quite difficult to straighten out and explain. That was exactly what happened in this case. I hasten, however, to add most emphatically that the English newspaper correspondent was absolutely innocent and that he was a gentleman to his fingertips, and was only doing his duty. The fault was exclusively mine. That the *News Chronicle* should have featured the interview with juicy headlines on the front page of its issue for 23rd October 1939 was only what all newspapers do, particularly on the threshold of a world war, and I have nothing to complain of in that respect either. Neither do I blame the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, who to begin with, in his righteous wrath, attached more weight to this, in itself, not very important incident than it really deserved. I ought to have known from experience that one has to be careful with interviewers, and that one breaks that rule only at one's peril.

On 21st October, then, Mr. Eric Dancy, special correspond-

ent of the *News Chronicle*, came to see me to obtain the interview which he knew was going to be a scoop for his paper. He tiptoed valiantly round the subject of Hitler's person and utterances, and I went no further in this respect than to assure him that I had found the Führer calm and self-possessed. In reply to purely political questions I always said: "Germany wants, Germany demands, or Germany considers" and never revealed a single word of what Hitler had said to me. I shall give below the text of the fateful telegram that Mr. Dancy drew up quite correctly and submitted to me on the Sunday, 22nd October, before dispatching it to London at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. It had to arrive in time to appear in the issue of the paper the following Monday morning.

That day, the 23rd, I was sitting with my sisters, Gerda and Alma, in the lounge, and we had just finished reading our letters and the morning newspapers when the telephone gave the double ring indicating a call from abroad.

"It is Berlin to speak to you," said one of my sisters.

"Hallo—hallo . . ."

"*Ist es Dr. Sven Hedin?*"[1]

"*Jawohl.*"

"*Hier ist Hewel. Guten Tag Herr Doktor.*"—So it was Hewel, the Legation Counsellor who had been present at my conversation with Hitler on 16th October. He went on:

"To-day's *News Chronicle* publishes an interview with you which contains a number of false statements. The Minister (von Ribbentrop) would like to speak to you."

Next moment Ribbentrop himself came to the telephone. He was obviously so furious that he could hardly contain himself. As soon as the preliminary greetings were over he delivered himself word for word of the exact contents of an express telegram which arrived an hour later bearing the red label of a State telegram:

"The *News Chronicle* publishes an interview which its Stockholm correspondent claims to have had with you, which gives a completely false impression of your conversation with the Führer and the object of which is obviously to sow distrust

[1] "Is that Dr. Sven Hedin?" "Yes." "This is Hewel. Good morning, Herr Doktor."

between Germany and the Soviet Union. Apart from the fact that the whole interview is incomprehensible to the Führer, as your visit was announced as purely private, I must ask you to publish the most emphatic denial immediately, as otherwise I shall be obliged to publish the contents of the conversation which took place in the presence of Minister of State Meissner and Legation Counsellor Hewel. The German Government's denial will be published in this evening's papers."

So far he had obviously been reading from the text of the above-mentioned telegram which was thereupon sent off. He continued:

"I would ask you for your part to send out a denial as otherwise we intend to publish in the German Press the whole of the *aide memoire* drawn up by Minister of State Meissner."

I had never met Ribbentrop but I knew that he was inclined to be a little hasty at times. So I realised from the start how the ground lay and answered calmly:

"*Herr Reichsminister,* I deeply regret that any misunderstanding should have arisen and will of course deny any false statements with pleasure. But it is impossible for me to do so until I have read the telegram in the *News Chronicle.*"

Ribbentrop: "A member of the staff of the German Legation in Stockholm will be coming to see you in a few minutes. You will be home then?"

I: "Of course."

Ribbentrop: "Excellent! He is coming to give you further particulars and any assistance he can in sending us your denial, for which I sincerely thank you."

The Foreign Minister had thawed considerably during the course of the conversation.

I had scarcely got back to my writing-desk before the front door bell rang and I opened the door to Herr Brunhoff, the Legation Secretary.

"*Guten Tag lieber Herr Brunhoff! Jetzt ist der Teufel los!*"[1]

"*Ja, das kann man wohl sagen!*" he replied with a roguish

[1] "Good morning, my dear Herr Brunhoff; Now the fat's in the fire!" "Yes, it certainly is!"

smile. We sat down and Brunhoff read out the account of the interview in that day's issue of the *News Chronicle,* which he had been given over the telephone by Hewel. After that it was not difficult to write a denial, in which I emphasised that in particular those passages which referred to the Soviet Union represented my own opinions and not opinions which had been expressed by the Reich Chancellor. Brunhoff then rang up Hewel and read the denial out to him slowly so that Hewel had time to take it down. He then asked Brunhoff to hold on and returned a little later with the news that Ribbentrop was satisfied.

But that was not the end of the matter. Late that evening Mr. Dancy rang up and was distracted because he had had a telegram from his editor telling him of my denial and demanding an explanation. " My job hangs by a thread, you are the only man who can back me up," he declared, and begged to see me even if it were in the middle of the night. He came, accompanied by the correspondent of the Danish newspaper *Politiken.*

It was a very uncomfortable situation. I wanted at all costs to save Mr. Dancy, who had been absolutely loyal and had not added a single word to the text as I had approved it. He *had* to be saved, even at the risk of bringing a fresh storm over my head from Ribbentrop's side. It would have been easy to give the impression that I denied in Germany what I confirmed in England. Actually I approved the telegram but disapproved the twist the newspaper had given it. I accordingly wrote on the original copy of the former:

" I declare that this telegram is a true copy of my interview yesterday with Mr. Eric Dancy and that any other version would be false. The opinions in this interview are my own and not the chancellor's. Stockholm, 23rd October. Sven Hedin."

Dancy approved this formula, all the more so as he himself had assisted in drawing it up. I told the two journalists that I had granted the interview in the hopes of reaching the ear of the British public and working upon its desire for peace. Dancy considered all such attempts futile.

Mr. Dancy was kind enough to present me with a copy of

the telegram he had despatched on the evening of 22nd October to his newspaper. It may be of interest to compare the actual contents with the article furbished up by the *News Chronicle* out of the material provided by me in the interview. It may also not be without interest—now that the drama has been played to its end and the curtain gone down on the final act, and now that the results are becoming day by day more apparent in ravaged and unhappy Europe—to establish to what extent my views of the situation and of the consequences a major war would have were correct or not.

The text of Mr. Dancy's telegram which I had approved, with the omission of all quotes and other technical newspaper terms, ran as follows:

"Hitler was quiet and calm, said Hedin. His manner was most confident. I have known him for six years. Usually he moves his limbs and body freely while conversing but now his voice was also quiet. He hates war but does not hate England. Desires peace passionately. I (Dancy) asked what had been discussed (16th October). I (Hedin) cannot reveal the details of the conversation, but my own feelings are that if war is let loose it will be terrible, resulting in the triumph of Bolshevism and an end of western civilisation. Only one thing can save us: Anglo-German co-operation, which is Hitler's dream. Such a move, in my opinion, would baulk Bolshevism's westward advance and create a tremendous and terrible power, which would impose and dictate peace upon the world. I (Dancy) asked if Hitler would join a powerful western bloc strong enough to maintain peace and reorganise the world. Germany would undoubtedly do so. Does Germany still retain her ambitions in the east? These are not substantial now, as the Russian frontier is agreed and settled finally. Did you discuss these things with Hitler? Yes. Would Hitler withdraw from Poland and Czechoslovakia? There will be a semi-independent Polish State, which Germany will protect, but she will not give up Czechoslovakia. Why not, if the West guaranteed Germany against Czechoslovak aggression? Germany occupied Czechoslovakia because it was an outpost of Bolshevism threatening Germany vitally. Can Hitler be absolutely certain of Russia's economic co-operation? Absolutely. I (Hedin) know the details but

cannot reveal them. And I loathe the prospect of England's being smashed. To let loose war now would be to multiply ten-fold the 12 million killed in the last war, and it would go much quicker. The U.S.A. might intervene, but intervention would probably be too late to save from destruction the flower of Europe's manhood. It would be foolish to fight for Czechoslovakia's sake. Czechoslovakia is not worth a European shambles. Would Germany want her colonies returned? The colonies are important but Germany would not demand them in the form of an ultimatum. However it would be a generous gesture if Britain offered to return the colonies, the present division of which is unjust. Hitler has made a tremendous sacrifice, he has struggled intensively for peace and will struggle yet. Is the world going to resign itself to this desperate war; in the calm preceding the storm cannot someone come forward in England who is raised above suspicion and hatred? Practically no German wants war, but all are prepared to defend their country if necessary. Anglo-German co-operation would mean an ordered world and lower taxation everywhere. Have you discussed with Hitler your going to England or France? I (Hedin) discussed it with Goering who said: All that can be done for peace is welcome. But it was I who raised the subject. Hitler said: Neither do I hate France, no German hates France; this war is unnecessary and a misfortune for Germany, Britain and France. If we fight it will endanger the predominance of the white races.—End.—Dancy."

So runs the original telegram which, when duly touched up and expanded, had roused Ribbentrop's wrath.

On 2nd November I succeeded in getting hold of a copy of the *News Chronicle* for 23rd October and found that the denial I had already written was fully justified. I will mention here only a few of the most flagrant inaccuracies in the newspaper's account of the interview. It stated in the sub-title: "Dr. Sven Hedin . . . travelled recently to Berlin to warn the Führer against co-operation with Russia." In actual fact it was my opinion that the Russo-German Pact might well be Germany's salvation in the war. Unlike the editorial staff, Mr. Dancy had emphasised in his telegram that I had refused to say anything about my conversation with the Führer.

I had, on the other hand, given it as my personal view that if Germany and the Western Powers were to exhaust one another in a prolonged war, then the danger would arise of a Russian advance over Europe. To avoid such a development I pointed out that Anglo-German co-operation was the only correct method. In his speech of 28th April 1939 Hitler himself had said:

"Throughout the whole of my political activity I have always favoured the establishment of an intimate Anglo-German friendship and co-operation. I have found that countless numbers of my supporters thought as I did. Perhaps they attached themselves to me on account of this attitude of mine. My desire for Anglo-German friendship and co-operation harmonised not merely with my feelings, which are based on the origins of our two peoples, but also with the importance in the interests of the whole of humanity of the continued existence of the British world empire. I have never regarded the continuance of this empire as anything but a source of immeasurable wealth, both cultural and economic, for the whole of humanity."

On 19th September 1939 Hitler said at Danzig:

"You know my offers to England. The one great object I had in mind was to bring about a relationship of sincere friendship with the British people."

The following sentence in the English newspaper must have caused surprise among its readers:

"*I* might intervene, but intervention would probably be too late to save from destruction the flower of Europe's manhood."

What I actually said at the interview was:

"*The U.S.A.* might intervene on the side of Britain and France, but the intervention would probably come too late. It is terrible to think of the destruction of the flower of Europe's manhood in another major war."

Such mistakes may be due to faulty interpretation of a telegram, or simply to printers' errors. And they can make complete nonsense of what one has said.

The essence of my remarks was, therefore, to emphasise Hitler's desire for peace, his freedom from hatred of England

and France, and his regret at the war. If one compares Meissner's summary of the conversation of 16th October, given above, with the *News Chronicle's* report of the interview, one finds that they deal with totally different subjects. Only the talk of peace is common to both. But even the English newspaper's free interpretation of my words contained—with the exception of the headlines—nothing that went against Germany's interests.

In a letter to Ribbentrop dated 2nd November I explained the whole circumstances and cause of the misunderstanding, and said that in his report to the Führer he must inevitably have given the latter the impression that I had been guilty in an interview of betraying his words to me and so of committing a terrible indiscretion. That, I said, " was clearly apparent from your telephone conversation with me on 23rd October." I concluded my letter with the words:

" I beg you therefore, *Herr Reichsminister,* to be good enough to explain this matter clearly and correctly to the Führer and to give me some unmistakable evidence, i.e. a message from the Führer himself, such as will convince me that all misunderstanding between the Führer and myself is now at an end."

In his reply of 10th November Ribbentrop thanked me for my explanation of what had happened, and insisted that his first representations to me had been correct. Unlike Hitler he emphasised his dislike of Britain and the British Press, which was also clearly apparent from the succeeding paragraph:

" The incident provides instructive confirmation of the, to us, well-known fact that British correspondents and newspaper editors, in their desire to stir up feeling against us, let pass no opportunity of misinterpreting and falsifying everything that is said to them about Germany.

" I gather from your letter that you assume that the Führer has obtained a false impression of the incident in consequence of a report from me. If so, however, you cannot fully appreciate the methods employed by the Führer in obtaining information on matters connected with the Press and of dealing with such false reports. Needless to say, on receipt of your letter I put the whole matter once more before the

Führer and can assure you that he now regards the episode as satisfactorily explained and finally disposed of . . . "

Whether the story of the interview and his Foreign Minister's exaggerated reaction to it ever reached Hitler's ears it is hard to say. The confidence he placed in me on later occasions did not suggest that he had any fear of further interviews. He never referred by so much as a word to the affair, and Minister of State Meissner never spoke of it either.

The Winter of 1939 - 1940

THE dark and gloomy November days swept by over an uneasy Europe whose people were torn between fear and hope. Everyone wanted to be let alone to live their lives and get on with their work in peace and no one wanted war, which could only tear the unhappy continent to pieces again before it had properly had time to recover from the former conflagration.

I myself was constantly disturbed by letters and telephone calls. Often they were from English newspaper correspondents in Sweden or Denmark, who wanted to know what I thought of the situation, of King Leopold's and Queen Wilhelmina's peace appeal, of the attempt on Hitler's life in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich, of Molotov's aggressive speech about the Western Powers, of Churchill's and Goebbels increasingly violent orations, and I could never make any other reply but: "I know no more than is in the newspapers, I hope for peace but fear the worst—an insane, unnecessary and devastating war."

On 3rd November I had nearly 3 hours' conversation in my study with Dr. Goerdeler, the former Mayor of Leipzig. He had come to Stockholm for the purpose of discussions with Marcus Wallenberg Senior and Gustaf Cassel, and in the Swedish Chamber of Commerce about world trade at sea. Goerdeler was an upright and clear-sighted man and, as I have said before, sharply critical of the German Government. He believed in Goering and thought that a speedy peace was the only thing that could save Germany, but that peace was unthinkable so long as Hitler remained at the head of affairs. He had no faith at all in effective help from Russia and was convinced that within two years Germany would be at war with the Soviet Union—a prophecy which later, to Germany's misfortune, proved to have been correct. As to Italy, he

quoted General Gamelin's words: "If Italy comes in on the side of Germany, I shall need an army corps at the frontier; if she remains neutral I shall need two, and if she goes against Germany I must have three army corps."

November was an unhappy month for Finland. At the opening of it Paasikivi was in Moscow, and on the 28th Molotov handed Baron Yrjö Koskinen, the Finnish Minister, a sharp Note accusing Finnish frontier troops of having opened fire and wounded Russian frontier guards. The Soviet consequently denounced its non-aggression pact and was free to begin a war whenever it pleased. The Finnish Government proved that the accusation was unjustified. The whole of the Russian Press stormed, and workers demonstrated in the streets of the Russian capital. On 30th November, the anniversary of the death of Charles XII, the Finnish Winter War broke out. The sympathies of the German people were entirely on Finland's side, but the Government was bound by the Russo-German Pact.

On 4th December I received a visit from an Englishman from Oxford, who hoped that Russia's advance into Europe would unite Britain and Germany for their mutual defence and bring about the peace that all desired. But he also feared that Germany, after defeating Russia, would drive out the Ukraineans and then push on to Bagdad, Iran and India. A world-reawakening and a renaissance of all Christianity was in his opinion the only hope of salvation.

The shining bravery of the Finns aroused the admiration of all the world. Sweden sent all the help that was possible within the framework of neutrality. Active intervention would have meant war with Russia. Finland's Marshal rallied the country to give of her uttermost, but the outcome was merely a matter of time as Finland's resources diminished day by day, whereas Russia's military strength was inexhaustible. Peace was the only thing that could save Finland.

* * *

A German official who knew Hitler personally came to see me about this time and gave me the following very accurate description of him: It is impossible to tell what the Führer's plans are or what he intends to do. He always does something quite different from what was expected. He

knows at any given moment what must, should and can be done. He will stand no compromises, never listens to advice, and yet he has no idea of the British psyche, British bulldog nature and endurance. The Führer does not know that British resistance will grow in exact proportion to the destruction caused by German bombs, and that the obstinate energy of the British only increases under adversity. All that is old wives' tales to him and has no applicability to the present time. He has an unrivalled capacity for work and keeps everything under his own control, military and political affairs, internal organisation and even plans for new towns, road-building, architecture, art, music, propaganda, films, the Press, everything. He is a phenomenon, there is no denying that.

On 17th February 1940, Ministerialrat Dr. Ziegler arrived in Stockholm and we had a long conversation in the evening about the situation in Finland, which by then was considered extremely serious. I told him the whole truth about Sweden's attitude towards Finland and Germany. Neither Hitler nor Ribbentrop was able to judge of the situation in Finland and I intended in a few days' time to go down and talk to them. The Swedish people, in common with the rest of the world, was quite unable to understand how it was possible for the land of Luther, Goethe and Kant to stand quietly by and watch the Bolsheviks battering down the gates of Christian Europe. He agreed with me absolutely, but claimed that there were political reasons that compelled Germany for the time being to side with Russia. "Germany is fighting for her life. When the war in the West is over—and it soon will be—the situation in the East will be quite different from what it is now." Finally I told him that, as a friend of Germany's, I feared that Germany herself might some day have cause to regret her passivity towards Finland.

Dr. Ziegler was a fine man. I have already mentioned above the invaluable services he did me when I was travelling in Germany in connection with my scientific work in 1936. From that time on and until the final act of the German drama in the spring of 1945 he remained, on the orders of his chief, the Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels, always at my service, and even made a number of journeys to Stockholm

on my account. It was his duty to report to his chief all my opinions and pronouncements, even on those points on which my attitude towards German policy was critical. This did not in the least affect the confidential and friendly relationship that always existed between us—nor yet the kindness and openness shown towards me later by Dr. Goebbels. In many respects Ziegler approved my critical attitude, even though his loyalty prevented him from openly admitting it.

* * *

I had already indicated, in my telegram to Hitler thanking him for his congratulations on my birthday, that I proposed to call and see him again before long. The journey to Berlin was to be undertaken at the end of February and my customary secretary Alma and my great-niece Ann-Marie busied themselves with their preparations. Prince Victor zu Wied provided us with a *Grenzempfehlung* and telegraphed to inform the German Foreign Office of our arrival.

The other passengers included Dr. Ziegler, Capt. Carl Florman and a number of Americans. The aircraft was a Junkers' three-engined J 52. Snow had been falling in Stockholm; in Malmö and in Germany the sun shone from a clear blue sky. Owing to war conditions the aircraft had to follow certain corridors and touch certain control points. We flew west of Stralsund, straight over Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, and landed at Rangsdorf in Berlin. Tempelhof aerodrome was too exposed to be used in wartime.

We were met at the aerodrome by Dr. Struve, the Legation Counsellor and a member of the Foreign Office staff, who brought a message of welcome from Ribbentrop. Later in the day I was informed that the Foreign Minister would be pleased to see me at his office at 5 o'clock on 28th February.

This left us with a few days at our disposal, which were taken up with incessant visits and conversations. Dr. Ziegler and I went over the main points of my conversation with the Führer on 16th October. Hitler had then been convinced that it would not come to hostilities between Russia and Finland and yet the Winter War had broken out only six weeks later! So he had proved a bad prophet on that score. If he were to say on some future occasion that Sweden had nothing to fear, it would not do to rely on it too much.

I asked when the war was really going to begin. Ziegler replied: at the end of March. I reminded him that in October he had answered the same question with: at the end of November. So his predictions were not reliable either. He laughed and said that the plan had really been to break through Holland at the end of November, but that King Leopold's and Queen Wilhelmina's peace appeal had meant postponing the offensive. Now it was to take place at the end of March and the line of attack would be through Holland. He said that France was to be left on one side, for even if the whole of France were occupied England would still not admit that she had lost the war. England was their most dangerous enemy. Barges were being built in vast quantities and of various models with a view to a landing on the English coast. The attack would take place under cover of aircraft and coastal artillery, against which the British Navy would not be able to do much. It was to prove before very long that these predictions too were incorrect and that the plan had had to be altered again. The German Government felt it could safely rely on the friendship of Russia and Italy.

The German leaders, Ribbentrop in particular, were utterly indifferent to Finland, and their feelings were dictated entirely by political considerations. In actual fact all Germans admired the courage and loyalty of the Finns.

Dr. Struve, the Legation Counsellor, had gone to Bremen to met the American Secretary of State, Mr. Sumner Welles, who was expected on a visit to Hitler, Goering and Ribbentrop. In non-German quarters it was believed that he and Mussolini were preparing a new peace proposal.

Rumour had it that the Russians were building a Western Wall, at a cost of hundreds of millions of pounds, from Leningrad through Poland to the Black Sea, and that the Germans were replying with an Eastern Wall, just like the Maginot and Siegfried Lines in the West.

At about midday on 28th February I had a visit from a German Foreign Office official who told me about Ribbentrop. He hated England and his first objective was to see her destroyed. This goal could be attained with the direct or indirect help of Russia, and that was why friendship with

Russia was so important. For the same reason he was very sceptical of any attempts to bring about a Finnish-Russian peace. Ribbentrop certainly believed that Russia would be glad of peace, but to Russia the Finnish war was not a vital question but simply a small problem on the periphery. My informant did not believe that Stalin had any designs on Swedish territory or on Narvik, but he wanted the whole of Finland. To Stalin the most important thing was Hangö, the rest he could do without—for the present. For the time being he would be content with Hangö and Lappvik, which would give anchorage for Russian warships. The fortifications inside the gulf could then be further strengthened. The Russians considered that the possession of Baltic ports already gave them control of the Gulf of Finland, and that it would therefore be less of a sacrifice for Finland to let them have Lappvik. The Finns replied that Russia could do without it for the same reason. Russia wanted a Kuusinen Government in Finland. My informant said that the French newspapers had recently argued against a Russo-Finnish peace because they intended to use Finland as a spring-board against Germany. From this point of view as well peace was very important for Germany. He emphasised that he entirely shared the view of the Swedish defence enthusiasts on the question of Finland. They also had Murmansk with its open water. Consequently they did not need Narvik. Germany had shut her eyes to Swedish volunteer aid to Finland. The suggestion of sending English and French troops to Finland merely reflected the desire to convert Scandinavia into a northern front against Germany. The Western Powers could never actively assist Finland without precipitating war with Russia, a development they wished at all costs to avoid.

Ribbentrop and Finland

AT 5 o'clock on the afternoon of 28th February I was waiting in Legation Counsellor von Zapp's room at Wilhelmstrasse 76. Legation Counsellor Dr. Paul Schmidt, who had been with Ribbentrop in Moscow the previous summer (1939) in his capacity of Russian interpreter, entered through the door that communicated direct with the Foreign Minister's room.

The moment I entered Ribbentrop came towards me, and gave me a very friendly welcome. Then he led me under a powerful light in the ceiling and said:

"*Herr Doktor,* you are not going to tell me that you are 75!"

"I was born in 1865 at all events."

"Incredible! To think that you are 30 years older than I! What shall I look like when I am 75?"

"Oh, as fit as I do now, I am sure."

There followed the usual questions about what one should do to preserve one's youthful resilience in later years. I mentioned the healthy open-air life I had led when I was exploring in Asia.

"Yes, if I were not Foreign Minister I would much rather travel through Asia with you!"

"It is so simple. How would it be if we set off together on a motoring tour along the Silk Road, to see if the Chinese have built it up properly. That would give you the opportunity to see some of the most remarkable places on earth."

"Yes, it would be marvellous, but unfortunately I am too firmly tied where I am!"

Tea, toast, biscuits and butter stood ready on a small table between a corner lamp and a couple of armchairs in this historic room, in which Bismarck worked for so many years. Inviting me to be seated, Ribbentrop remarked:

" I read *From Pole to Pole, Tibetan Adventure* and several other of your books when I was a schoolboy."

With a gesture towards Schmidt he continued:

" Do you wish to be alone with me or would you have any objection to Dr. Schmidt remaining here?"

" No, on the contrary, I should be glad for him to stay."

" Tell me, *Herr Doktor,* is there any particular question you wish to ask me?"

" Yes, Finland!"

Ribbentrop: " The Finnish question is for gigantic Russia a peripheral matter of little importance. Stalin did not want a war. He thought that Finland would have agreed to the terms he offered. We Germans consider that the Finns were wrong to reject these terms. In Stalin's opinion they were moderate and should have been accepted. It was England and France in consultation with—I am sorry to have to say it openly—a certain gentleman in Stockholm, whose intrigues and persuasions prevailed on Finland to go to war—just as England was at the bottom of Poland's resistance against us."

Before I had time to reply an attendant came in to announce that Goering was on the telephone and wished to speak to the Minister. I have no reason to suppose that this conversation was a fictitious one invented for the purpose of showing me that the rumours of disagreement between Goering and Ribbentrop were exaggerated; or that Goering, who probably knew about my visit, wanted to remind Ribbentrop to be sure and speak to me about the Swedish Press. In any case Ribbentrop plunged suddenly into this subject when he returned a bare five minutes later, saying:

" The Führer is not in the least interested in anything that happened before 1933—but we have not been able to help noticing that ever since that year (1933) the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish Press has abused and insulted the Third Reich, National Socialism and the Führer in almost every issue of its newspapers. The Swedish Government too has been unfriendly disposed towards Germany.

After some further polite remarks on his side about my own attitude towards Germany, I replied:

" I know that I have held an honoured place with the German people for more than 40 years. The reason for the

unfriendly attitude of the Swedish people towards Germany is brought out clearly in my book, *Germany and the World Peace*. Unfortunately this book was banned in Germany."

"What! Banned! *Germany and the World Peace*—I have never heard of such a book!"

I then told him the whole story of the tussle I had had with Secretary of State Walter Funk, Hitler's friendly letter of thanks for the book, and the fact that it had still not appeared after nearly three years. I also explained that the reason for the ban lay in the criticism I had expressed of certain of the principles and views of National Socialism. But Ribbentrop made no reply—merely looked surprised. He could not, however, have been more surprised than I was; for I knew that the book had been read, either in German typescript or in proof, by Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and Frick and probably by others. It had, indeed, provoked lively discussion precisely in Government circles.

But time was passing and I must not let Finland slip through my fingers. I accordingly asked:

"*Herr Reichsminister,* will you permit me to ask you two questions which very closely concern me and my mother-land?"

"Certainly!"

"My first question is: Is there no possibility of peace between Russia and Finland, a peace which might be rendered acceptable to the Finns by German mediation?"

Ribbentrop: "It would be very difficult for us to intervene as mediators. I can see no possibility of that. You must understand our position. Our future depends on Russia. We get raw materials, grain, petrol and various things from Russia. Deliveries have already begun. Our pact with Russia is not military, only economic. It is a matter of life or death for us to keep that pact with Russia intact. We cannot offend Russia. Russia's prestige must be saved; it is therefore important for Russia to be able to show a victory in Finland now."

I: "But it is equally important for Finland and Sweden to have a reasonable peace concluded now; and we need the assistance of the German Government in finding a formula."

Ribbentrop: "I can see no possibility of that. It would

be very difficult for us to negotiate a peace. The Finns could have peace at any moment, but then they must also be prepared to make certain sacrifices."

I: "I pass on, then, to the second question: How would you regard Swedish intervention in the Finnish war in the form of volunteer aid on a larger scale than now?"

Ribbentrop: "We should not regard Swedish intervention in the war with sympathetic eyes, but we shall in all circumstances observe strict neutrality."

I: "Then we can help Finland by voluntary means without Germany taking any steps against us?"

Ribbentrop: "Yes."

I: "What would be your attitude towards Swedish aid of an official nature?"

Ribbentrop: "In relation to Swedish intervention, whether of a voluntary nature or official, we should observe strict neutrality provided Sweden did not allow herself to be beguiled into any common action with England and France, for in that case it would be clear to us that the Western Powers were trying to induce Sweden to enter the great war on their side and to fight on behalf of England and France. I hardly think, however, that the Western Powers would dare to sacrifice any considerable troop forces on such an uncertain gamble. The Western Powers are completely indifferent to Finland's fate, they merely want to use their intervention (on Finland's side against Russia) as a pretext to entice the Scandinavian countries to enter the main war on the side of the Entente. So that if Sweden refrains from letting herself become identified in any way with the interests of the Entente, she can count upon our absolute neutrality, but I should advise Sweden most emphatically against any large-scale intervention in the Finnish war. Such intervention would in my view involve Sweden in very great danger, since Russia might in such circumstances interpret Sweden's attitude as an unfriendly act. You might then be in danger, before you realised it, of air attacks on Stockholm and other of your coastal towns."

I: "You understand, *Herr Reichsminister,* that I came here on my own initiative and not on any sort of official mission from the Swedish Government, and in actual fact I

have not spoken to any of its members for four years. But I think I can guarantee, for all that, that the Swedish Government will remain absolutely neutral. So that if we maintain strict neutrality, we can rest assured that Germany will not take any action against Sweden on account of your pact with Russia?"

Ribbentrop: "Yes, I have already assured you of our neutrality."

At this point I suddenly threw in a short historical lecture. I had a distinct impression that Ribbentrop was not particularly well informed about Finland, and had jotted down the main points in my notebook the day before, so that now I was able to reel them off from memory without any difficulty.

"*Herr Reichsminister,* permit me to remind you of some of the more outstanding facts of Finnish history. For more than 600 years Finland was an integral part of the Kingdom of Sweden. Her culture, administrative and judicial systems are Swedish. Sweden built up Finland, which later formed one third of our realm. At Salmi, on the north-eastern shores of Lake Lagoda, Gustavus II Adolphus erected a stone with an inscription saying that here runs the frontier of the kingdom of Sweden and so, please God, it will always remain. Charles X Gustavus summed up the strategic position in the following maxim: 'Sweden's line of defence is the counterscarp, on the other side of the moat'; the counterscarp is Finland, and the moat the Gulf of Bothnia. And he meant that Sweden's position would be very serious if she ever lost the counterscarp. In the unhappy war of 1808-09 we lost the whole of Finland and Aaland. For more than a hundred years our frontier has run, as it does now, along the river Torne and through the Sea of Aaland. Mannerheim liberated Finland by the war of liberation of 1918, and made it into a sovereign State. The 'Swedish Brigade' that was sent over was voluntary. The Swedish Crown took no part in that war, but Germany, which was then hard pressed on every side, sent von der Goltz with 14,000 men to Mannerheim's aid in southern Finland. And now Finland is once more fighting for her life under her great Marshal. The bravery of the Finns has outshone anything in history since the days of Marathon. It has roused the admiration of all the world.

Every country on earth has sent help in one form or another. By intervening now to bring about peace Germany would win the gratitude and sympathy of every nation, in particular the four Scandinavian nations. The strategic significance of the Baltic would remain unchanged. The export of iron ore from Narvik and through the Baltic would not be endangered. If it is true that Britain and France are preparing to send fleets and troops to the north-western coast of Scandinavia, the *raison d'être* of these forces would be swept away by the conclusion of peace between Russia and Finland. Germany is now on the side of Russia against Finland, which is the farthest outpost of western culture to the north-east. Italy's sympathies are entirely on Finland's side. If peace could be established by German intervention, then the bonds between Germany and Italy would also be strengthened. It is possible, perhaps even probable, that Russia would be willing to make peace in return for Hangö. Finland would only relinquish this important strategic point in case of acute necessity."

When I had finished Ribbentrop said:

"Thank you for this account. Much of what you have told me is quite new to me."

He then passed on to England and told me one or two reminiscences from the time he had spent as Ambassador in London. He described his impressions of conversations with Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, and added:

"It rested with half a dozen Englishmen whether it was to be peace or war. The Führer has worked for peace and understanding with England, and has made England various offers. They have all been rejected. England wanted war and now she has got it. We shall be victorious in this war. Germany is much stronger now than in 1914."

Towards the end of the conversation we spoke of Russia again. I said:

"It has always been my opinion that an alliance with Russia would be the wisest policy Germany could pursue. But I had never imagined that such an alliance could have such dangerous consequences for Finland as is now the case."

Ribbentrop: "The days of Bolshevism are over. Something new and better is growing up in Russia. Stalin is a

man of unusually large stature, a really great man. Tsar Peter is his ideal."

I: "Has not Germany possibly a mission to fulfil in Russia, for example by sending her experts and engineers in various fields?"

Ribbentrop: "No, Stalin does not want any German experts. He wants to organise Russia according to his own ideas and his own principles. He is presumably afraid that the Germans might get power and influence in the country."

With that the interview proper was over, and the Minister asked:

"How long are you staying here, *Herr Doktor*?"

I: "A few weeks."

Ribbentrop: "Then we must meet again."

I: "It would give me great pleasure. You, *Herr Reichsminister,* are the man who could bring peace to Finland. It would be an advantage for both Germany and Scandinavia."

Ribbentrop sat silent for a while and stared at the ground. Then he said:

"I will think it all over carefully and *mir die Sache durch Kopf gehen lassen.*[1] Are you going to see the Führer?"

"Yes, I should like to. I am only afraid of taking up his valuable time."

"Not at all. He enjoys talking to you. I shall be seeing him tomorrow and will speak to him about it then. I will telephone later to let you know the time."

I: "Thank you very much. And now I have also taken up a great deal of your time, and Sumner Welles is coming to-morrow."

Ribbentrop: "Yes, I am not worrying about that. He can say what he wants to. I have nothing to say to him."

At that we rose. The Minister thanked me once more for the insight I had given him into conditions in Scandinavia and I thanked him for his patience and kindness. Legation Counsellor von Zapp escorted me back to the Kaiserhof.

The judgment passed on Ribbentrop by foreign observers has mostly not been very flattering. He has been described as an arrogant and vain *parvenu,* an ill-mannered man who

[1] "Turn the matter over in my head."

considered himself equal to any situation whatever. The first time I heard him ranting over the Stockholm telephone in connection with my interview with the *News Chronicle*—of which not a word was now said—I was inclined to agree with these critics. At my first meeting with the Minister in person, however, he made a by no means unpleasant impression. He was polite and agreeable and showed no trace of arrogance. He made no attempt at bluffing, but revealed a surprising ignorance on certain questions of fact, particularly with regard to Sweden's relations with Finland. Yet he openly admitted his ignorance of Finland and thanked me for the information I had given him. He was unquestionably not equal to the terrible responsibility he bore at a time when the German Reich was facing its death-struggle. It would have been better for both Germany and Hitler if the experienced, wise and cautious von Weizsäcker had held the position of Foreign Minister. What is said about Ribbentrop being responsible for Hitler's mistaken idea that it would be an easy matter to vanquish Britain may be correct, but Hitler never listened to advice or warnings, but always thought he knew better than anyone else. In his interesting book *Now or Never* Sumner Welles has given an account of the interview he had with Ribbentrop two days after my visit, i.e. on 1st March 1940. The portrait he paints of the Foreign Minister is far from generous.

Wherever one went in Berlin at the end of February and beginning of March 1940, Finland was the main topic of discussion. Everyone admired the struggle put up by the Finns for their life and freedom, only the politicians regarded the problem more realistically. Everyone thought that if Finland got peace now, the terms would be harder than they had been in November 1939. But it could not be much longer now before the Finns would have to bow before the superior force. The suggestion that the Western Powers wanted to use Scandinavia as a spring-board and a bridge to Finland, as the German leaders presented the position, made a certain impression on the Germans. " If the Western Powers so manipulate affairs that we Swedes are drawn into the war, either willingly or against our will, on their side, then we can confidently expect a German attack. In order to avoid risks

in Scandinavia it is clearly in Germany's interest to try to bring about peace between Russia and Finland." (My diary.)

* * *

Dr. Ting, the Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy, who came to see me frequently, asked me to impress on Ribbentrop how important it was for peace to be concluded between China and Japan. The only comfort I could give him, however, was that I was convinced that China could never be conquered by Japan. I had clearly expressed this view in my recently published book, *Chiang Kai-shek*.

On 1st March we paid a courtesy call on Dr. Frick, the Minister of the Interior, whom we had met during his visit to Stockholm to lecture to the Swedish-German Society. He had an important meeting just then in an adjoining room, so that we only stayed a very short time, but long enough to enable him to ask me a few questions about Finland and me to answer them.

We lunched with Minister Richert. He and I used always to talk over and " prepare ", so to speak, the questions I ought to discuss with the German leaders.

The following day I paid my respects to Dr. Rust, the Reich Minister for Popular Information and Learning, a tall and energetic man who took a keen interest in my atlas of Central Asia. This was already in full production at Justus Perthes' in Gotha and I had received the first sheet on 19th February. Rust also referred to Finland's struggle for independence, and was just as sceptical about it as the other party leaders. He had recently heard a speech of Hitler's in which he had discussed the general situation and pointed out the necessity of creating a new order in Europe. British tutelage must cease, and Germany rise in her full power to take her just place as leader on the continent. Russia's friendship was necessary to give her support in the rear in a war against the Western Powers. This pact must at all costs be maintained. Russia was extremely sensitive with regard to everything she regarded as her rights under the pact. Germany had recovered the frontiers she had had before Versailles—now Russia demanded the same advantage. Before Versailles the Russian frontier had run west of Finland and Aaland, and Russia

demanded to have this frontier restored. Sweden had lived at peace for a hundred years with this frontier, and had as little to fear in the future as then. And it in no way affected Germany's interests if Russia were to establish herself in Kiruna and Narvik, and dominate the greater part of the Baltic. The patriotism and bravery of the Finns could never be sufficiently admired by the rest of the world. It seemed as though the German leaders were getting a bad conscience about Finland.

Another Conversation with the Reich Chancellor

ON 4th March von Zapp, the Legation Counsellor, came to call for me. We drove to the Reich Chancellery and I was received by Dr. Meissner exactly as on the previous occasion. As we entered the reception room the Dictator came towards me and led me behind the armchairs and the table to the same corner of the sofa as I had occupied on my visit in October, while he himself sat in the same armchair as then.

He leaned back in his chair and broke into poetic reflections on his own career.

"My life is like a saga. The whole course of my life has been saga-like. Few people have experienced so many wonders as I. But a human life is only a short episode, it vanishes as quickly as the foam on the surface of a river. Step by step I have fought my way on to power, and my goal have already achieved enough. The policy of the Western Powers aims above all at destroying my work and preventing Germany's rise to greatness. But my work will be completed by others who will come after me, and perhaps carry out their task as well as I mine. I have had great good fortune in my undertakings, but I shall not live long. Remember that I am over 50!"

"I am 75!"

"Yes, but you are an exception!"

"Fifty is no age at all. When you are as old as I am, *Herr Reichskanzler,* you will still be vigorous and active."

"Ah, no, no; I shall be worn out long before then. But give me the key to your secret and tell me what you do to keep so healthy and alert at your age!"

"It is all very simple. I have spent a large part of my life among the high mountains of Asia and in their pure

fresh air, and in the limitless deserts, where no microbes find their way. I have lived for years in tents both winter and summer, and I have ridden thousands of miles, which is the finest exercise you can have. If ever I felt tired I have rested for a day and I have never—except for a matter of life or death—over-exerted myself. In Asia I never drank alcohol, and under civilised conditions only with the utmost moderation. I used to tire very quickly of tinned foods and preferred to live on the native fare and whatever the country had to offer. In the lowlands I preferred milk, eggs and rice, in Tibet I always took adequate supplies of flour and rice with me and had freshly-baked bread every morning. My rifleman kept the caravan supplied with game: antelopes, gazelle and birds, especially wild geese, wild ducks and partridge. But my staple diet in Tibet was always the thick yellow sour milk, and also the delicious sweet milk of the yak cows."

Hitler: "Yes, yoghourt, sour milk is the best of all foods, healthy and good to eat. Anyone who has made yoghourt his staple diet for twenty years will be strong as a bear and live longer than other people."

He then asked a few questions about the organisation of the expeditions, about servants and their reliability, about roads and maps, about the delight of knowing oneself to be the first to set foot on some part of the earth.

He returned once more to the subject of diet, which evidently interested him particularly. He asked:

"But a people that lives at such a terrific height and in such a hard, cold climate must surely eat a great deal of meat and fat?"

"Yes, the rich nomads who own large flocks of sheep eat a great deal of meat; but they mix their diet with milk in various forms, and grain which they get from the Himalayan people in exchange for salt. In Central Tibet there are small tribes of huntsmen who hunt wild yak and trap antelopes. They live almost exclusively on meat. Even the horses are fed on meat in districts where there is no grazing for them."

"Are these tribes not liable to certain diseases brought on by their constant meat diet?"

" No, these huntsmen are strong and hardy and can stand up with ease to both the cold and the snowstorms. Of course I too ate meat in Tibet, though I preferred sour yak's milk and bread. Here in Berlin I have a special predilection for *die fleischlosen Tage.*"[1]

He laughed at this remark. But by now I was beginning to fear that the reason he was digging his teeth so firmly into the Tibetan diet was to keep me off the subject of Finland and make the remainder of the hour he had set aside for me too short for any political discussions. I therefore plunged boldly in and in a few short words brought the conversation round to the channels I desired:

" But, *Herr Reichskanzler,* what do you think about Finland?"

Without directly replying to my question he drew from his breast-pocket a piece of paper which he unfolded and said:

" Listen, *Herr Doktor,* this will tell you what the Finns think about us: ' Helsinki. D.N.B. report. *Vasabladet* writes that the Finnish war of independence is embarrassing both to the Soviet Union and to Germany. Hitler and Stalin would be glad to see an end to the Finnish war. Germany fears that the Soviet Union might become involved in the war between the Great Powers and that Germany then would only obtain insignificant military support from the Soviet. The peace terms Russia would propose would even exceed her demands of the autumn of 1939. A peace involving the resignation of Mannerheim and Tanner and dictated by Russia and Germany would not, however, be entertained for a moment by Finland!"

With that he folded the paper up again, put it back in his pocket and said:

" You will understand, *Herr Doktor,* that I do not feel any great desire to interfere in Finland's affairs when that is the sort of treatment I receive."

That evening Dr. Meissner sent me a copy of the Finnish paper that had influenced the Dictator so strongly against Finland.

This episode was proof to me that Ribbentrop had reported

[1] The meatless days.

to the Führer the import of my conversation with him a few days previously. Otherwise Hitler would never have had this translated extract from a Swedish-Finnish newspaper so ready to hand.

Hitler then continued:

"You understand, then, that I do not propose to concern myself with the Finnish cause. I have instructed Herr von Ribbentrop to send the following communication immediately to Stalin: 'The Führer requests me to inform you that he will not have a military pact, only an economic pact!' Russia's military undertakings therefore do not concern me in the least. Stalin does not want war. His demands are natural and reasonable. They concern areas which were formerly Russian. He only desires small parts of these areas. The Finns should have accepted his proposals—then they would have avoided all the war and destruction. Now Stalin will presumably ask for more than then."

"What would be your attitude in these circumstances, *Herr Reichskanzler,* if Sweden were to help Finland officially?"

"Strictly neutral! But if the British use that as a pretext for slinking in to Scandinavia, then I attack. I understand something of military matters!"

I: "The present Swedish Government will undoubtedly maintain Swedish neutrality and not allow any British troops over our frontiers. But Sweden is helping and will continue to help Finland with volunteers, arms, money, clothes and provisions."

Hitler: "All that will not help Finland much, but I shall not concern myself with it. Finland's fate is obvious, her future looks very black."

I: "What do you think of the Baltic problem, *Herr Reichskanzler?"*

Hitler: "The fact that the Russian fleet is navigating in the Batlic is quite immaterial to Germany. In these days a single bomber can destroy a battleship. For the cost of one battleship we can build 600 aircraft. A hostile fleet in the Baltic is therefore of no account. On more than one occasion Finland has shown very little liking for us. The Finns have never referred to von der Goltz's corps that was sent to their

aid in 1918. No Germans were invited to the celebrations in commemoration of the victory of 1918. When we signed the non-aggression pact we were insulted in Geneva by the Finns."

I: "Could you not at least, *Herr Reichskanzler,* make a friendly gesture towards Finland? Tokens of admiration for the Finns' brave struggle for survival keep pouring in from all the continents and nations of the earth and collections are being made all over the world. Some evidence of sympathy from Germany too would make a tremendous impression all over the world."

Hitler: "All that does not mean very much. The American loan of 20 million dollars was not granted by the Senate. Sentimental outpourings everywhere do not impress me."

I: "Is there no hope either of the peace between Germany and England-France that everyone longs for?"

Hitler: "No, there will be no major peace—the battle must be fought out *now,* a stop must be put to British arrogance *now*!"

At that we rose and said goodbye. This time I received no memorandum from Meissner and nothing at all was said about the Press. But an announcement about my visit was inserted in the afternoon's radio and in the evening papers. It was regarded in Berlin as rather remarkable for a foreigner to be received in a private capacity by the Führer. Everyone wondered what it was all about, but everyone was tactful and no indiscreet questions were asked. I was in contact with the Swedish newspaper correspondents, in particular Jäderlund and Svanström, but they understood more than well that nothing was to be said.

The conversation with Hitler that had begun with poetry and sour milk, thus ended somewhat negatively. I had indeed learnt that, whatever Sweden might do in Finland, he would remain strictly neutral but that he intended on the other hand to intervene if we made common cause with England. Nevertheless he refused to help Finland, as I had hoped he would, on the road towards peace. I have already mentioned that, thanks to the information he had received from Ribbentrop, he was informed in advance of the purpose

of my visit. Yet I accepted the outcome with equanimity. It was always possible that, on closer consideration, Hitler would realise that my view, even from Germany's standpoint, was correct. The political situation changes from day to day. None of us could imagine that the time would come when the Dictator would fly to Mannerheim's headquarters and when he would send Ribbentrop and Field-Marshal Keitel to that very Finland whose fate he now left unhesitatingly in Stalin's hands.

At Carinhall

ON 6th March my sister and I were invited to lunch with Field-Marshal and Frau Hermann Goering at Carinhall. We had been warned in the morning to start in good time as the roads were bad and covered with ice. On our arrival we were received by Lt. Goering, who took us in to the drawing-room where we were welcomed by General Bodenschatz who was attached to Goering as a military expert.

Goering was in his study in the thick of a conversation with Ivan Andres, the Yugoslav Minister of Trade and Industry, and his adjutant. At a quarter to two they both came out and General Bodenschatz took me in to Goering, who was walking backwards and forwards on costly carpets in his large study, his hands behind his back, deep in thought. He was dressed in rustic style and looked, as on the previous occasion, like a prosperous farmer in his pale green shirt and without a jacket. He had also received the foreign emissary, and later the ladies too, in his shirt-sleeves. He was in brilliant spirits and as genial as he had been in Stockholm more than fifteen years before. Fine, I thought, perhaps he will be amenable to argument and not so hard to make an impression on as the Führer. I knew that, thanks to Carin, his first, Swedish-born wife, and his memories of Sweden, he had a real friendship for our country, but on the other hand his views would hardly count for much if they happened to conflict with Hitler's will of iron.

We sat down facing one another with the enormous writing-desk between us. Not a single paper, a single document or telegram marred its grass-green surface. I began at once with Finland:

"In Sweden we feel uneasy about Finland and hope that Germany, thanks to her pact with Russia, will be able to find a way to end this uneven struggle that will be acceptable to Finland."

Goering: "The Finns are fighting under Mannerheim with shining bravery and there is no one here who does not admire them. But the situation is hopeless. The Russians send one new legion to the frontier after another. The Finns should make peace while there is yet time."

I: "That is just what we want both in Finland and Sweden, and we trust and hope that Germany will be able to help Finland to peace."

Goering: "I am convinced that Stalin will be moderate in his demands and perhaps not go beyond his terms of last autumn. Probably Viborg will have to go, as it did at the Peace of Nystad. I have no fears for Finland's future. The chief thing is that the country should not be entirely occupied. So long as, at the worst, only a corner of Finland remains, the time will always come when the world situation will make it possible for the Finns to regain what they have lost. In general the Scandinavian nations have an unreasonable fear of Russia. What should the Russians want with Kiruna when they have iron-ore closer at hand, and why should they trouble themselves about Narvik, which is altogether too far away for them and would be difficult for them to defend? I should warn Sweden strongly against any ill-considered action which might cause Russia displeasure. It might also have anything but desirable consequences for us. For example, England might intervene under the pretext of wanting to help Finland. If England takes any steps with a view to occupying Narvik and Kiruna, then Germany will have to intervene in the Scandinavian game and you can rest assured that no one would regret such a development more than I. In order to prevent all such complications it would be best for all parties if peace could be concluded now between Russia and Finland."

We then discussed the Scandinavian situation at length and I repeated very much the same things as I had said to Ribbentrop. Goering was much better informed on the Scandinavian problem than he. He agreed with me in all essentials, though when I urged strong German intervention in Moscow on Finland's behalf he merely replied:

"It is not so easy for us to intervene in this war. Hitler has to think above all of his friendship with Russia."

I then pointed out the importance for Sweden of obtaining howitzer ammunition, anti-tank guns, small 20 mm. machine guns and aircraft from Germany.

Goering: "Aircraft we cannot supply to Sweden, but all the other types of arms and ammunition shall be sent over in an unbroken stream. Everything in the nature of aircraft that we have time to build we shall need ourselves."

I had received a letter a few days previously from some unknown person containing a cutting from the *Tägliche Rundschau* of about the end of July 1920 reporting an interview I had given, in which I had expressed my surprise that the Germans had capitulated in 1918 in spite of the fact that they had been victorious on practically every battlefield and had kept the enemy out of German territory on every side. Towards the end of the article I had pointed out that 'Germany's future lies in Russia', by which I meant that Bismarck's idea of a German-Russian alliance would be the only conceivable protection against an attack from the west. I had long since forgotten all about this twenty-year-old interview. In view of its applicability to present-day affairs I had kept the cutting in my notebook.

We rose and went across to one of the windows, Goering looked out over the leafless park and said:

"You must understand that friendship with Russia is the most important thing of all for us. We have to be able to count on this powerful ally. Other nations blame us loudly and can never forgive us for entering into a pact of friendship with the Soviet Union, that 'vast empire of Asiatic barbarians'. We help Russia with experts and technicians and ourselves obtain raw materials and grain from her. The pact is of advantage to both parties and it is presumably that that people cannot forgive us. It is also realised that a war on two fronts would be a great danger for Germany. That is just what we want to avoid with the pact. The 23rd August 1939 was a diplomatic victory of the first order for Germany, a step that may possibly decide the whole outcome of the war. It showed that we were wise and far-sighted and that German diplomacy was not so inept as they tried to make out in the First World War."

I: "Yes, the German Government's pact of friendship with Russia was a very skilful move and enormously important to Germany's strategic position. But what surprises me is that it should have taken you seven years, or ever since Hitler's accession to power, to realise this. To me the policy was perfectly obvious twenty years ago, as this article shows."

With that I extracted the cutting from my notebook and showed him the interview I had given in July 1920 to the *Tägliche Rundschau*. He read it with rising interest and exclaimed:

"*Dies wird der Führer lesen!*"[1]

When he had finished he put the cutting away in his own pocket and its further fate is unknown to me. He parried my impertinent remarks with a few sarcastic comments about the state of the Swedish Army in 1925 and the Government that was responsible for it. I replied that the Swedish nation had woken up to the danger now and was making far-reaching and satisfactory efforts to make up for lost time. He admitted that the tone of the Swedish Press and the attitude of the nation in general towards Germany had improved of late. In the end I said:

"One thing that would improve feeling towards Germany would be if you would respect our merchant ships sailing under the neutral Swedish flag."

Goering: "That is not our fault. You should address your complaints to England. So long as England continues to escort neutral ships to Kirkwall, we shall not respect neutral flags either."

Our conversation had lasted an hour and during that time the other guests had had to wait for their lunch. We joined them now and all moved in to a smallish room where a round table was set. The Yugoslav Minister's wife sat on Goering's right hand, my sister on his left. The Minister and I were placed on either side of Frau Emmy Goering. Other guests were the hostess's two sisters, the Yugoslav adjutant, General Bodenschatz and Lt. Goering. Whenever I went to see him I always used to take Goering a bottle of Swedish brandy, which he loved. He took the bottle in his arms and caressed it like a baby. The party was in high spirits, the meal

[1] "The Führer must read this!"

Lucullan. There was butter and real Gruyère cheese, caviare, lobster, fresh asparagus, hot dishes and delicacies of every sort. The restrictions in Berlin were not observed at Goering's table.

Frau Emmy was sweet, dignified and unassuming. She confided later to my sister that she detested all this luxury at a time when millions were living in poverty and want, and she was appalled at this unnecessary war which could lead to nothing but destitution, disappointments and sorrow.

Little Edda tripped in and greeted the guests very prettily. And then began a tour of inspection of this original dwelling, which was a sort of cross between a manor-house and a farmstead. A positive museum of gifts that had been presented to Goering by colleagues, organisations and communities was displayed on tables and in cases—valuable goblets, cups and beakers of gold and silver, chests, statuettes and articles of every description. The walls were covered with carpets and paintings by old Italian masters. But what he himself valued most highly was his collection of Cranach's masterpieces, which he said was the largest in existence.

One wall was hung with framed photographs taken on various historic occasions. One feature they all had in common, and that was that Hitler appeared in every one. The library was richly stocked with *de luxe* editions. In one of the large drawing-rooms the outer wall was composed of a single pane of glass, the largest in Germany.

We were also taken down to the kitchen department, which was enormous and clearly showed that the owner by no means despised the culinary arts. In the basement we were shown the bathing-pool, whose crystal-clear water was 8 ft. deep and was kept at a temperature of 82°. Nearby was also a miniature railway that was supposed to be Edda's, but was obviously just as highly appreciated by her father, who gave us a demonstration with evident pleasure of the way the small electric trains tore round through the hilly landscape, vanished into tunnels and rattled on over bridges and viaducts.

After several pleasant hours at the Goering home we drove back to our old Kaiserhof.

Heldengedenktag.[1]

ON 7th March, in company with the Embassy Counsellors Tann and Ting and their wives and the Swedish Minister, we attended a genuine Chinese dinner given by the Chinese Ambassador Chen Chieh and his wife. All the Chinese present once more expressed themselves anxious that my book on Chiang Kai-shek should appear in German, as they thought it would lend support to China's just cause. They suggested that I should cut everything in the book that might prove hurtful to Japanese feelings. But it was precisely my sympathies for China that the people of Nippon took exception to and I replied that I could alter nothing.

Among my afternoon visitors at the Kaiserhof I would mention in particular Dr. Haegert, Ministerial Director to the Ministry of Propaganda, who had to do with my books in the censorship. The series of scientific expeditionary works that was being published in Stockholm included also two massive volumes on meteorology by Dr. Waldemar Haude, the printing of which I had had to pay for myself. This was being done by Brockhaus of Leipzig. In order to provide the sum required for the printing as painlessly as possible I suggested to Brockhaus that they should use the royalties from my book, *Fünfzig Jahre Deutschland,* for this purpose. But to enable a sufficiently large edition of this latter book to be published there would have to be an extra allocation of the very strictly rationed paper. This was where Dr. Haegert stepped in as a sort of ministering angel and I got all the paper I needed not merely for the above-mentioned book but for most of my old travel-books as well. Actually I never noticed the restrictions at all. My books sold exceptionally well throughout the war. According to Dr. Haegert books were selling up to 100 per cent. better than in peace-time. There

[1] Heroes' Day.

was plenty of money about and people were unable to spend it on luxury goods, amusements, clothes or foreign travel. In addition the extremely strict blackout regulations made it difficult to go out after dark. People had to stay at home, and reading was their only pastime. The large royalties I received from Brockhaus came in very handy to me, since the grant awarded by the Swedish Riksdag on 30th June 1941 had all been spent. I was then able to continue the publication of the scientific works of my colleagues and myself at my own expense. Even 44 years after the appearance of my first German book, *Durch Asiens Wüsten,* I received four thousand Marks, or 6,700 kronor in royalties on this work. I also discussed with Dr. Haegert plans for new books. The two that interested him most and that he would have liked to have written as soon as possible were *My Horses in Asia,* a description of the horses I had ridden for thousands of miles on Asiatic soil, and a chronicle of the famous men and women I had met during my life. When Pearl Buck and her husband, the head of the John Day Company of New York, saw my files and got some idea of the extent of my correspondence, they were very anxious for me to write a book entitled *Celebrities and Kings* or something of the sort. My gallery included men like Mutsuhito, Emperor of Japan, Sultan Abdul Hamid, Li Hung Chang, two Popes, many of the princes and scholars of Europe and Asia, most of the great explorers of our time, and there were also letters in my collection from Kaiser Wilhelm, Hindenburg, Hitler, Lord Kitchener and even a telegram from President Franklin D. Roosevelt. All told the collection numbers more than 130 historically famous names.

Haegert believed that a book along these lines would be a success in Germany too. When I asked what the public would think of English and French names, he replied that they would find those the most interesting of all.

However, I did not hurry myself over the two proposed books and they have not yet appeared even to-day. Large editions of my books continued to be published right up to the end of 1944, foremost on the list being *Amerika im Kampf der Kontinente* which came out in the autumn of 1942. By 1945 no further royalties could be paid, and at the beginning

of 1946 my books were banned by the new masters in Berlin. According to what I learnt from letters from Brockhaus his publishing house in Leipzig, i.e. in the Russian zone, was still in operation though on a modest scale, and was under the management of the old Dr. Fritz Brockhaus. Hans Brockhaus, on American initiative, has established a branch of the famous 150-year-old firm in Wiesbaden.

That afternoon Hans Brockhaus arrived from Leipzig and I had a conference with him, Haegert and Ziegler at which plans for all the above-mentioned books were discussed. Brockhaus was very keen on a book about Sweden. He thought that the German people, who for more than 40 years had known me as a traveller in Asia, would like to read a travel-book about my own country.

* * *

The annual ceremony of *Heldengedenktag* was to take place on Sunday 10th March and I had received in good time an invitation which ran as follows:

"Im Auftrag des Führers und Oberbefehlhabers der Wehrmacht bittet der Chef des Oberkommandos des Wehrmacht Herrn Sven Hedin an den Gedenkakt zu Ehre der Gefallenen des Weltkrieges 1914-1918 *und des jetzigen Krieges am* 10.3.1940 12 *Uhr im Lichthof des Zeughauses teilzunehmen."*[1]

At 11.30 Ministerialdirektor Gutterer called to escort me to the Zeughaus while my two secretaries, Alma and Ann Marie, set off in company with Princess Elisabeth Fugger for the Propaganda Ministry in the Wilhelmstrasse, where they had an excellent view from a window over the route and were able to watch the Führer and his cortège of cars in bird's-eye perspective. Gutterer and I drove up to the main entrance of the Zeughaus between double ranks of S.A. and S.S. soldiers. While the ceremony was in progress the Under den Linden was closed to traffic, but behind the soldiers the pavements were packed with sightseers.

After threading our way among exhibits of mediaeval knights' armour, artillery and other trophies we reached the courtyard, which is quadrangular in shape and not very

[1] "By order of the Führer and C.-in-C. the Army the Army Chief of Staff requests the presence of Herr Sven Hedin at the ceremony in honour of the fallen of the 1914-1918 World War and of the present War at 12 o'clock on 10.3.1940 in the courtyard of the Arsenal."

large. A red carpet was laid along the centre of it to the opposite wall, where an enormous iron cross flanked by German banners was mounted above a table standing on a low platform which was to serve as rostrum. On either side the red carpet stood the Ministers, leaders and high-ranking officers of the Third Reich, all in uniform. So far as I could see I was the only civilian and presumably the only foreigner. The number of people present must have been about 150.

Gutterer led me to the front row on the left hand side, where I had Hess on my right and Goebbels on my left. Everyone greeted their friends and chatted.

I met Dorpmüller, Meissner, Milch and, for the first time, Himmler.

Suddenly the murmur of conversation ceased, a fanfare resounded through the quadrangle, everyone faced towards the red-carpeted gangway and raised their right arms in the same direction. The Führer entered. He knew the art of walking with straight legs, straight back and head held high. Behind him came Goering, Field-Marshals von Brauchitsch and Keitel, and Grand Admiral Raeder. They took up their places in the front row on the right. Then the band played Beethoven's divine Eroica. As its last notes died away Hitler advanced to the table, spread out his manuscript, which was written in large, bold letters, and made a powerful speech in memory of the dead lasting ten minutes. He spoke of the gratitude which the Germans of to-day owed to the fallen heroes who had given their lives for their Fatherland both in the previous war and the present one. His words vibrated with glowing force and conviction and his voice often trembled with emotion. Germany had been forced by her enemies into this war, which neither he nor any other German had desired. They all lived now in times of terrible gravity, but every man and woman would know how to do their duty.

When Hitler had finished speaking the band played *Deutschland über Alles* and the *Horst Wessel* song. As the last notes faded away he left the assembly with rapid steps. His face was deeply serious and hard. He gave not a glance at those present, there might have been no one in the quadrangle but himself. His thoughts were entirely fixed on the dead—the living did not exist for him. Their lives were

dependent on his will and whenever he pleased he could send them to the same death as had gathered in the fallen. To-day, 10th March, was indeed *Heldengedenktag*. All those present stood as though moulded in bronze with their right arms stretched towards the Dictator who in seven years had raised Germany from the humiliation of the Peace of Versailles to a height of power that made the whole world tremble.

He went to the Grave of the Unknown Soldier in the Zeughaus and laid his wreath. Finally with his attendant staff he took up his position on the edge of the pavement outside the German Armoury to take the march-past of three companies which were applauded to the echo. A column of new tanks drove past, a thundering salute echoed against the façades, banners fluttered and the band broke into a parade march.

* * *

A very attractive Oxford man from the U.S.A., a Mr. B., came to see me at the Kaiserhof and assured me that no one in America wanted to come into the war and he did not believe the United States would do so. He himself was doing all he could for the cause of peace and was just off to Rome to discuss the matter with the Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Sumner Welles. Less than two years later his efforts were to go up in smoke.

A little later on Magister Räikkönen came to inform me that ex-President Svinhufvud and Herr Norrmén, the bank director, were in Berlin and would like to meet me. I accordingly went to see them at the Central Hotel where we had a few hours' conversation. The grand, indefatigable old Svinhufvud, whom I had known in Helsinki at the time when he was President of Finland and when Carl von Heidenstam was Swedish Minister in Finland, had set out on this journey to Berlin and Rome with the single object of trying to achieve his burning desire to end the Winter War. It pained him that he had not been able to gain access to Hitler and Ribbentrop and he wondered whether I could act as intermediary in this respect. As their unwillingness to receive such a distinguished representative of the country with which Russia was just then at war was obviously connected with the delicate

Russo-German pact, and as my capacity was entirely private, I did not feel myself in a position to carry out the President's wishes.

Herr Norrmén asked me whether I could and would tell them what I had learnt during my conversations with Hitler and Ribbentrop. Unfortunately this was impossible as the conversations had been strictly private and as, if I were to reveal what had passed, I might have prejudiced the position I occupied with the German leaders, a position which might possibly in the future be of value even to Sweden.

Norrmén told me that while he and Svinhufvud were in Stockholm they had heard that Hitler had expressed to me his unwillingness to mediate in the Finnish war. Their source had been the Swedish Foreign Office, which had passed the information in strict confidence to Minister Erkko, who in turn had spoken to Paasikivi and the three other men who were just about to set off for negotiations in Moscow. Svinhufvud and Norrmén had heard the news at the same time, i.e. the night of 7th-8th March, immediately before their departure for Berlin. They pointed out to me now that it would unquestionably be helpful to Paasikivi and his companions to be informed of Germany's attitude towards eventual peace preliminaries with the Russians on their arrival in Moscow. I could only regret that I had not been able to achieve anything more positive. I had in any case done all I could, and if I could thereby do anything, however slight, to benefit the cause of Finland and Sweden, I would gladly stay in Berlin any length of time and not hesitate to enter into fresh conversations with the German leaders.

With that I took my leave. I never saw the two Finns again. But I preserve happy memories of this little episode and rejoice that it has been granted me once in my life to strike a blow for beloved Finland.

Dr. Goebbels and Finland

ON the morning of 11th March I received a message that Dr. Goebbels was expecting me at 4 o'clock in his office at the Ministry of Propaganda. I was received there by Ministerialrat Dr. Müller, who took me in to the Minister at the appointed time.

Some of my German friends had advised me against bringing Finland under discussion, on the grounds apparently that it pained the Minister to be obliged for political reasons to leave the brave and magnificent Finnish people to its fate. I never had the opportunity to disregard this not very well-considered advice, for hardly had Goebbels greeted me with the utmost friendliness and hardly had we settled ourselves comfortably in our two armchairs before he said:

"*Nun was sagen Sie von Finnland, Herr Hedin?*"[1]

With that the defences were down and for more than an hour and a half we talked of nothing but Finland, of course with various digressions into other subjects. I replied:

"Yes, Finland!—that is a problem that is filling the whole world just now with anxieties and hopes and in Sweden particularly is being followed by our people with the warmest sympathy. Finland has not merely been part of the Swedish kingdom for more than 600 years, it also contributed in very large part to make it possible for our immortal kings to give Sweden the position of a great Power she occupied for a century. Finnish blood has mingled with Swedish in innumerable victorious campaigns that have established a blood-brotherhood between Swedes and Finns which nothing can destroy, however our destinies may vary with the passing storms. From 1809 to 1918 Finland was Russian, but the bonds between our two peoples were never broken on that account."

[1] "Well, what do you think about Finland, Herr Hedin?"

Goebbels listened with tense interest and sat for a moment silent and thoughtful. Then he said:

"Yes, but how is it going to end *now*? *How* is this Finnish war going to end?"

I: "With downfall—unless the Finns receive help now at the twelfth hour. In Sweden we are doing everything in our power and everything that is allowed us within the framework of neutrality. There is not a single Swede who is not contributing in some form or other. Even the schoolchildren have their collections. But officially we *can* do nothing—unless we want war with Russia—and that we do not want!"

Goebbels: "But tell me, what are the Finns themselves doing to avert a catastrophe?"

I: "They are fighting like lions to save their land and their freedom."

Goebbels: "Yes, but there is a limit to what is possible. What are they going to do when they cannot go on any longer and the help from Sweden is not enough?"

I: "Then there will be the risk of a situation arising that would be as unwelcome to Germany as to Sweden. If the Finns were reduced by superior force to absolute desperation and despair there would hardly be any course open to them but to appeal for help to England and France."

Goebbels: "Help from the Western Powers! We know how the help they promised Poland turned out! I consider that Finland ought to seek peace as soon as possible—even on hard terms."

I: "Yes, of course peace in the existing situation would be the best thing of all, but the terms must not be *so* hard that Finland would be turned into a defenceless cripple, threatened in any case sooner or later with total destruction. If they are forced to capitulate under crushing conditions, then I think they would prefer to fight to the uttermost."

Goebbels: "No, that would be unrealistic. If they continue a hopeless struggle, they will lose everything. If they content themselves now with the terms they can get, they will at all events have a future."

I: "*Herr Reichsminister,* do you not think that the Germans in a similar situation would fight to the uttermost?"

Goebbels: "No, I do not think so. When we lost the World War in 1918 we submitted for a time to a humiliating and damaging peace and yet after 15 years were able to rise to new greatness. The same might happen to Finland."

I: "The loss of Hangö would be as unendurable to Finland as the loss of Cuxhafen to Germany."

Goebbels: "I cannot accept the comparison. So far as I know the new Russian terms are not as severe as might have been anticipated. I do not consider that an enormous Power like Russia could be expected to submit to having strong fortifications belonging to a foreign Power just outside Leningrad."

I: "That is simply a pretext as Russia knows that Finland would dare not to exploit her geographical position for any aggressive purposes. You must not imagine, *Herr Reichsminister,* that I have any unfriendly or hostile feelings towards Russia. Since 1885, or for a space of 55 years, I have travelled through Russia time after time between the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Caspian and the Pacific and I preserve nothing but pleasant and happy memories of all these journeys. In my books, most recently in *The Silk Road* just published, I have emphasised my debt of gratitude to Russia. And the services that have been done me by Russians are among the experiences of my life I shall never forget. That is *one* thing and it has to do with my heart and my feelings. Bolshevism is another matter. I have no hatred for Bolshevism and actually no one can contest the right of the Russians to adopt whatever philosophy or ideology they please. It concerns no one but themselves, just as National Socialism is the private affair of the Germans. But what I cannot reconcile myself to is the Russian plan for World Revolution, which in my view would be a terrible misfortune for the whole of mankind. Hitler in *Mein Kampf* has expressed similar views about Bolshevism."

Goebbels: "Bolshevism is no danger to Germany. As you know, it is forbidden here. Which of the Commissars do you know personally?"

I: "Chicherin, Lunacharsky, Kara Khan and Bubnoff. I once met Litvinov and a few others at the house of the first-named. Chicherin and Florinsky I met at dinners given by

the Swedish Minister in Moscow, von Heidenstam. Now, *Herr Reichsminister,* I am going to take the liberty of putting to you a question which it is really unsuitable and tactless to ask of a German Reich Minister."

Geobbels: "Oh, this is exciting. Tell me what it is."

I: "Let us now assume that Germany has conquered the Western Powers and become the strongest Power in the world. She would then, of course, possess unlimited hegemony over the whole of Europe. Do you imagine, *Herr Reichsminister,* that this Greater Germany would agree to having Russia as her nearest neighbour in the Baltic Sea, the Baltic States and Finland? My conviction is that Germany, whose object is to reshape and reorganise Europe after her own heart, would then also drive the Russians out of northern and eastern Europe back to the old Russian Steppes."

Goebbels, smiling and interested: "Yes but, for God's sake, *Herr Doktor,* we can hardly discuss things like that now of all times."

I: "No, let us not discuss it. I merely throw out this suggestion as being my own idea of what would happen."

Goebbels did not follow up the subject at all but broke away on a completely different tack with the words:

"One of the Führer's basic principles is the homogeneity and unity of the Germanic peoples in a bloc of States bound together by firm bonds of confidence and common interests."

I: "Yes, and just for that reason Finland must be saved before it is too late. Finland should surely be looked upon as a member of this Great Germanic bloc."

Goebbels: "Your views, *Herr Doktor,* have given me a great deal to think of."

I: "If Germany were to give the valiant Finnish people her support in their present desperate situation, Germany herself would gain by it."

Goebbels: "How do you mean?"

I: "The whole world with the exception of Russia and Germany sympathises with Finland. Every land and nation admires the Finns. Everyone is collecting for and talking of help for Finland, but no one has the courage and strength to do anything really effective. If Germany then, in the midst of all this *viel Geschrei und wenig Wolle,*[1] were to

[1] "Much cry and little wool."

put an end to the Russo-Finnish war at a single stroke, the whole world would rejoice and say: It is the Germans who have done this deed, it is Germany that has saved Finland. Morally Germany. which is now surrounded by hate, would rise at one bound to a strong position and there could no longer be any question of calling the Germans Huns and barbarians. The moral prestige of a nation has its importance in this world too. I do not know if the German leaders attach so very much value to the importance and effectiveness of moral prestige."

Goebbels: "Yes indeed, our moral prestige in the world matters to us very much. But do you really think that action of that sort would have such immense consequences?"

I: "Yes, *Herr Reichsminister*! If I were not such an old and sincere friend of Germany's as I am, I should never have said this to you. To me as a friend of Germany's it is a matter of deep concern to see Germany treading only such paths as may bring blessing to the German people. But one ought not to think exclusively of the moral consequences of such action. It would also bring Germany the gratitude of the Scandinavian nations for all time to come. Our people would never forget such support.—And it is by no means only the Scandinavian countries that think in this way. If you follow the sympathies of the Italian papers as expressed in *Corriere della Sera, Popolo d'Italia, Osservatoro Romano* and others, you will find that they are whole-heartedly with Finland in admiration of her hard struggle. It cannot be good for the Axis Powers for Germany to set herself against Finland while Italy is enthusiastically on Finland's side. Even for the Axis Powers I believe that German intervention to bring about peace between Russia and Finland might have its value."

Goebbels listened attentively and I went on:

"So far as I can see German mediation in the peace negotiations in Moscow would be of very great importance for Germany herself. In the first place peace would presumably not be welcome to the Western Powers in the event of their intending, as it is called, to "help" Finland with troops. For if peace were concluded it would neutralise all such plans.

Furthermore the conclusion of peace would gain you the goodwill of all the world."

Goebbels: "We are not unaware of the so-called "help" of the Western Powers to Finland and we know very well that their real object is to create a northern front against Germany and so force us into a war on two fronts."

I: "It is precisely that plan that would be foiled by a Finnish-Russian peace, which could surely be hastened by friendly German pressure in Moscow."

Goebbels: "At present there can be no question of Germany's hazarding her friendship with Russia by intervening in this way in a matter which does not really concern us. For us the pact with Russia is of the very greatest importance. If, as a result of German peace mediation, a rift were to occur in the pact between us and Russia, England and France would endeavour in every way and by every means to extend this rift and make it worse, which might do possibly irremediable damage to the pact."

In this respect Goebbels adopted the same attitude as Hitler, Ribbentrop and Goering. I got the impression that the Russo-German Pact must be pretty fragile if it could not stand such a very mild strain as a friendly proposal for mediation, all the more so as it was believed in some quarters that the Russians themselves were not disinclined for peace. It was not, of course, to be more than a year and three months before this friendship was changed into open war.

I: "All the Germans I have met in Stockholm and here have been on the side of Finland."

Goebbels nodded and smiled understandingly. Then he asked:

"What does Svinhufvud say about the situation? He is here now, I believe."

I: "He feels the greatest uneasiness for Finland's future and sets all his hopes on German help. I have discussed with him the suggestion that I might fly to Moscow, but . . ."

Goebbels: "No, no, if you went to Moscow direct from Berlin you would immediately be suspect."

Finally he touched upon the Swedish Press and made a few anything but friendly comments on *Göteborgs Handelstidning*. He said among other things:

"It only requires half a dozen of the larger newspapers to adopt an attitude of hostility towards Germany for the whole nation to be poisoned. Bismarck's words about the broken windowpanes still hold good to-day. It surprises us that the Minister of State or the Foreign Minister cannot prevent the Press from using the language it does against us, a language which greatly impairs relations between Sweden and Germany."

I: "The Government does what it can to keep the Press in check. But we have an almost unlimited freedom of speech. The Swedish people is accustomed to think for itself and not go tied to the leading-strings of the newspapers. I myself do not take it too tragically when I am attacked for being a pro-German. Germany can take our Press criticism equally calmly."

Goebbels: "To us it is not a matter of indifference that popular opinion should be poisoned day by day. I admit that *Dagens Nyheter* has improved recently. Have you heard that that paper is to be sold for eight million kronor?"

I: "No, I know nothing about that."

As I left the Kaiserhof to go and see Goebbels my sister Alma had asked me to say something to him which now, when the Minister and I rose to say goodbye, took the following form:

"It is my hope and prayer that Germany, when she has won the war, will make a humane and reasonable peace, the exact opposite of the Peace of Versailles. I hope that neither England nor France will be mutilated and that Germany will win the gratitude of the whole world by her moderation."

Goebbels replied in a firm, clear voice and without seeking for words or qualifying anything.

"Yes, that is quite certain. We shall make a moderate and just peace, a peace that will be a blessing to all nations, a peace that will create a situation in Europe that will make fresh wars impossible. The Führer has never had and has not now any intention whatever of crushing England. England shall remain just as before, but we must be the leading Power on the Continent. England shall retain her dominion over the seas as before. We want no vengeance, only justice."

With that the interview was over. A hearty handshake

and goodbye. Ministerialrat Müller accompanied me out. I said to him: "Now I have taken up a great deal of the Reichsminister's time!" He replied: "Yes, but it was worth it, it was an extremely important and valuable conversation."

* * *

I never had any occasion during the next few years to see Goebbels again and was only once or twice in contact with him by letter or telegram. I will describe here in all brevity one of these occasions, which is of great interest as showing that the Propaganda Minister was not always inaccessible to the wishes of the Christians.

In the spring of 1943 I received a visit from Pastor Erich Marx of the United Evangelical Moravian Brethren of Stockholm, who told me of the difficulties the Moravian authorities in Saxony were having over the publication of their little book of daily texts, *Tägliche Losungen und Lehrtexte,* known in Sweden under the name of *Dagens Lösen.* There was a danger that the 1944 edition of this book, its 214th volume, might not be able to appear. They had appealed to Archbishop Eidem and Archbishop Kaila, who had promised to support this application to the Ministry of Propaganda. Now they also wanted support from a layman who had connections in Germany and consequently appealed to me.

From the year 1902 onwards I had been received on several occasions with the utmost hospitality at the Moravian missionary stations in the Himalayas, particularly those at Leh and Poo on the frontier between Tibet and India, and I accordingly promised gladly to do what I could for my Moravian friends.

On 20th March 1943 I wrote a long letter explaining the situation in full to Goebbels and telling him that the little book had been published in Germany every year for 213 years and that my parents, my sisters and I had read the Swedish edition, *Dagens Lösen,* every day for 64 years. In the deserts and mountains of Asia and in situations of great danger I had always read it and had gained strength and confidence from it. The German United Brethren hoped warmly and sincerely to obtain permission to publish the book once more the following year. Its prohibition would be a terrible blow to hundreds of thousands of people. And these people were

among the best, truest and most faithful in the German Reich. I too should deeply regret its prohibition—it would be like losing a friend I had loved and honoured from my youth upwards.

The reply was not long in coming. Early in April I received from Goebbels the following letter dated 1st April:

"*Hochgeehrter Herr Doktor Hedin.*

In view of your letter of 20th March I shall be pleased to authorise once more, as last year—in spite of the severely restricted printing capacity of the Reich—publication of the Moravian Brethren's *Losungen und Lehrtexte*. I am particularly happy to be able in this way to fulfil your personal wishes in this matter.

"With the expression of my deepest respect and my sincere good wishes

Your

J. Goebbels."

The Moravian Bishop Baudert sent me a letter full of touching gratitude. The usual edition of the book, 600,000 copies, was printed at a large press in Berlin that had escaped bombing.

In the spring of 1944 the Moravians came to me again with the same request as in the previous year. I again wrote to Goebbels and received the same friendly reply. This was the 215th volume, or the edition for 1945. Now the little book is printed in Switzerland.

Goebbels' goodwill towards the German Moravian Brethren contrasted sharply with his responsibility for the Jewish pogroms of November 1938 and for the brutalisation and terrible cruelty of the whole policy towards the Jews.

In spite of the cruelties of which Goebbels was undoubtedly guilty he seemed personally attractive and open. When the bells of the Third Reich tolled and the whole proud edifice collapsed in ruins, he stepped back in silence into the great unknown darkness.

The Moscow Peace

AS soon as the Propaganda Ministry had informed the Press that I had had a long conversation with Goebbels the usual results followed: quantities of visits, telephone calls and letters. A merchant named Kulenkampff wanted to know whether the Silk Road was passable for lorries bringing sheeps' wool from Central Asia to Germany; a Baltic youth, Stenbock, who claimed to be descended in the seventh generation from Magnus Stenbock, interviewed me about new plans and books; the Swedish General Gilbert Hamilton, coming direct from Doorn where he had been serving as adjutant, informed me that the Kaiser was strong in mind and body and followed world events with the keenest interest.

That evening we also had a visit from von Post, the Legation Counsellor, who carried me off to the Legation where I gave Minister Richert and von Post an account of my conversation of the previous day with the Propaganda Minister, an account which interested them exceedingly. At 7 o'clock, in company with the whole of the Legation staff, we listened to the Stockholm radio news bulletin. The Finland Fund had risen to 28 million kronor. The Finns had had a few minor successes, the Russians had almost encircled Viborg and penetrated into its northern and southern suburbs. It was now 12th March 1940 and one wondered how much longer these brave people would be able to stand out against the gigantic Power that month after month stamped new fresh legions out of the ground and sent them in across the blood-drenched soil of the Karelian Peninsula. Three and a half million people against 180 million—it *could* not go on much longer. But still the Finns held their ground. Tsar Peter was beginning to loom at this time larger and larger out of the shadows of a vanished world, and to Stalin and his school stood forth as their ideal of a hero and a ruler.

From the Legation we returned to the Kaiserhof. We had invited to dinner Dr. August Diehn, Director General of the Kali Syndicate, and Legation Counsellor Brunhoff. They went up with us at about eleven to our rooms. I told Brunhoff in private about my conversation with Goebbels the previous day, particularly those parts that concerned the German attitude towards Finland. He listened with tense interest, and considered that what I had said to Goebbels about mediation might have a certain effect. Brunhoff thought that the visit of Paasikivi and the three other men, Ryti, Tanner and another, to Moscow indicated that the peace negotiations had already reached an advanced stage. If that were the case, then Hitler had been right in telling me that he did not wish to mediate. If the negotiations in Moscow now were really likely to lead to peace, then the war would come to an end without German mediation and Hitler would have been spared offending the sensitive and suspicious Russians. What happened later on that dramatic evening indicated that Brunhoff knew more than he cared to reveal.

With that we went in to the others. Dr. Diehn was explaining to the two ladies his plans for improving the world along common-sense principles—trade by barter, abolition of customs barriers, etc. When the clock struck twelve Brunhoff asked if he might use the telephone, and I took him to my bedroom. A quarter of an hour later he came back, radiant, his hands extended, and cried out:

"Peace has been concluded between Russia and Finland and was signed in Moscow to-day!"

We could hardly believe our ears. Was it really possible! Everyone was jubilant! Peace, peace, the bloody Finnish Winter War at an end! God be thanked!

Brunhoff's midnight telephone call had evidently been to the Foreign Office, for he was able at once to reply to the question: on what terms? But he was not quite sure whether he had it all correctly. So much at any rate he had understood:

"That the terms were less severe than had been expected in Berlin: Hostilities were to cease, Russia demanded parts of the Karelian Peninsula including Viborg and parts of the Mannerheim Line, nothing on the shores of Ladoga,

Hangö and some surrounding territory, renounced her claims on Petsamo but retained the right to exploit the nickel mines, which were a special Canadian interest."

It was to prove the following day that this first version of the terms had been unduly optimistic. For the moment all we felt was joy that Finland's death-struggle was over. We immediately rang up Eric von Post, who wondered whether the Finnish Riksdag had approved the Russian demands. Brunhoff supposed that it had, as otherwise Paasikivi could not have signed the peace in Moscow.

It was not long before we found out that the peace Finland had got was a calamitous one, and that the midnight message had been in reality a message of mourning for both Finland and Sweden.

The following day, 13th March, Minister of State Dr. Meissner celebrated his sixtieth birthday and gave a reception in his apartments on the ground floor of Schloss Bellevue. An adjutant received me, and presented me in passing to the Russian Ambassador. I congratulated him on the great news of the day. " Yes," he said, " it is well that that war is over."

The brilliant company of high officials and foreign emissaries was all congratulations. The tables were laden with positive batteries of flowers, silver dishes, bowls, cups etc. and books including *Napoleon in Caricature.* The Führer had sent a picture and was to attend in person later. I met a number of interesting personalities, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, whose interesting profile and high turban contrasted strangely with the Western surroundings, the Swedish Minister and the Belgian Ambassador, Vicomte Davignon, who was full of uneasiness at the war situation now menacing his own country.

Our next visit was to General Erhard Milch, Secretary of State in the Air Ministry. He had been our old and faithful friend ever since the beginning of my last expedition, when Milch and Joachim von Schröder as members of the Board of Directors of the Deutsche Luft Hansa had been my indefatigable support, and during my absence in Asia that of my sister.

We sat now for a good hour talking in his office in the Haus der Flieger and found him just as vital and enthusiastic

as ever. He was Goering's right hand, and indispensable in the Air Force.

Scarcely had we got inside and exchanged greetings before Milch, bowing ceremoniously, congratulated us on the Finnish-Russian peace and added that my conversations with Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goering and Goebbels were highly appreciated in Berlin. He said:

"The information you gave to the Government has hastened the work of peace."

I: "But my conversations took place too close in time to the decisions in Moscow to have had any effect."

Milch: "Quite so, but there is a Russian Embassy here with which we are in constant touch."

I: "It would be interesting to know something more about the part Germany played in the peace negotiations in Moscow."

Milch: "You will find out soon. I myself have no authority to reveal what I know. But this much I can always tell you, that the statements you made to the Führer and the three other Ministers were carefully compared one with the other and produced results."

Later on Stalin's fears of Anglo-French military operations via Scandinavia to assist Finland was quoted as the real reason why the Moscow peace came so quickly. The risk of getting the Western Powers as enemies was too great.

We spent that evening at von Post's, who was living then in the South African Legation building. Only the little Swedish circle assembled there as at the Minister's, who was absent that evening as he was still on a short visit to Stockholm, and another member of the circle was the Naval Attaché, Commander Anders Forshell and his wife. Our friends were afraid that the Russian peace terms were harder than we had thought. They included also the railway between Salla and Kemi, the western shores of Lake Ladoga, and other demands. The Russian terms were received with sorrow in Finland. All over the country flags were flown at half mast and the newspapers came out with black margins. These burning questions were eagerly discussed in our circle, as was also His Excellency Günther's powerful and serious speech

that same evening, in which he declared that Sweden would in no circumstances tolerate the passage of Allied troops through Sweden. He also stated that Sweden could not have helped Finland with troops, as that would have involved a terrible risk for the whole of Scandinavia.

* * *

During my visits to Berlin and other parts of Germany it happened not infrequently that I came across Germans whom I had met on my travels in Asia and who were able to give me news from the interior of this otherwise hermetically sealed great continent. Through Russia, which was best informed, not a sound ever penetrated to the rest of Europe, in China very little was known and in India still less. The best bearers of news were the missionaries, who had recently been expelled by the Russians.

On 13th March Herr P. A. Balkenbach, a member of the Catholic community Societas Verbi Divini, who was resident in Berlin, came to see me at the Kaiserhof and imparted some anything but pleasant tidings of our friends the Catholic missionaries in Sinkiang, who on so many occasions between the years 1928-1934 had been of invaluable help and service to me and my expedition. Herr Balkenbach told me that Pater Hillbrenner, Pater Moritz, Bishop Lay and two Dutch misisonaries of the S.V.D. had been cast into prison. That this had not been done on Chinese initiative was obvious, for the Catholic missionaries had been too long in Sinkiang and under Chinese authority had enjoyed almost unlimited freedom. If these noble and irreproachable apostles were now being treated as criminals, that only went to show that the power of the Bolsheviks was increasing in Sinkiang. The two Dutch missionaries, Veltmann and Habert, had escaped with difficulty and made their way home.

On 14th March most of the day was taken up with visits to us at the Kaiserhof. Everyone talked of Finland and everyone was under the delusion that Finland had obtained an advantageous peace with moderate terms.

We ourselves went to call on the German Ambassador to Washington, Dickhoff, and his wife. When I paid my first visit to the United States, in February 1923, I had had the company of Herr and Frau Dickhoff in the Hapag liner

Hansa, formerly called the *Deutschland.* He was then secretary at the Embassy. He had now been home in Berlin for a year and three months. When President Roosevelt recalled his Ambassador in Germany to report as a protest against the persecution of the Jews, Hitler had similarly recalled Dickhoff. The recall was in both cases permanent. The two Embassies were being run meanwhile by Chargés d'Affaires. Germany's *Geschäftsträger* was Herr Hans Thomsen, who was sent as Minister to Stockholm in 1943.

We had invited to dinner with us Geheimerat Grosskopf and his wife. They too were old friends of ours and we were very glad to see them again. Grosskopf had acted for twelve years as German Consul in Novo-Sibirsk, formerly called Novo-Nikolaievsk after the last Tsar. All through our expedition in Central Asia we had on many occasions received invaluable help from Grosskopf, particularly in such matters as sending instruments and other things and motorcars from Novo-Sibirsk to Semipalatinsk and Urumchi. When Wild's large theodolite was brought by Professor Ferdinand D. Lessing to Novo-Sibirsk, Grosskopf had taken charge of the valuable instrument and sent it, without any charge to us, by a reliable man all the way into the heart of Asia, where it was received in perfect condition by Dr. Nils Ambolt. Whenever I passed through Novo-Sibirsk on journeys to and from our field of work, the Consul had always come down to chat with me for the hour the train stopped at the station. When Dr. Erik Norin and I travelled westwards for the last time, in April 1935, on the thousand-mile-long journey from Peking to Moscow, we had promised to stay over for twenty-four hours with Grosskopf. That day was not ill spent. Grosskopf took us to see all the leading officials of the town and we had a very kindly reception everywhere. Grosskopf occupied a very influential and authoritative position in Novo-Sibirsk. He spoke fluent Russian and initiated us in all the conditions prevailing in this remote and forgotten part of the world. After that he had been Consul-General for a short time in Kiev, and had finally been promoted to Geheimrat at the Foreign Office, and here we sat now in peace and quiet discussing the great questions of the day.

I have never met any other European who was so thoroughly versed in Bolshevism, its doctrines and ways. He was convinced that the Soviet system was stable and had a long future before it, even though it had undergone and might yet undergo many, perhaps far-reaching, changes. The kolkhozi, or State collective farms, had cost an enormous amount and were in his opinion a fiasco but were being maintained for all that. The real peasant-farmers, who had constituted 10 per cent. of the whole peasant population, had been exterminated.

With regard to Finland he expressed a number of highly original views. Before his service in Siberia he had been Consul in Helsinki and was thoroughly at home in Finnish affairs. He believed that if Svinhufvud had been elected President instead of Kallio the Russian attack would never have happened. For Svinhufvud was a pronounced pro-German and he and his Government would have had such powerful support from Germany that Stalin would never have dared to attack. Grosskopf declared that the German Government was pleased at the Moscow Peace because it had warded off the Anglo-French plans for a northern front, and perhaps also because it had saved the Russian Army from having to reveal its weakness any longer. The course of the Russian war a few years later was to show that this latter assumption was incorrect and that the Russian Army possessed terrific striking power. This change was to a large extent due, however, to the supplies of arms, to a value of eleven billion dollars, sent from America.

Now that the great drama has been played to an end and its tragic consequences for all the world are being daily unrolled before our eyes, it might seem that such predictions were quite valueless. But there is always a certain interest in seeing how a wise and well-informed German Foreign Office official regarded the general situation shortly before the storm broke loose in earnest.

Grosskopf was convinced that a break-through would be made through the Maginot Line, which was considered by the military experts to have certain weak points. Once this break-through was made, he thought, the whole of France would be occupied right down to the Channel coast, and he

believed that this campaign would be completed in the same rapid tempo as the Polish. Finally a landing would be made in England and the whole thing would be over within the year.

From his observation-post in Novo-Sibirsk Grosskopf had followed events in Sinkiang with eagle eyes. He was convinced that the Soviet Consul-General in Urumchi, Apresoff, would never have dared to set me free, in October 1934, if he had not had direct orders from Moscow. Otherwise I should " still have been sitting there to-day," he said, or perhaps have disappeared in some fictitious attack by bandits.

A Parenthesis

WITH the exception of two of my expeditions to Asia, Russia has always been the base from which I have started out and to which I have returned, and the supreme Russian authorities have always been my foremost support. The last Tsar favoured me and my undertakings with a generosity and an interest that very greatly facilitated my travels. In 1899, for example, I was granted free travel facilities on all Russian railways for myself and my equipment for a year, and for three years I had an escort of four Cossacks which never cost me a kopek. This tradition of unlimited goodwill was later taken over by Soviet Russia and the Bolsheviks, who always and in every way, without a trace of suspicion, lent their powerful support to my expeditions and helped me to reach my objectives. In November 1923—thus at a time when Sweden had not yet recognised the Soviet Union and when Siberia was consequently closed to Swedish travellers—the whole of the route from Peking through Outer Mongolia, via Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Tomsk and Sverdlovsk, the Siberian route to Moscow, was opened for me personally on orders from Moscow by the Russian Ambassador in Peking, Kara Khan. On my arrival there I was overwhelmed with hospitality and kindness by the Commissars in the Kremlin, particularly Chicherin, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and Lunacharsky, Commissar for Education, and enjoyed complete freedom of movement in the capital and heart of the Bolshevik world.

In 1934 when I penetrated, with a column of cars and accompanied by Swedish and Chinese scientists and engineers, with no other pass than that which had been given me by Chiang Kai-shek's Government in Nanking, into rebellious Sinkiang, at that time strictly guarded by the Russians, and might with good reason have been suspected of travelling on errands that were unacceptable to Moscow, I was received

by the Russians with the utmost hospitality and consideration.

At first things certainly looked dubious. The Soviet Union had sent an army of 6,000 men to help Sheng Shih-tsai, the Governor-General of Sinkiang, against the rebel Tungan General, Ma Chung-yin, known as "The Big Horse". Just as we reached Korla the town was entered by the advance troops of the Russian Army under the Red General Volgin. He sent for me immediately and I presented myself at once at his headquarters. When I entered the room he had literally not had time to shake the dust of travel from his clothes and his face was ash-grey with dust.

Volgin subjected me to a preliminary examination. He behaved absolutely correctly. Three junior officers were present in the room, one of them took notes. He gave no orders for my detention, but when Russian guards were placed in our court we realised that we were prisoners. A few days later General Bekcheyeff, Commander of the "Northern Group", arrived, and he too sent for me and put me through a still more thorough cross-examination. This lasted a full three hours. I had taken my maps along with me and described in glowing terms the history of the Lop-nor problem and the investigations into the wanderings of the lake that had been made by Prshevalsky, myself and other explorers. He grew more and more interested in the hydrographical problem and its geographical significance, not least in connection with the two-thousand-year-old Silk Road and the swaying journey westwards of the Chinese silk along the longest caravan-route in the world. I told General Bekcheyeff that if he could assist me to a few month's exploration of Lop-nor, he would be doing me a service that would never be forgotten in the annuls of the exploration of Central Asia. By the time we parted he was my sworn ally and promised to deal with Sheng Shih-tsai. After that it was not very long before I received a letter from the General to the effect that the Governor wished me to take myself off to Lop-nor and keep out of the way as long as the civil war lasted.

The discoveries I and my companions then made definitely solved the Lop-nor problem for our day and age, and it was a Russian general's wisdom and clear-sightedness that we had to thank for this triumph.

General Sheng Shih-tsai, the Governor of Sinkiang, hated and distrusted us. If the Russian Consul-General in Urumchi, Garegin Abramovitch Apresoff, had not protected us our fate would have been sealed. When Dr. Hummel fell ill, at a distance of several days' journey away, it was only thanks to Apresoff that I was able to hasten to his aid in one of our cars. And that was not all—Apresoff also let his own and the Consulate's doctor, Dr. Saposhnikoff, accompany me. He could hardly have gone further in willingness for personal sacrifice. Our last trip eastwards to Nanking would have been impossible without Apresoff's intervention and his uncompromising orders to Sheng Shih-tsai. We were allowed to keep our cars, all Customs formalities were waived, and we were even allowed, contrary to the laws of the province, to take our archaeological collections out with us. We were not even asked about our maps, diaries and photographs. I may say without the slightest exaggeration that I have never on all my travels in Asia met with more superbly generous treatment than on the part of Soviet Russia and that I shall treasure the memory of it with gratitude to my dying day.

With regard to the Bolshevik system my views are and always were the same as those I entertained and still entertain with regard to German National Socialism. If the Germans in the days of their power preferred Nazism to any other system, that was their concern and no one else's. If the Soviet Russians regard Bolshevism as the finest of all ideologies and ways of life, then leave them in peace and do not interfere in their internal affairs. To denounce Nazism, as was done during the war, and at the same time send up prayers in our cathedrals for the victory of the Red Army, was illogical.

To me Russia is and will always remain the saga-land of my youthful memories. Russia was the first country I got to know outside the Swedish frontiers. I have always loved the distant horizons, the limitless plains, the melodious jingle of the troika-bells and the beat of the quick-trotting horses' hooves on the ground as the tarantass sped hundreds of miles through the Steppes, or the sound of the rollers scraping against the East Siberian snow. The dark, silent forests, the

gigantic rivers with their melodious or solemn-sounding names, the snow-covered giants of the Plais, Pamirs and Altais, those wonderful landscapes that always keep their magic charm, the simple, unassuming people with their poverty and their never-failing hospitality and good-humour, the Cossacks dashing along on half-wild horses and the ceremonial priests swinging their censers during prayers in the cathedral-churches, where the gold of the ikons and the images of the saints gleamed softly in the scented warmth of smoking wax candles, and the singing of the choir-boys sounded like choirs from some heavenly Jerusalem. Between her world oceans and her inland seas Russia lies immeasurably vast. She fascinates by her very grandiose immensity. She impresses by her limitless extent, her distances of thousands of miles from east to west, her poverty, her wealth of Altai gold, her barbarism, her enormous population and her irresistible strength.

All this external framework, this impressiveness and beauty still remains and could never be wiped out by the November Revolution of 1917 simply because it is dependent on geographical, meteorological and physical conditions, natural laws that remain untouched by even the most radical political upheavals. The new Russia is therefore in all essentials the same as the old. Classical Russian literature—the works of Tolstoy, Dostoievsky, Turgeniev, Pushkin, are and remain objects of our admiration, Russian music delights us with its dreaming melancholy and we love the inspired creations of Tchaikovsky. Russian painting can boast of masterpieces that in strength and perfection can stand comparison with the finest products of the West. No one has ever surpassed Aivasovsky in the presentation of the shapes of the waves of the sea and the play of light in them, no one can compete with Vereshtshagin in depicting the horrors of war or the Oriental life of Turkestan and India, while Repin takes his place in the foremost rank of artistic interpreters of the life and historic events of Asia. In scientific research work, too, Soviet Russia stands high and has in many cases greatly surpassed the Russia of the Tsars. Even on my visit to Moscow in 1923 I had occasion to admire the progress that had been made in various fields of scientific research. If the world is

spared another war Russia will draw level with the West in this respect.

This human ocean of hundreds of different nations and races, of languages and dialects, of religions, false creeds and superstitions, enclosed within the frontiers of the Soviet Union, is ruled, regulated and directed by one single will of iron, which with unswerving determination and singleness of purpose leads upwards of two hundred million docile people towards a goal without landmarks.

The change that has come over the Russian scene since the end of the Second World War fills me with sorrow and foreboding. Bolshevist Russia has become a spreading centre of disturbance, a gigantic union whose measureless expansionist policy threatens the peace, freedom and future of the whole of Europe, indeed of the whole world. The fatal mistakes that Hitler made when, to protect Germany, he built up by force and conquest a ring of States round Germany proper, a mistake that resulted in the bloody protests of most other States and the mobilisation of armies of millions, is now being committed by Stalin too on a much larger scale and in proportion to Russia's own size. The future will show whether the result will not be the same for Russia that it was for Germany. A higher wisdom ordains that trees shall not grow up to the skies, a proverb which implies that there are laws in the history of humanity which not even the strongest Powers have ever been able to evade. If the Soviet Union continues to expand her rule to west, south and east, then she will be digging a grave for her own greatness just as certainly and just as swiftly as Hitler did. Such a development would be the salvation of civilisation, whereas the German catastrophe threatens with destruction everything that goes by the name of culture and Christianity. Presumably the Kremlin will not take warning by Germany's fate and will not realise the danger of the path it has now chosen. The empire of Genghis Khan, the only one that can be compared in size with the Soviet Union and that covered the same parts of the old world as does the greatest Power of the present day, crashed and fell asunder precisely in consequence of its enormous size. Only by withdrawing inside her old frontiers could Russia hope to avoid the fate of the Mongolian Empire. Then an old friend

of Russia's might long to return once more to the sound of the silver bells of Ivan Veliky and to the good-hearted people who have their roots in the black earth and in the mysterious silence and haunting solitude of the Steppes.

Visits to Grand Admiral Raeder and Col.-General von Brauchitsch

MY visits to Grand Admiral Raeder and General von Brauchitsch, which were merely courtesy visits, had been arranged through the kind offices of Commander Forshell, the Swedish Naval Attaché, to take place on the morning of 16th March 1940. On the previous day Commander Forshell had put me through a highly necessary refresher course in some of the questions of particular importance to Sweden which I ought to know about in case they should come up for discussion during my visit to Raeder:

1. If the Grand Admiral referred to what the Germans called the "smuggling traffic" in Swedish coastal waters, I was to reply that what we did in our own territory or territorial waters, thus also on our railways, was our own affair. Coastal traffic could not be called smuggling. We must also have the right to allow the ships of other nations to pass unmolested. We stood on a firm basis of international law: remember the Altmark affair! One only had to imagine the absurdity of Norway closing her territorial waters to, for example, German ships.

2. If the Grand Admiral referred to Swedish trade with England, I was to point out to him that if we were unable to obtain certain goods, e.g. coal, in sufficient quantities from Germany, then we were obliged to import the coal we needed from England. It was also a German interest that our industrial life should be maintained undisturbed. Swedish public opinion was highly troubled and irritated by the sinking of Swedish ships, such as the *Santos,* the *Dalarö,* the *Pajala,* colliers etc.

At the appointed time I accordingly drove to the Tirpitz Ufer to the Supreme Command Headquarters. A lieutenant was waiting for me in the vestibule and conducted me to

Grand Admiral Raeder's room. He was sitting working at his desk beside one of the windows, surrounded by reports and telegrams, but he rose at once, greeted me and invited me to sit down. He was rather small of stature but powerfully built and his face betrayed nothing of his high position and the terrible responsibility that rested on him. Like most other Germans at that time he congratulated me on the Moscow Peace and considered that it was fortunate for Finland that it had come at last. I replied that the Finnish people were submerged in sorrow at this peace and that flags were being flown all over the country at half mast. He answered in surprise:

"But they must surely realise that this solution was better than a continuation of the war, the outcome of which was easy to predict."

On this point I could not but admit that he was right, as otherwise the situation would soon have become hopeless for Finland.

I then brought up the question of the "smuggling traffic", following the directives I had been given by Forshell. The Grand Admiral listened attentively to my views and said:

"I perfectly understand your attitude to this often very delicate question and respect your demands for absolute right of determination over your territorial waters. But you must also understand that we follow certain principles in the defence of our interests and our country. I can assure you that we do everything in our power to avoid actions that might interfere with neutral Swedish coastal trade and the Swedish coastal traffic."

I: "The German sinkings of Swedish ships in the North Sea, which in themselves are very regrettable, also involve a deterioration of relations between Sweden and Germany. The feeling between our peoples would be improved if such sinkings ceased."

Raeder: "I regret that Swedish ships should have been sunk by German U-boats, but the intensified naval warfare often makes it necessary for us to shoot in cases where we are not certain of a strange ship's character. If these ships do not hesitate to expose themselves to the risk of being hit by our torpedoes in unsafe waters, then they will just have to

take their chance. It would be more sensible for Swedish merchant ships carrying cargo between Sweden and South America to resign themselves to the extra trouble and expense of going round by Iceland in order to avoid being sunk. American ships go via Iceland rather than take unnecessary risks. I regret that the latest Swedish-German trade negotiations have been broken off and I have the impression that the authorities on the Swedish side were rather too uncompromising."

I: "Negotiations have been resumed since then and everything has been satisfactorily settled." After that we discussed the situation more generally and Raeder was convinced that this time Germany would win. Finally he said:

"As regards your country I should like to emphasise that a strong, well-armed and wide-awake Sweden is a German interest of the first order. A weak Sweden would be a centre of disturbance for Germany that would cause us constant anxiety and force us to keep a sharpened look-out, whereas a well-armed Sweden would give us a sense of security."

* * *

From Raeder's private office I was conducted by the same lieutenant as had first taken charge of me through a long corridor to the room of the Army Chief-of-Staff, Col.-General, later General-Field-Marshal, von Brauchitsch. It was not the first time I had met this unusually distinguished officer with the handsome, energetically cut features and the manly, powerful figure. He began with the words:

"Do you remember, *Herr Doktor,* the first time we met?"

I: "I shall never forget it, *Herr Generaloberst,* it was four years ago at the Swedish Consul Ostermeyer's in Königsberg."

von Brauchitsch: "Just so. But then we did not talk of war and world conflagrations, then it was Asia we discussed, your expeditions and experiences, China's future prospects, the great Chiang Kai-shek and the British Empire in India. Now things have taken a different turn and now we stand once more on the threshold of a great war."

As usual our conversation touched first on Finland and to his question what was thought in Finland and Sweden of the peace that had been signed in Moscow four days previously

I gave the same answer as before. He admitted that the peace terms were hard, but in any case better than a continuation of the war which might have been an irremediable misfortune for Finland. In general he took the same line as Hitler, was straightforward but also cautious and as sincere as it was possible for a man in his position to be towards a foreigner. To my question what he thought of the events that now confronted the world he replied:

"I consider this great trial of strength to be necessary and inevitable. As things are now Germany is in an intolerable situation. We must come to a decision with the Western Powers about Germany's position in Europe before there can be any question whatever of an enduring and reliable peace, not merely on this continent but all over the world. England has played the part of policeman everywhere in the world and towards all other nations quite long enough—in fact, too long. *We* can no longer tolerate this self-appointed and unjustified tutelage. So now we intend to put an end to it. The position of the British Empire in Asia is not so strong that it could not be shaken and Japan might be a dangerous rival to Britain."

I: "But before your settlement with Britain can begin you must first conquer France, and is it not possible that the Maginot Line might withstand even very powerful onslaughts?"

von Brauchitsch: "No, the Maginot Line *cannot* be held. We know its weak points. It can both be captured and broken through."

I: "Yes, but after that? The French, after all, have always been known as brilliant soldiers. Is it not possible that their national pride might awake and that they might conjure up enormous armies as they did in the time of Faidherbes? Might not France even yet prove a hard nut to crack?"

von Brauchitsch: "*Herr Doktor,* France will be occupied as Poland was occupied. The whole thing will be just another Polish campaign. France *cannot* withstand our military power. And as to the small States, they should beware of trusting English promises."

Von Brauchitsch too spoke of Sweden's position and pointed out that Swedish neutrality was a great advantage to Germany.

For the rest he said very much the same as Raeder, adding:

"From a purely practical point of view it is an enormous advantage to us that Sweden should be strong enough to defend against all external dangers the iron ore that is an essential condition for Sweden's own existence. Germany could never stand passively by and watch a foreign Power, e.g. England, taking possession of the Swedish iron ore. If anything like that were to happen we should be forced against our will to take action."

With that the conversation was drawing to a close. It had lasted, like the previous one, only half an hour. I said:

"It must be a wonderful feeling to carry such an enormous responsibility on your shoulders at one of the most fateful periods in the world's history!"

von Brauchitsch: "Yes, it is glorious, it is a great happiness."

Hindenburg, after the battle of Tannenburg, had replied to the same observation on my part:

"*Ja, sehen Sie Herr Doktor, ein Soldat muss auch Glück haben.*"[1]

* * *

At the Kaiserhof the visits continued. To me it was particularly interesting to make the acquaintance of the former representative in Columbia, Herr Hentig, whose book on his adventurous ride from Afghanistan through Pamir, East Turkestan and China to Shanghai in 1916 I had already read. We had much to talk about!

For once we were at home for dinner and had invited as guests our friends Hans and Suse Brockhaus and their young son Hubertus, who was later sent to the Eastern Front and of whom nothing has since—up to the spring of 1949—been heard. His parents suffer the most intense anxiety not knowing whether he is dead or working on new road constructions in Russian Turkestan or in Siberia. In present-day Germany there is hardly a home that has not been visited by sorrow, loss or anxiety. One cannot help thinking of the story of Fielding Hall's about the young woman in Burma who had lost her husband and her two children. A holy hermit promised to restore them to her if she could show him a house in which

[1] "Yes, but you see, *Herr Doktor,* a soldier has to have luck as well."

no one had died and no one was grieving for some dear lost one. She sought and sought in vain for weeks and months but without result. Everyone was mourning for someone they had loved even though by then the wounds had often been healed by time. In Germany the wounds are open and will remain unhealed for a good while yet. There, as in many other countries of Europe, countless homes have been wiped out and sorrow, hunger and poverty are the lot of the unfortunate people.

On 17th March I provided the Swedish Naval Attaché with a detailed account of my conversation with the Grand Admiral the previous day and he was satisfied with what the latter had said, which was just what he had expected. From remarks let fall by Forshell's German colleagues he gathered that his preliminary conversation with me had been listened in to on our telephone at the Kaiserhof. Generally we laid a soft cushion over the telephone, but on this occasion we had forgotten to take that precaution.

At an afternoon tea at the Chinese Embassy Counsellor Ting's at Dahlem we met a number of interesting persons, including General von Seeckt's widow whom I had known both in Nanking and Berlin, Herr von Borsch, the former German Minister in China, Dr. Martha Unger, who knew Himmler well and told me he had expressed a desire to meet me, which I promised to fulfil, the authoress Dr. von Abegg, who had written some excellent books about Japan and China, and finally the Embassy Counsellor Tann and his Ukrainian wife, whom we knew from their period of service at the Chinese Legation in Stockholm.

Next day I had a visit from my good friend Dr. Karl Diem, the General Secretary of the International Olympic Games. He was just completing his valuable book, *Asiatische Reiterspiele,* to which I had been able to contribute accounts of the riding displays I had seen among the Kirghiz of Pamir and the Tibetans of Shigatse. Dr. Diem believed that the next Olympiad would be held at Helsinki.

Everyone hoped for peace, everyone thought the war meaningless. When Hitler and Mussolini met that day on the Brenner Pass and when Ribbentrop had an audience of the Pope, hope revived. At an interview which I was subjected

to that same day on the gigantic *Reichsrundfunk*, the Königsberg transmitter, no mention was made of the great political events of the day. The questions I was asked, and which had been submitted to me the previous day, were:

(1) When did you make your first visit to Germany and when did you first come in contact with German science? (2) To what extent have you kept in touch with German science during the past fifty years? (3) What are your memories of such Germans as Virchow, Helmholtz, Richthofen, Schweinfurth and others? (4) What is your impression of the scientific life of present-day Germany? The whole interview was only to take twelve minutes so that the answers could not be very exhaustive.

On 20th March we were invited to tea with Reichsminister and Frau Rust. He was in charge of popular education and science. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the National Socialist philosophy and his eloquence when he spoke of the advantages of Nazism was like thunder crashing from his lips and his eyes shone like fires. It was no use arguing with him, for one was immediately crushed by some overwhelming and lightning-swift reply.

On the prevailing world situation he expressed himself with the utmost certainty. "Peace is unthinkable until England has been conquered by blows that will fall as regularly as pulse-beats. The German Air Force is irresistible and both England and France will be smashed from the air. The German Air Force has orders to destroy armament factories, depots, ports, ships and other military targets. Nothing else is to be touched. The peace we will then dictate will be humane and just. It is not our intention to crush any Power —merely to exclude England from the continent of Europe. We have no intention of harming the British Empire." To my question as to the meaning of the Russo-German Pact Rust made no reply, though he reminded me that Hitler had violently attacked Bolshevism for five years.

On my return to the Kaiserhof I wrote to my old sparring partner, Reichsminister Dr. Walter Funk, who had been seriously ill for several weeks, regretting that I had not been able to see him again on this occasion. I then addressed a long and circumstantial letter to Dr. Goebbels, begging him

earnestly to exert the full influence of his high position in favour of the three German and two Dutch missionaries of the Societas Verbi Divini imprisoned in Urumchi. I told him that the Swedish missionaries who had been active in Sinkiang ever since 1890 had been expelled and allowed to return home at the instigation of the Russians, and that the same favour ought to have been shown to the German Catholic missionaries who for many years had been the torch-bearers not merely of Christianity but of German culture in the western provinces of China. I knew them all personally and was tormented by the thought of the sufferings they must be enduring in revolting Chinese prisons. The Chinese of their own initiative would have done the missionaries no harm, but the Chinese authorities had to bow to Russian demands.

With Himmler and Hess

On the afternoon of 21st March I made my way to the Gestapo Headquarters, where guards gave the military salute at the entrance and on the stairs. Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer S.S. and supreme chief of the Secret Police, received me politely and pleasantly and invited me to sit down at a small table. He had none of the look of a cruel and ruthless despot and might just as well have been an elementary school teacher from some provincial town. One felt a lack of character and pregnancy in this face, of the strongly moulded lines that tell of will and energy. It bore not a trace of the classical beauty of Greece and Rome, not a suspicion of race or culture. His face was everyday, commonplace and uninteresting, and the pince-nez did nothing to remedy the absence of intelligence, warmth, cruelty, hardness or any of the other qualities that usually betray their presence in a pair of human eyes. His expression could only be called indifferent and colourless, his eyes lacked life and fire. Himmler, in a word, left the visitor completely unmoved. In Goebbels one was fascinated by the lively temperament of the man, the sweep of his thought, the intelligent conversation and the melancholy expression of his live, keen eyes. With Hitler one felt at once that one was in the presence of a remarkable personality, a giant in will and determination, a man who trusted solely and blindly in himself, a ruthless and fanatical ruler, a dictator who believed himself to know everything that was worth knowing about the world and mankind and whose eyes sought the distant horizon beyond the seas and continents.

But Himmler's outwardly insignificant appearance may possibly have been only a mask which he used to hide the fact that he strove to become as powerful as, or even more powerful than, Hitler. Our German friends expressed very varying opinions of him. We met ladies who declared that he was

a charmer whom no one could help but love and admire. Cautious men said nothing, while others hinted that the Chief of the Secret Police was after all the most hated and feared man in all Germany.

Just as simple and unassuming, almost bare indeed, was Himmler's office and reception room, in which his desk by the window, a sofa, some chairs and a table by the inner wall constituted the only furniture. The elegance which characterised the offices of all the other Ministers was completely lacking here. It struck one altogether as old-fashioned and make-shift.

Himmler opened the conversation by telling me about the able and successful expedition into southern Tibet, led by the young Dr. Ernst Schäfer, which had recently returned. Schäfer had already made one or two trips into Tibet, chiefly for zoological and botanical research, and I had read his accounts of them. He was consequently no stranger to me. I had not known, on the other hand, that his expedition had been under Himmler's patronage and still less that the Reichsführer S.S. took such a keen and enlightened interest in the snow-lands north of the Himalayas. He told me now that Schäfer and his companions had spent forty days in Lhasa and had brought back from their travels, among other things, a successful film. Himmler was eager that I should see this film and give my opinion on it. He asked me to let him know in good time when I was next coming to Berlin, so that he could send for Schäfer to come and show the film. Schäfer, he said, had succeeded in evading the British prohibitions and watchfulness and somewhere between Sikkim and Gyangtse had entered Tibet and gone ahead to its capital. In India he had been to call on the Viceroy. Himmler asked me to show as much interest in his young protegé as I felt he deserved, which I promised all the more readily as I was very interested myself in hearing what he had found.[1]

We talked so long about Tibet and explorations in Asia and about Collin Ross's work *The New Asia* that there was not much time to spare for other subjects. To my observation that the times were not very favourable for geographical

[1] Schäfer, who was interned for nearly three years although he had only served the cause of free science and of Tibetan exploration, has now been completely rehabilitated.

exploration Himmler replied:

"No, that is true, the war has to come before anything else, Germany's whole position in the world hangs in the balance. The Führer rightly regards it as his great mission to fight this war to a victorious conclusion. And my own task is always to be with or close to Hitler and be responsible for his personal safety."

On 20th March I had received from the Swedish Legation a document making serious accusations concerning German treatment of the Jews who were just then being transported to Poland. A party of 1,200 Jews had been sent from Stettin in goods waggons, and without any protection against the cold, to three villages round about Lublin. They had not been allowed to take anything with them except the clothes they stood up in. Many of these unfortunates had died on the way from the cold, which was regarded as an advantage. A suitable opportunity to turn this ghastly information to account had now presented itself, and I said:

"Do you not think, *Herr Reichsführer,* that German prestige would gain all the world over by treating Poland and the Jews who are sent there with the greatest possible clemency? I have heard of the 1,200 Jews who were recently transported from Stettin under appalling conditions and without the most elementary necessities of life and that many of them died from the hardships of the journey. The name of Germany will lose its ancient lustre in the world if Germany makes herself guilty of atrocities towards helpless people."

I had expected that he might have felt insulted at this remark, so much the more so as he himself was primarily responsible for the barbaric cruelties towards the Jews, but he listened absolutely unmoved and replied in the same controlled and amiable tone as when he had been talking about Tibet:

"The cruelty of the Poles towards the Germans before, during and since the Polish war makes it necessary for us to employ severe methods. The report you heard of cruelty towards the Jews transported from Stettin was very exaggerated. All the transportees had seats on the train and they were not in any want. The story about numbers of them having died boils down in reality to one old woman who died of a heart attack and was stripped of all her clothes except

her chemise and knickers and was eventually left behind at a station."

I: "All the evil rumours circulating abroad would cease if the Poles and expatriated Jews were kindly treated. No one would derive greater benefit from that than Germany herself."

Himmler: "I am very well aware how hated and maligned I am all over the world. The newspapers in every country write about me as though they know me through and through. I am described as a blood-thirsty barbarian. Actually severity and justice are necessary attributes of the holder of the post that has been entrusted to me by the Führer."

The hour was up so we rose. I had no time to lose, for at 5 o'clock I had to be with Rudolf Hess at Wilhelmstrasse No. 68. There I was received by the same adjutant as had been in attendance on Hess on his travels in Sweden in 1935 and had also accompanied Herr and Frau Hess on their motoring-trip to Ovralid. Hess had read all Heidenstam's books that were available in German translation and he did not want to leave Sweden without having met the great writer. I myself had met Hess on a few occasions in Stockholm, when he was the guest of the Swedish-German Society. It was consequently no stranger towards whom I now directed my steps.

Scarcely had the adjutant and I sat down at the tea-table in the drawing-room before the Reichsminister and Führer's Deputy entered. Hess was tall, powerfully built, upright, with a graceful carriage of the head. The cut of his face was thoughful, his expression dreamy and melancholy. He lacked life and movement both in mind and body, was quiet and controlled but had dignity too. I got the impression that he found difficulty in speaking without preparation and liked as far as possible to keep his thoughts of life and the world to himself. Yet he was altogether likeable, and gave one a feeling that here was an unfortunate man for whom one could only be sorry. It was and remains a mystery to me how this weak-spirited, sensitive and sad-hearted man could ever have been appointed deputy to a volcanic fanatic like Hitler. He obviously had nothing but his faithfulness from the start to thank for his high position. He probably realised himself that he was not at all suited for the part of Hitler's deputy. He must have been turning over and weighing in his mind,

even then, in March, the idea of flying to Scotland, an idea which did not, however, bear fruit until after the defeat of France. He hated the war and regarded it as a misfortune for everyone. His own country seemed to him to be threatened from various quarters and he was tormented by the possibility of England's being crushed. He had nothing but friendly feelings for Great Britain. That was why he made his bold and adventurous flight to Scotland. From the very first moment I heard about this courageous journey I was convinced that it had been dictated by the highest and most humane intentions. Those who regarded him as a runaway, a traitor, did him an injustice, and those who suspected him of bringing a secret peace offer from his Führer had no conception of Hitler's mentality. Hitler would never have used so precarious and uncertain a method, and above all never a private back-door entry. Even when he was in a much stronger position, namely on 19th July 1940, he made his peace offer to England in a speech that was heard by all the world.

Our conversation was not very fruitful and I had known from the start that I was hardly likely to receive any remarkable confidences from this introspective dreamer. The question of the Winter War and of Russia's probable plans in Finland followed the usual lines. I talked about Rurik and his warriors from Roslagen, a story he had never heard of and which roused his interest for a time. He was convinced that Sweden had nothing to fear from Russia, which certainly would not trouble herself in the least about outlets to the Atlantic coast. Relations between Germany and Russia were firm and reliable and to the advantage of both. And yet it was only to be a year and three months before Germany began her bloody and unhappy war against her former ally!

For the rest Hess sat silent and listened while the adjutant and I talked. As soon as tea was over I rose and took my leave.

Finland's Uneasiness for Her Future

ON my return home after every fresh visit to Germany during this war I had the time-consuming task of reading and answering all the letters and communications that had piled themselves up on my desk. On Easter Sunday itself I gave a general review of my impressions and experiences in Berlin to His Excellency, Herr Günther.

General Axel Rappe, one of my firmest friends ever since the days of the defence battle of 1913 and 1914, was always the first to call on me after a trip to Germany. Rappe was intensely interested in the feeling in Germany and above all in everything connected with military matters. We had already discussed the publication of a pamphlet on the situation of a similar nature to the 1912 and 1914 warnings, when Col. Gabriel Hedengren and Col. Carl Bennedich had been my military advisers. But we decided now that it would not be feasible to publish such a brochure, since it would be impossible to give any account of the actual situation and our vital future plans and quote supporting facts without revealing a good deal which had to remain secret. Such popular instruction would have been doing the country an ill service. Rappe considered that the Finnish Army had held out as long as was humanly possible and that its courage had been magnificent. Rappe and some of his colleagues on the General Staff felt that the part we had played in the Winter War did not constitute a particularly creditable page in Swedish history. Perhaps if he were still alive to-day, he would realise that he had been guilty of a strategic and political error of judgment!

On 27th March the King received me in audience at Drottningholm Palace. For all his 82 years I found His Majesty alert and interested and very much at home in all the burning questions of the day, particularly Finland. He facilitated my account of the situation in Germany by asking direct questions

on all the points that interested him most.

On 6th April, in company with a number of other Swedes, most of them officers, I was invited to the German Legation to see a film of the Polish campaign, its terrific speed and devastation. When the fires and ruined houses in Warsaw came on, the commentator exlaimed: " Chamberlain ought to see this film and realise what his guarantee to Poland did!" The film was shown the same day in Copenhagen and Oslo and was presumably intended to pave the way for the events of three days later.

The following day, which was a Sunday, was marked by a tragi-comic episode: One of my sisters informed me that " Adjutant Count Hamilton " had telephoned and invited me to tea with the King at 4 o'clock that afternoon. The invitation sounded suspicious, but when the Governor, Col. Adolf Murray, rang up to say that he too had been invited and would call for me on his way past, it all seemed settled. Count John Hamilton, the Lord of the Bedchamber, met us in the Guard Room at Drottningholm Palace and laughingly explained that we were not the only ones who had been taken in. Their Excellencies Hansson and Günther had also been " invited ". The former had been in the train going south for a lecture, but his train had been stopped at Tumba and he had caught a local train back to Stockholm. The latter had been informed in time. While we were talking Prince zu Wied came in, and thought the whole thing *" köstlich und unglaublich "*.[1] The Italian Minister was also on the list of the elect, but they had not been able to get in touch with him. Finally we were joined by the King himself, who saw the funny side of the episode. Half an hour later we all went home again, the King regretting that we had had our Sabbath peace disturbed. The following day a few police officers came to see me and wanted a detailed account of just what had happened. They were trying to track down the author of this tasteless jest and feared it would not be easy to find him. The anti-German feeling that was being fanned up often took decidedly regrettable forms.

Then came 9th April 1940 which split all Scandinavia from end to end and set every mind afire. Even in Sweden everyone

[1] " Rich and incredible "

woke up and felt that the war had come a step nearer to us in deadly earnest. Sweden lay like an island surrounded by nothing but occupied and belligerent States. But these and all other events connected with the war lie outside the framework of the present book. I had left Germany only 17 days before the occupation of the two Scandinavian countries, but all the time I was in Berlin I had not heard a whisper, not a hint, that any attack on our neighbours was imminent. The plans against France had been made no secret of. Actually all arrangements must already have been in existence then for this attack. Germany was well aware of the British and French plans for coming to Finland's " aid ", as it was called, though their real objective was to create a northern front against Germany.

In May and June the great European war burst out in full flame. The Germans broke in to and occupied Luxembourg, Holland, Belgium, and held their entry into Paris. In Dunkirk they captured enormous quantities of material, though the British Army escaped across the Channel.[1] One shattering military development followed on the heels of the other. Certain signs seemed to indicate that the friendship between Russia and Germany was not so strong as they had tried to make out in Berlin. Russian troops marched in to Kaunas and Vilna and occupied Lithuania.

I had a visit from a representative of the *Hamburger Tageblatt* who asked me what would be the attitude of Sweden and Swedish public opinion in the event of a war between Germany and Russia. I replied that the Swedish people, on the basis of its past experiences, would mostly sympathise with Germany, but that the Communists and various elements hostile to Germany would support Russia. The occupation of Denmark and Norway, Holland and Belgium had enormously fermented hatred of Germany during the past three months. On the other hand, since the conclusion of the Winter War we felt the Russian threat to be stronger than

[1] In Capt. Liddel Hart's book *The Other Side of the Hill,* there is a chapter entitled " How Hitler beat France—and saved England ", in which the author shows how it was Hitler who, against the wishes of the Generals, allowed the British Army to return home unscathed. Presumably he hoped by this otherwise inexplicable generosity to make the British more inclined to conclude a separate peace.

ever it had been since the days of Bobrikov. We felt that we were between the devil and the deep sea and realised that anything might happen. The whole nation, even those sections of it that had previously worked against a strong defence, realised that we must be prepared for anything and must be armed to the teeth by land, sea and air. We accordingly sacrificed all we had to sacrifice and our people took upon themselves a heavier burden of defence than at any time in the recent history of our country. To us who had faith in the power of Sweden and the future of our people this national revival came like a flash from our former period of greatness. Many also remembered that it had been above all our relatively strong defences that had saved us from being involved in the First World War and from the loss of our freedom and independence then.

In the course of the next few months one recognised fresh signs again and again of the way in which Russia was drawing towards the West. On 28th June, Rumania surrendered Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviet Union, which had presented an ultimatum to this effect. Finland, having already received instructions to discontinue fortification works on Aaland, went in dread of further Russian demands, and the Finns began to set their hopes increasingly on German help. Early in July, I wrote a letter to the former President Svinhufvud, in which I observed that the seed of hatred and ill-will sown in the Versailles Treaty had ripened to a harvest that could bring nothing but misfortune and misery to all mankind. I received an immediate reply from the President, dated 12th July, dealing at length with the problems of the day.

On 19th July Hitler made this third speech to the Reichstag since the outbreak of war and once more offered England peace. He demanded unrestricted freedom of movement on the European continent and the return of the African colonies. But England refused. Roosevelt promised England all possible aid—everything short of troops—on condition that England did not fall for any German peace offers. Probably those Englishmen were right who felt that Hitler's great idea, the idea which inspired and directed all his actions, was to exclude British influence from the European continent. Lord

Dawson of Penn saw this clearly at the end of July 1939, when he told me his views on the world situation then. If British Imperialism was to be saved, Germany *must* be conquered. Churchill and Halifax—even after the defeat of France—remained adamant. Their faith in England in an apparently hopeless situation was magnificent and by their example they carried the whole nation with them. Their manful resolution led them and their people to the goal they had set themselves, but their hatred and fear of Germany made them blind to a much greater danger that threatened the Empire from the east. At all events the situation now, in the spring of 1949, is far more fraught with danger for every Power, except Russia, than it was when Germany took to arms in 1939—perhaps more dangerous, indeed, than it has ever been.

Owing to the uncertain fate that awaited Finland I had countless visits from Finnish patriots who were really merely in search of someone on whom to work off their uneasiness. Among these was the former Minister Hackzell, who saw the future in very dark colours. If Germany won, or if a sudden peace brought the war to an end, Finland would be saved, but the longer the war went on the greater would be the danger to Finland. He was anxious for a Scandinavian alliance in which Finland too would be included, and he believed that such an alliance would be favourably regarded by Germany. Swedish help in any other effective form he did not believe in. When I told him of Hitler's unfavourable attitude towards Finland on 4th March, he replied that both the leading politicians and the Press in his home country had allowed themselves to be misled by the attitude of the Swedish Left-wing Press towards Germany. The best thing to be done now he considered would be to write a letter to Ribbentrop setting forth the whole problem, and he asked whether I would be willing to undertake this task. This I promised to do, and asked him to draw up a memorandum covering the most important points.

Two days later, on 17th August, another former Finnish Minister came to see me and gave vent to the same fears as Hackzell. He thought the situation terrible. Anything at all might happen, an ultimatum, an invasion of Finland by

the five Army Corps that had been stationed in Estonia and Latvia and were now moving eastwards. The number of Communists was on the increase. They were causing disturbances and demonstrations. Svinhufvud's German sympathies were too great for him to be acceptable as head of the Government. The German-Russian friendship was not strong enough to stand such a strain, and a Finnish-German *rapprochement* would be regarded by Russia as a hostile act and would probably not be taken into consideration by Hitler either.

On 20th August Churchill made a speech to the nation, full of confidence and most impressive. England had never been so strong as now and yet she stood alone in Europe, was in an extremely serious situation and saw her sea route to India threatened. A few days previously Col. Charles Lindbergh had made a speech describing how on a recent visit to Europe he had found the British too rich and the Germans too poor. This injustice was one of the forces that made for war. There must be a levelling out. He was right: 70 million Britons in Europe and the Dominions owned one quarter of the earth's surface whereas 80 million Germans did not possess a single square mile outside the frontiers of Germany. So that it was not unreasonable of the Germans to demand their African colonies back.

* * *

To return to Finland, I may mention in this connection that my letter to Ribbentrop on the subject of this country and its historical relations with Sweden and Russia was despatched on 25th August. I had obtained a good deal of information both from Finnish and Swedish quarters, but the letter in its completed form I did not show to anyone. I mentioned this fact in the letter in order to make it clear to the German Foreign Minister that the contents were not to be regarded as being inspired by Swedish or Finnish Government quarters but simply represented my own private views. In other words, no one but myself was responsible for the contents. Several of my Finnish friends, on the other hand, were aware that the letter had been sent, and these looked forward eagerly to the reply. During my stay in Germany, particularly in Berlin, from the end of October to the middle of December 1940 I learnt from various Legation Counsellors

in the Foreign Office that the letter had immediately been read by Ribbentrop and had later been studied by several other members of the Foreign Office Staff. Many of them asked me questions in connection with it, which I answered.

At long last I received from the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs the following letter, dated Berlin 6th November 1940:

"I have read with interest the account you sent me of your views on political developments in the three Scandinavian countries. I should very much like to discuss this matter with you personally some time. I had hoped that this might perhaps have been possible in connection with your lecture at the end of October, but I was away from Berlin a great deal during the last few days of your visit, as I have been in general lately, so that, to my great regret, I was unable this time to have the pleasure of meeting you.

"The next time you come to Berlin, I hope that you will let me know in advance in writing, so that a meeting can be arranged.

"With sincere greetings I remain always yours sincerely

Ribbentrop."

Having received confirmation from Herr Brunhoff of the fact that Ribbentrop had read my letter at the beginning of September, I had no further cause to withhold details of its contents from those among my Finnish friends who came to see me to enquire about the letter. The questions which particularly interested them and which I had put direct to Ribbentrop in my final summing up were: what attitude would Germany adopt towards a possible defensive alliance between Sweden and Finland; how would Germany regard a Scandinavian alliance in which Sweden would occupy the leading position and which might also possibly be joined by Norway, and what would Germany do if Sweden, in the event of a fresh Russian attack on Finland, were to intervene on Finland's side—and finally I put the question whether it was likely that Russia would refrain from any further attack on Finland in the event of Sweden's entering into a defensive alliance with Finland?

Although Ribbentrop took his time about writing the reply quoted above he carefully refrained from mentioning these burning questions. Probably he *could* not answer them, or

preferred in any case to postpone the answer until some later meeting. Only Hitler could have given a definite reply, as he did when I went to see him a month later at the Reich Chancellery. My Finnish friends consequently had to contain themselves in patience for a few months longer. They lived in constant dread of further Russian demands. Feeling for Germany was on the up-grade, and they believed in German rather than Swedish aid.

* * *

A German professor who came to see me at the beginning of September 1940 had a number of interesting things to relate. He knew that Hitler was convinced that he would soon die and that was why he was in such a hurry to carry through his plans. The Führer dreamt of a German renaissance after the war and of a new order under which Germany would be the most flourishing State in Europe. Walter Funk, the Finance Minister, was to help him with financial questions and in abolishing the power of gold. Funk liked to quote the text about gold: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." He argued that if all the gold in the world were collected on a small island in the middle of the ocean and this island suddenly sank to the depths of the sea, mankind would never notice the difference and life would go on as before. Other means would be found of valuing goods. Labour would become the measure of value, all customs barriers would be swept away and an international barter system introduced.

With regard to Sweden my informant thought that if the Swedish Government knew and realised how high Sweden's stock stood in Germany and how advantageous her political position was, it might profit considerably thereby. Germany paid court to the Swedes but was met with coldness and stiffness, which the Germans could not understand. German sympathies for Finland were steadily increasing. Many people were surprised and pleased at the speech von Tschammer und Osten had made in Helsinki in connection with the Finnish-Swedish-German sports. He had expressed his unbounded admiration for the courage and endurance shown by this brave people in their war against Russia.

Dr. Hans Draeger, President of the German-Swedish

Society in Berlin and of the Scandinavian Association and a high-standing official first under Goebbels and later under Frick, came to Stockholm on 23rd September and invited me to lecture to the former society on 29th October. He said that my talks at the end of February and beginning of March, when peace for Finland was at stake, had born fruit and that relations between Germany and Finland were steadily improving. On the other hand the Russo-German Pact was fragile and Draeger believed that if Finland were attacked again, Germany might possibly give her her support.

At the same time it was reported that feeling in Finland was turning increasingly towards Germany. Von Tschammer und Osten's and Karl Diem's visit to Helsinki had done good. Many believed that Finland would be lost without German help. In certain quarters it was questioned whether the conversion was genuine or merely the result of opportunism.

Dr. Ziegler too came to Stockholm for a short visit. He thought that a Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance might be dangerous for us if Russia had fresh plans against the west. One does not set up an army in a year. It had taken Germany three years of purposeful and strenuous effort to create her army.

I discussed with him Sweden's position in the proposed new order in Europe. He knew from leading quarters in Berlin that there could never be any question of a forced conversion to Nazism. But if Sweden rejected any idea of co-operation, then Germany would withdraw her hand and leave her to fend for herself. If Sweden were then attacked by some foreign Power and appealed to Germany for help, the answer she would get would be: No, you wanted to manage your own affairs, get on with it. Even at that time —2nd October—Draeger spoke of a war between Germany and Russia as a probability. This unhappy idea sealed the fate of Hitler, Germany, Finland, and the whole of Europe. What Hitler himself thought he confided to me two years later. Although the war had already been going on for more than a year the Germans were sadly misinformed as to America's strength in the air and Russia's on the ground. The Germans had 500,000 men for the invasion of Britain and three million for other undertakings.

A German official told me that the Government, i.e. Hitler, was willing to have peace on condition that Britain abandoned her suzarainty over Europe and returned German East Africa, the Cameroons, Togo and South West Africa and also ceded to Germany the whole Congo and possibly part of French Morocco. In August 1940 the Russians had had everything ready for a fresh attack on Finland, but then Germany had checked them. According to some Germans the German military authorities made light of the prospect of a winter campaign in Russia. I reminded them of Charles XII's and Napoleon's experiences in the winters of 1708-09 and 1812. They replied that at that time railways, tanks, aircraft, and all the other mechanical equipment that would make an invasion incomparably easier now, were still unknown. It was the cold and the distance combined that had broken the Swedish and French armies. Now distance no longer existed. These statements indicated in themselves that a plan for the invasion of Russia was already in being in the autumn of 1940.

Reports and rumours followed one on the heels of the other at the beginning of October. It was said that Chamberlain wanted to negotiate for peace whereas Churchill wanted to continue the war. So the former had had to go. To anyone who was in the very least in the know about Hitler's plans it seemed surprising that people in the U.S.A. could not merely consider the possibility of, but actually fear, a German attack on America. They said quite seriously: "If England is beaten in the war, the U.S.A. will be the next". If Germany had really wanted to conquer continents, Africa or Asia would have been nearer to hand. How could German armies and navies ever have crossed the Atlantic when they could not even venture across the Channel! The whole idea was absurd and had obviously merely been fabricated for war propaganda purposes. No, Hitler's object was, in the main, to weld all Europe into one block against England. He began where Napoleon ended. The Corsican had lost his Emperor's crown into the bargain. Hitler was going to show the world how to play for the winning trick. For both of them the invasion of Russia was the decisive mistake. Hitler said himself that he did not intend to repeat his great predecessor's mistakes.

Actually and without noticing it he copied him step by step. Britain's situation was serious. Churchill's broadcast to France seemed like a prayer for help—after Aandalsnes, Namsos, Dunkirk, Somaliland and Dakar and after the attack on the French fleet at Oran.

And what had America up her sleeve, and what were Japan's intentions?

All these questions and viewpoints cropped up again and again in the German line of argument.

The idea to which Hitler constantly returned in his speeches was, however, the creation of a federation of European Continental States under German leadership. Churchill's speech at Zürich in September 1946, after the defeat of Germany, similarly advocated the formation of a "United States of Europe", a bloc that was to be under the leadership of France and Germany. To this realisation Churchill had come after observing that, with the defeat of Germany, Europe had lost its strongest, indeed its only, bulwark against the danger from the east. That the Anglo-Saxon war policy was wrong is best demonstrated by the state in which the world finds itself to-day. It played only into the hands of Russia, and the Russian leaders have exploited with unerring genius the situation created by the blindness of their former allies.

To Berlin again

ON 26th October we travelled down to Berlin again, arriving there on the evening of the following day. In Sassnitz hundreds of soldiers were waiting for the ferry to Trelleborg. They were to proceed by the west coast railway to Norway. At the Kaiserhof we were given our usual corner suite one floor up. We ordered dinner; service forbidden on account of an air raid alert. Three quarters of an hour later came the long all-clear.

The whirl of engagements began right away on the 28th, with a lunch given by Reich Sports Leader Tschammer und Osten for his Italian colleague Samboni. A number of generals and Herr Bormann, from Hitler's Chancellery, were present.

On the 29th came my lecture at the Haus der Flieger. The magnificent hall with dazzling ceiling lights was full to capacity. The front seats were occupied by the Swedish and Finnish Ministers, Reichsminister Count von Schwerin Krosigk, Herr Kerrl, the Ecclesiastical Minister and Herr Dorpmüller, Minister of Communications, General von Schröder, Herr Hilgenfelt, who was responsible among other things for the Winter Relief, von Blücher, the Minister in Helsinki, with his wife, and many of my friends and former colleagues, most of them professors. A number of Swedish newspaper representatives was also present. The subject of my lecture was Sweden's relations with Germany in olden days, followed by a series of aerial photographs of the Swedish countryside, towns, castles, churches and ancient monuments. My jesting comment that it had been rash of Rurik and his Roslagen lads to found the Russian empire and that is would have been better for Europe if America had never been discovered, met with lively approval.

On 30th October the only outstanding incident was a lunch given by the Foreign Pressmen's Club in the building formerly

occupied by the Anglo-German Society. The President was Dr. Paul Schmidt, the Envoy, the second of that name. He made a pretty speech. After the meal we sat for a long time chatting about current events and about his travels with Ribbentrop. Just recently they had been to see Pétain, Franco and Mussolini. He told us that Hitler, on his first meeting with Pétain, had said to him:

"Herr Marshal, it grieves me to meet you under circumstances such as these when your country has just suffered such a great misfortune." Hitler had treated the Marshal throughout with courtesy and respect.

With regard to my letter to Ribbentrop on Finland Dr. Schmidt told me that the Minister had read it thoroughly and then handed it over to the Legation Counsellors for their consideration. He often received communications of up to 60 pages in length and positive stacks of letters, reports and telegrams, all of which he had to read.

In the evening the Swedish Minister gave a dinner at which we met Count von Schwerin Krosigk, Reich Finance Minister, Herr Meissner, Minister of State and Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, Baron Ernst von Weizsäcker and some members of the Swedish Legation. Weizsäcker had begun as a Naval officer but later transferred to the diplomatic service. In 1930 and 1931 he had been German Minister in Oslo and was well acquainted with Norwegian affairs. Weizsäcker undoubtedly provided a fortunate and much-needed counterbalance on many occasions to the over-hasty decisions of his departmental Chief.—Weizsäcker was tall with a fine, attractive face and an air of culture and intelligence. He had served under Tirpitz at the time when this great Admiral was building up the German High Seas Fleet under Kaiser Wilhelm. There was something of the freshness of the winds and waves about this fascinating man and one had a feeling that the mystery and endlessness of the ocean would have made a more suitable background for him than did the obscure shadow-play and tortuous by-paths of diplomacy. When the crash came he was German Ambassador at the Vatican and it was probably the personal esteem in which he was held by Pius XII that enabled him to remain for a time in the Vatican City after the catastrophe.

I was on the watch all the evening for an opportunity to speak privately to Weizsäcker, and when in the end I succeeded I asked him point blank:

"*Herr Staatssekreterare,* countless men and women in Sweden are wondering and speculating as to what the proposed new order in Europe will mean for our country and there is no one at home who can answer this question. In general it is feared that the new order will involve external compulsion on our land and people. The Swedes are extremely sensitive and proud in this respect. We have been a freedom-loving people from time immemorial. We cling to traditions that have their roots in the dawn of history. It would be of incalculable advantage to you and us and would strengthen the friendship between our peoples if nothing were done that might in any way interfere with our freedom and our national individuality. I beg you, therefore, to let me know what part, in your opinion, will be allotted to Sweden in the new European order."

Weizsäcker: "I am absolutely convinced that Sweden's freedom and individuality will not be affected in the very least. Not a shadow of force or compulsion will be exercised in any way against your country. The new order will only affect economic questions, all the customs barriers between the different States of Europe will be abolished so that people will be free to conduct trading transactions or travel from country to country without restriction, which will be a blessing, boon and help to all alike. I can assure you that Hitler will *never* make any demands on Sweden which might in any way infringe the absolute freedom of your land and people. It will be for the Swedes alone, in the future as formerly throughout the whole of their history, to answer for the preservation of their national characteristics and to retain them unimpaired."

I: "Is it the Führer's intention to create a sort of United States of Europe?"

Weizsäcker: "Yes, in a way, but *only* in economic respects and with regard to customs barriers. I hope devoutly that all States will feel freer and happier than before. This is to be what might be described as a continuation and consummation of Napoleon's Continental System."

After that the Secretary of State turned the conversation into quite different channels by switching it over to a subject which obviously interested him particularly, namely the Press. He said:

"I hope and believe that some curb will be set on the tone of the Press. Under the new European order it is not to be tolerated that the Press organs of any country should indulge in frivolous or insulting modes of expression, insults or abuse of the leaders, government or ruler of any other country. We shall demand a certain measure of self-discipline of the Press. I fail to see why it should be the privilege of the newspapers to speak their mind unconstrainedly and openly about everything that goes on or to brand innocent persons when I myself neither enjoy nor ought to enjoy any such privilege. Even if I personally disapprove of something that is being done in another country, my sense of tact demands that I should not say so publicly. I expect a similar sense of tact of the Press organs of other countries. The newspapers may gladly discuss conflicting views and opinions of happenings and events, but their criticism must be tactful, mannerly and to the point, not crude and raw as is the case at present in certain quarters. In order to bring the different States and nations closer together we want to establish a cultural unity or an interchange of cultural treasures and learning that could only be a blessing to all concerned."

I thanked Baron von Weizsäcker for his candid and valuable exposition.

* * *

We had been shown on arrival where the underground shelters were and how to get to them. Now the Manager of the Kaiserhof assured us that we did not need to bother about the air raid alert until the anti-aircraft guns opened up in earnest. Then, like everyone else, we ought to go to the shelters.

The banquet given by the Scandinavian Association and the German-Swedish Alliance on the evening of All Saints' Day for the Swedish Legation and us at Victoriastrasse 7 took quite a tragi-comic turn. Some seventy guests had been invited, among them General von Schröder, who was in

charge of the air raid shelters. Our host, Dr. Draeger, welcomed us all and announced that there were to be no further speeches. After the meal we settled ourselves in the reception rooms. I had a conversation with a Foreign Office official on the same subject as with Weizsäcker and found that they both took precisely the same view. He assured me that Sweden's love of liberty and national integrity would not be interfered with one hair's breadth by a victorious Germany.

I: "Then neither would your leaders attempt to use propaganda methods in order to pave the way for National Socialism?"

The Spokesman: "Never! Your political philosophy does not concern us in the least. We merely propose to introduce a common economic continental system for the whole of Europe, in other words in trade, customs, currency and banking. But even in that we are not going to force anyone. If a State refuses to accept our proposals and says: We prefer to keep our trade and economy in our own hands, we shall reply: As you please, but then you must be prepared to take the consequences. If such a State were then to find that it was unable to compete with our system and that it would have been more advantageous to join the European bloc and were to apply belatedly for membership, it would run the risk of being rejected."

I: "Well, how do things really stand with the Russo-German Pact, how long will it last?"

The Spokesman: "*Now* we have to keep strictly to the pact, but we cannot allow Bolshevism . . ."

He was suddenly cut short, for just at that moment the sirens sounded and there were cries in the room of "*Achtung, Flieger!*" We took it calmly and meant to stay where we were. But then General von Schröder came along, who was responsible for everyone observing the regulations and going to the shelters immediately the alert went. Having thus the misfortune—or perhaps the fortune—to have the guardian angel himself among our numbers, we had no choice. The General did his duty and ordered: "Everyone down to the cellars!"

We accordingly moved down in procession to the ground-floor vestibule, where we put on our out-door clothes, and then on again down another two flights of stairs to the two, not very inviting, cellars furnished with cane-seated chairs and dimly lit with a couple of electric bulbs. We joked grimly with Draeger about the help the English airmen were giving him in entertaining his guests. I had a long conversation with the Swedish Minister, who thought it highly desirable that I should find an opportunity for another conversation with Hitler before I went home. I accordingly promised Richert not to leave Berlin until I had done so.

It was actually to take me nearly six weeks to carry out this promise, but its fulfilment was a point of honour and an absolute necessity as the question at issue was one of importance for Sweden. Our plans were therefore altered and our stay in Germany prolonged. I kept the closest watch on Hitler's movements; now he would be in Munich, now in Berchtesgaden, now occupied with important conferences in Berlin. But Dr. Meissner had promised to keep me informed. I *had* to talk with Hitler before I went home and it was not for pleasure's sake I remained.

After that we rejoined the others and carried on with our conversation. We listened, in company with 4½ million other people, to the bombing, the explosions and the smattering anti-aircraft fire, the sounds of which faintly penetrated our cellar. At last came the all-clear . . . Wonderful! It was half-past one and we had been sitting like prisoners in a dungeon for more than four hours. But how peaceful it had been, after all, in comparison with the fate that awaited Berliners three or four years later!

We drove home and said good-night, but scarcely had we settled to rest before that nasty wolves' howling sounded through the night again. We rose, dressed hastily and went down to the Kaiserhof shelter, where the row of comfortable armchairs was already occupied. We found a seat, however. Every corner and passage was packed. Some humorous gentleman told us the story of how Reich Chancellor von Bülow had once been invited to a teachers' meeting. As he

entered the hall he had said: *"Ich habe Säle gesehen voller als dieser und auch leerer als dieser, aber ich habe niemals einen Saal voller Lehrer gesehen"*.[1]

[1] "I have seen halls fuller than this and emptier than this, but I have never seen a hall full of teachers before". (The pun is untranslatable.)

A Car Trip to Munich

ON 4th November 1940 we set out on a visit to Munich, whither we had been formally invited by the Deutsche Akademie. Dr. Wilhelm Ziegler was, as usual, our faithful cicerone. I had suggested that we should make the journey by train, but Ziegler insisted on car so that we should be independent and could stop where we pleased. My scruples about the unnecessary use of petrol he swept aside with the words: "It is a drop in the ocean; we have more petrol now than we had a year ago."

We dashed along through Potsdam, between Wittenberg and Dessau, between Leipzig and Halle, and then at full speed along the endless *autobahn* that vanished like a white ribbon ahead of us. Wooden poles were erected at every thirty yards to prevent the landing of enemy aircraft. But we could not pause now for any observations by the way. When we drew up at the Bayrischer Hof we had been on the road exactly eight hours, including almost an hour for lunch, and we had travelled faster than an express train.

The 5th November was a strenuous day. Herr and Frau Siebert had invited us to lunch. He was Prime Minister of Bavaria and President of the Deutsche Akademie. Among the forty guests were a number of Generals, Professor Karl Haushofer the geopolitician, Dr. Schäfer the Tibetan explorer, Princess Elisabeth Fugger of Wellenburg, who had come up from Augsburg to Munich on purpose to meet us. The Reich Governor, General von Epp, was away on official business and unable to be present.

After lunch we drove to Dr. Schäfer's Research Institute, where he showed us a small but very fine collection of ritual objects from Tibet and after that a series of highly successful colour photographs of Lhasa and a technically excellent moving film of Tashilunpo and other temples showing

processions and ceremonies of the Tibetan Lamas and the ever-picturesque temple services with their drums, trumpets and flutes and their impenetrable mystery. Dr. Schäfer gave an explanatory lecture by way of commentary on the pictures, which was followed by a moving and, so far as I was concerned, far too flattering speech by Professor Haushofer, a speech in honour of the veteran to whom it had been granted, in the midst of a Germany toiling, seething and fighting for her life, to return for a while in thoughts and memory to the snow-capped mountains and golden temple-courts of his youth.

At 3 o'clock we drove out, with Herr and Frau Siebert, to the Starnberger See where Dr. Frick, Minister of the Interior, had a country seat. He himself could seldom spare time to go there, but his family preferred the idyllic country life to the dreary streets of Berlin. Dr. Frick himself was at home for the moment, after a visit to Rome, and we spent a few pleasant hours at his house.

My lecture was to take place in the venerable old Town Hall at 8 o'clock on 6th November. The hall was only supposed to hold 500 people, but 800 had been admitted by the police. Others crowded outside and thronged the staircases. It was with difficulty that we finally made our way through to our places.

Ortsleiter Reinhardt mounted the rostrum and welcomed me as the guest of honour of the Deutsches Museum. I was next, and gave the same lecture as I had given in Berlin and showed the same pictures. I did not forget to point out that " to-day, 6th November, just 308 years ago, King Gustavus II Adolphus fell on German soil ". In conclusion I expressed the hope that the new order would come as a blessing to the peoples of Europe and that the Führer would show his real greatness as a peacemaker.

After I had been duly thanked Prime Minister Siebert mounted the rostrum and made a speech. Ever since Dr. von Miller's time I had been a Senator of the Deutsche Akademie and it was as such that I was now acclaimed. Hanging the insignia of the Academy round my neck, its President declared that I was the first foreigner who had ever received this distinction. He then gave a brief survey of the functions

and future aims of the Academy. Music played before and after the ceremony. The Swedish and German flags were solemnly unfurled beneath the ancient vaulted roof.

A simple supper was served at the Bayrischer Hof, during which President Siebert discussed the new order and expressed his conviction that Sweden would play a very important part in the new Europe. The re-election of Roosevelt for a third term of office was regarded by Siebert and Frick as indicating that there would be no change in the previous policy. Siebert told us that Hitler had arrived in Munich but that his presence there had to be kept absolutely secret. He was in his private apartments, writing the speech he was to make on 8th November. The object was presumably not to call the attention of the R.A.F. to his whereabouts.

A great part of the following day was devoted to the new Art Gallery with its pillared façade, built after designs by Hitler himself. It was christened later by some popular humorist " The Pompeiian Railway Station ". An exhibition of modern paintings and sculptures of uneven quality was on show there.

After that we went to call on Professor and General Karl Haushofer and his wife, who had a pleasant little villa one floor of which was entirely devoted to books. In his time he had been Hitler's tutor in geopolitics and was a member of the Führer's inner circle.

On 8th November we had an interesting visitor, namely the German Consul-General in Sweden Schniewind, who had been financial adviser towards the end of the 1920's to Riza Shah Pehlevi in Teheran and had a great deal to tell about these parts, through which I had passed on three separate expeditions. Our conversation turned almost exclusively on Persia, which he had left because his advice and warnings were ignored. As we parted I asked him casually:

" Do you think, *Herr Generalkonsul,* that the war will go on all through the winter?"

He: " It will go on until 1943 or 1944."

I: " Neither side will be victorious?"

He: " Yes, Stalin! He is waiting to come into his heritage."

I: " But the German Air Force will take some beating?"

He: "The R.A.F. is improving day by day. Berlin will be destroyed as utterly as London. The U.S.A. will send aircraft to Britain. All Europe will be turned into a rubble heap. Stalin will emerge triumphant and the Soviet Union will endure."

I: "You are not exactly an optimist, *Herr Generalkonsul.*"

He: "No, but I cannot see what else can possibly come of the existing situation. I think all our large towns will be reduced to rubble and the whole land laid waste."

Schniewind was the only German I had met who painted the future in such dark colours. He saw with an almost prophetic vision what was to come. Even on the matter of the duration of the war his guess was pretty correct. What he thought about the ruling party it was not difficult to realise. After the attempted assassination of Hitler on 20th July 1944 he was one of those who were imprisoned and would probably have been hanged had it not been for the intervention of the Swedish Minister. I too sent a personal telegram to Hitler appealing for mercy on his behalf.

Our departure from Munich was fixed for this same day, but it was about one o'clock before we set out and we drove direct to the mountain fortress of Wülzburg near Weissenburg in Bavaria. It may reasonably be asked what we wanted there. The fact was that my niece, Fru Märta Wetterlind, who was a member of the Oxford movement, counted among her English Oxford friends a Mr. Andrew Strang, who had been in Denmark at the outbreak of the war and in company with other British civilians had been arrested and sent to Germany. He was now in the civilian internment camp at Wülzburg and we had promised Märta to visit him and see how he was. We had applied to the Secretary of State, Herr Gutterer, who, after investigating the matter, had given us permission to visit the camp.

We accordingly drove up to the gateway in the wall surrounding the camp, where we were received with the utmost civility by the officer on duty. He took us up to the castle and straight to the pillared hall which Mr. Strang occupied in company with 48 other Englishmen. Two English-speaking German officers were present at our conversation with Mr.

Strang and his friend Mr. John Grubb. The supervision they exercised was light and tactful, and we, of course, for our part avoided asking any indiscreet questions. After presenting Märta's greetings I asked:

"How are things with you, Mr. Strang, are you satisfied?"

"Yes, we have nothing to complain of—apart from the fact that it always is a trial of patience being in prison. But we fill our time in well. We read a great deal, some of us play bridge, we get exercise playing football, I give lectures occasionally, and I am taking German lessons too."

I: "How about food?"

He: "Quite adequate. I have certainly lost about five pounds in the year I have been here, but as you see I am perfectly well and I suspect the loss of weight is chiefly due to the monotony of the life. Besides, there is a canteen here where you can buy cigarettes, chocolate, sweets and so on—if you have the money."

We asked the C.O. whether it was allowed to send money or gifts to the prisoners. He replied that we were at liberty to do so, but that everything sent to the prisoners had to be censored. At Alma's suggestion we arranged with the C.O., Strange and Grubb to send Strange 50 and Grubb 10 Marks a month for the duration of the war and also gift parcels from time to time. This arrangement with the C.O., Capt. Sippel, was faithfully adhered to during the years 1941, 1942 and 1943. The two Englishmen sent their receipts to Brockhaus for his monthly disbursements and Brockhaus included them in his monthly accounts. Alma and I received a succession of postcards from the two prisoners, whose gratitude was touching. How it went with them after 1943 I do not know, but I believe their transfer to some other camp made correspondence difficult. I heard indirectly that Mr. Strang had returned to England after the end of the war.

It is possible that our visit and Secretary of State Gutterer's order to some extent improved the position of Strang and Grubb as compared with the treatment meted out to the other 396 British and the 736 other prisoners interned at Wülzburg. Capt. Sippel thanked us very warmly on 18th December for the attention we had shown him in sending him one of my travel books.

The two letters from Strang and Grubb quoted below are interesting as showing what the British prisoners themselves thought of their internment:

Internierten-Lager 13. 7. 42.

Dear Miss Hedin. How happy I was to receive your recent letter from Berlin! I had no idea you were once more in Germany. It has been so long since I have written, but please do not feel that because of that, I have not been grateful for all your kind thought—such is far from the truth. I think you understand the difficulties in writing frequently. I am always happy to hear from Sidney about Märta and family. Do please give them my warmest greetings when next you see them. I have now quite recovered from my operation and feel normal again. Health is a great boon, almost as great as deep quiet faith in our Father who keeps us all. How I look forward to the day when it will be possible once more to visit Sweden. With kindest regards to Dr. Hedin.

Yours sincerely,
Andrew Strang.

Absender: *Vor- und Zuname*: W. Andrew Strang
English interned civilian
Gefangenennummer: W-17484
Lagerbezeichnung I lag VIII
Deutschland (*Allemagne*)

14th Feb. 1943.

Dear Miss Hedin.

I had read in the papers of Dr. Sven Hedin's visit to Munich, but it was a wonderful surprise when I found that you had been so very kind as to send me a parcel from Berlin. It was a delightful gift and I thank you not only for that, but also for your remembering my name when you must have so many names to think of.

The day of your visit to Wülzburg will always be among the happiest memories I shall keep of internment. I remember wondering before you came whether it would be very difficult to speak with you, and then when you arrived, you were so delightful. Do you know that you are the only lady I have spoken to since I was interned in September 1939!

The years have rolled on since then, but internment has not turned out half so badly as I thought it would at first. We

are six in a small room at this camp. Andrew Strang is one of us, and there are far better opportunities for study than we had in Bavaria.

And now before I finish these lines, I want to say once more how grateful I am both to yourself and to Doctor Sven Hedin for all your kindnesses to me.

Yours very sincerely,
John Grubb.

Absender: *Vor- und Zuname*: John Grubb
British interned civilian
Gefangenennummer: W 68
Lager-Bezeichnung I lag VIII H
Deutschland (*Allemagne*)

After casting a glance into the shower-room, where some twenty well-built, high-spirited Englishmen were performing a positive pantomime between jets of water that spurted from ceiling and walls, and after making a tour of the sleeping-quarters with their three-tiered wooden bunks, we took our leave and returned, accompanied by Sippel, Strang and Grubb, to our car. And so the hill and the old castle vanished from our sight.

From Wülzburg we bent our course towards Bayreuth, where we spent the night at the hospitable home of Gauleiter and Frau Wächtler, so that we could see over the House of Education with its spacious lecture-rooms and institute the following day. The previous evening and night Munich had been subjected to a visit from the R.A.F., which had presumably worked out for itself that Hitler would most likely be among his *Parteigenossen*[1] just then—not his *Volksgenossen*[2].

To stay in Bayreuth without setting foot once more in Richard Wagner's house would have been unthinkable. Frau Winifred Wagner, Siegfried Wagner's widow, greeted us with open arms at the Führerhaus—the house where Hitler used to stay on his annual visit to the Wagner Festival. Frau Winifred invited us to the 1941 Festival and we accepted her kind invitation eagerly.

We also paid an hour's visit to Frau Eva Chamberlain-

[1] Party comrades [2] Fellow-citizens.

Wagner, the great master's daughter. I had corresponded during the First World War with her husband, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and it was in his spacious study—absolutely untouched since he left it for ever in 1927—that we sat now chatting about old times and new. Eva Chamberlain-Wagner, for all her 80 years, was still beautiful. Distinguished and aristocratic in appearance, she had her father's profile and great kindliness and charm of manner. Listening to her melodious, well-modulated voice one's thoughts went back unbidden to the world of music in which she had lived and grown up. As we were leaving she presented me with two volumes of Chamberlain's letters and his photograph. One seemed to hear a dying echo of Lohengrin and the spinning-song from the Flying Dutchman. It was the last time we were ever to see her. She died about a year later, and so was spared seeing Richard Wagner's country devastated and trampled under foot by hostile armies and airmen.

Richard Wagner's villa, Wanfried, with its memories, the instruments with which he created his immortal works, his enormous library, the portraits in oils of Liszt and Schopenhauer and other irreplaceable treasures—all is now a heap of ruins.

On 11th November we had Hans and Suse Brockhaus to lunch at the Kaiserhof and also Herr Hederich, a high official at the Ministry of Propaganda and a power in the world of books, censorship and paper supplies. His political ideas were also interesting. We had heard that the Russian Foreign Minister, Molotov, was coming to Berlin and Herr Hederich believed the object was to strengthen the pact and persuade the Germans not to make the Eastern Wall too strong. The general feeling about Russia was becoming increasingly unfavourable, owing to the prevalent belief that Russia might join the Anglo-Saxon bloc at any moment. Hederich regretted that England had not accepted Hitler's peace advances. If she had done so, the British Empire would have remained intact, as it was it would be weakened at the end of the war. And that neither side had any idea of conciliation was clear from Hitler's and Churchill's latest speeches.

In some Berlin circles a certain pessimism was beginning

to be noticeable. The Germans might be strong in the air at present, but in time they would be outstripped by England. Germany *could* not become much stronger than she was now, it was said, whereas England was growing steadily stronger both militarily and in morale, and in nine months' time the American Air Force would be ready for action. I noted in my diary: " One feels in one's bones that Europe will commit suicide and that Stalin will bide his time."

Mr. Molotov arrived in Berlin on 12th November and everyone wondered what the distinguished Russian visit could portend. It was not believed in German circles that Finland could be in any danger, for Stalin knew that Hitler would not favour a Russian penetration into the interior of Finland, and Stalin respected Hitler.

When an air raid was expected there was always a preliminary warning. No such warning was heard that evening and people supposed that the British would leave Berlin alone so long as Molotov was there. They were wrong, however, for we had a siren that evening and went down to the shelter underneath the Kaiserhof, where we met Herr and Frau von Blücher. We could tell from the sound of the explosions that it was the suburbs that were getting it this time, so that we could return to our sitting-room. Blücher had read my long letter to Ribbentrop and imagined that the two questions: about possible Swedish help to Finland in the event of a fresh attack, and how Hitler would regard a Swedish-Finnish defence alliance, were so important that the Minister could only answer them verbally.

So the days passed, with countless visitors coming to see us and the nights either with or without an air raid alert. On the 13th Ribbentrop and Molotov had to spend a few hours in a shelter. The Russian Minister had been 2½ hours with Hitler. It would have been worth something to know what they talked about, and what part Sweden and Finland played in the conversation.

One night we spent several hours underground with friends from Sweden, while the bombs burst and the Flak guns roared overhead on the ground and in the air. Four planes were said to have been shot down. One had to be quick about it if one wanted to see what the wreckage of one of

these shot-down aircraft looked like, for first thing in the morning it was gone.

As I said above, Minister of State Meissner had promised to keep me informed of the Führer's plans. On 16th November he accordingly notified me that the Führer was going to Munich that same day and would not be returning for several weeks. He had asked Meissner to convey his regrets at the delay, but his every moment was occupied. All sorts of rumours had been in circulation in connection with Molotov's visit to Hitler. Those who saw fit to make light of the whole affair tried to make out that it was merely a return visit, many times postponed, for Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow in 1939. Others argued that Molotov would never have come all the way to Berlin with a suite of a hundred persons if he had not had some very important reason. Of course he had come to put forward demands! But what for? Some thought that it had to do with Finland—perhaps the whole of Finland and the " calotte ". Some German officials who had just returned from Norway told me that if the British had succeeded in occupying Norway, the Germans would have felt obliged for strategic reasons to occupy Sweden, so that they could attack the British overland from the east. I retorted coolly that this would have been a very difficult undertaking that would not have improved Germany's position in any way. Without pursuing that question any further they wondered whether Molotov's mission now had anything to do with northern Norway, and they thought for their part that the Russian statesman's demands must be pretty far-reaching. Another rumour had it that Molotov's purpose had been to offer Russian adherence to the Three Power Alliance. And on this the comment was that a bloc consisting of Germany, Italy, Russia and Japan would be quite invincible by the rest of the world put together. But it was admitted that if Stalin had made such an offer it would only have been in consideration of something very big in return. And again one came back to the question, could it be Finland or Scandinavia or south-eastern Europe—But all these amateur politicians failed to realise or take into account the real strength of Russia or the fact that Stalin was the most skilful statesman of his age.

I wondered whether Hitler's unwillingness to meet me now,

and his message through Meissner that my next visit to the Reich Chancellery would have to be indefinitely postponed, could be due to his reluctance to tell me the whole truth about the promises he had given Molotov at Finland's expense, in order to strengthen the pact with Russia and perhaps turn it into a military alliance. Hitler had given sufficient proof during the preceding year of his ruthlessness in eliminating small States that stood in the way of his plans. It was consequently a not unnatural fear that if Hitler had been able to prevail on Russia to join a military alliance, he would not have hesitated on the grounds that this could only be done at the cost of Scandinavian or Finnish territory. If such were in fact the direction in which his mind was running, then that would also have explained his unwillingness to meet me personally, and his postponement of our conversation week by week until I should be forced by the approach of Christmas to go home with my errand unfulfilled. For he would certainly have shrunk just as much from revealing as from concealing any operations against Swedish territory. At a dinner-party to which I have already referred Count von Schwerin Krosigk said to me: " Hitler does not believe in a Germanophil who puts Germany before his own country. A sincere and genuine patriotism is the passport to his respect for a Germanophil. Anyone who can place his own country second to any other interests is in his opinion worthless." This did not prevent him from making use of every sort of Quisling and renegade in order to attain his ends.

All my fears—the fruit of the spate of rumours and the delay in obtaining my audience—were to prove in the fulness of time to be incorrect and unfounded. Molotov had not said a word about Swedish territory, and what he had said about Finland I was to hear from Hitler's own lips after his return from Munich. There was not a particle of truth in the rumour about a military alliance. What the Führer actually thought at this time about Russia was presumably only known to some few of the highest circle of Army and Naval officers. That these thoughts were anything but friendly was to appear in June the following year. The outward illusion of the stability and endurance of the Russo-German Pact was maintained, however, to the very last.

Conversation with Secretary of State von Weizsäcker

I HAVE described in a previous chapter a conversation I had recently had with the Secretary of State in the Foreign Office, Baron von Weizsäcker, at which we had agreed to meet again soon. On 18th November 1940, just before lunch-time, this further conversation took place. It is not many steps from the Kaiserhof to Wilhelmstrasse 75—it simply meant crossing the Wilhelmsplatz diagonally. I was not kept waiting a minute in his anteroom. An attendant announced at once: "*Der Herr Staatssekretär lässt bitten*".[1] Charming, winning and attractive as ever, a ghost from former days, Herr von Weizsäcker made me welcome, and reminded me of a visit I had paid him many years ago before, and of our fleeting encounter in Berne in 1935 when he had been German Minister in Switzerland and I a lecturer.

Our conversation had many points in common with the previous one, but I give it all the same as it appears in my diary. Herr von Weizsäcker had a wonderful capacity for optimism in the face of current events, and for looking full of confidence and hope toward the future. He spoke deliberately, and if his answer to my first question, about Finland, was not exhaustive, that was due to the caution which a responsible diplomat must always exercise in speaking to a foreigner. I had asked, in fact, whether the Russian Foreign Minister's visit had to do with Finland, and whether there was any truth in the rumour that Finland was in danger?

Weizsäcker: "No, there is no basis for that statement. The talk about Molotov having come here to prepare the entry of the Soviet Union into the Three Power Pact I consider improbable. Russia does not want to be bound by the Three Power Pact, though she will gladly work parallel with it and not in opposition to it. There has also been talk of Russian

[1] "The Secretary of State is ready to see you".

plans in Irak, Iran and India, but I know nothing of any such plans. It is certainly true that the Russians have an insatiable appetite, but the attitude they are adopting now is rather one of 'wait and see'. No, the reason for Molotov's visit was primarily that he ought to have returned Herr Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow long ago, and though his return visit has often been discussed, it has been put off month after month. Now it has been paid at last, but without involving any far-reaching consequences."

I: "You do not think, then, *Herr Staatssekretär,* that Finland is in any danger?"

Weizsäcker: "Finland has nothing to worry about. She has entered on a period of peace which will continue unbroken, at any rate for the present. For Finland the peace of 12th March was a blessed thing. Here in Berlin we had expected that Russia would have gone much farther and demanded much more. It was a surprise to us that Russia was satisfied with so relatively little. I myself consider that the outcome was advantageous for Finland. Germany rejoiced at it."

I: "I wrote a letter a little while back to Herr Ribbentrop, in which I described Finland's earlier vicissitudes and present position. Have you seen that letter, *Herr Staatssekretär?*"

Weizsäcker: "Yes, I read it with great interest."

I: "Why has Herr Ribbentrop never answered it?"

Weizsäcker: "In present circumstances he *cannot* answer it, and the world knows too little of what is to happen. I remember that at the end of your letter you asked one or two weighty and important questions."

I: "The first of the cardinal points in my letter to Herr Ribbentrop concerned the question of possible Swedish aid to Finland in the event of a renewed attack on that country."

Weizsäcker: "The answer Hitler gave you to this question when you went to see him in October 1939 still holds good. I consider, however, that this question has now assumed a somewhat different complexion owing to the fact that Sweden is militarily stronger now than she was a year ago."

I: "The second question was whether Berlin would regard favourably or unfavourably a defensive alliance between Sweden and Finland."

Weizsäcker: "Let me see, was there not a clause in the peace treaty between Russia and Finland under which Finland was precluded from entering into an alliance with a third power which might be regarded as hostile to Russia? I cannot remember the exact words of the treaty, but I have an impression that Finland is bound in this respect, and so would not be free to enter into a defensive alliance with Sweden. I have not time at the moment to look it up in our foreign treaty files."

I: "A defensive alliance between our two countries need not, of course, be regarded as directed against Russia."

Weizsäcker: "No, that is true, it might in certain combinations be directed against some other Power. For that matter we do not know what Britain may get up to yet in northern Scandinavia. But in any event a defensive alliance between Sweden and Finland would quite naturally be regarded in Russia as an unfriendly act."

I: "It is very often the case that treaties are not eternal, but are broken with impunity as the political situation changes."

Weizsäcker: "Yes, but this treaty must be adhered to for the present, provided such a paragraph exists, but as I said before I cannot exactly remember the text."

I: "The third question related to a Scandinavian bloc which might also conceivably include Norway."

Weizsäcker: "That question *cannot* be answered now. No one knows anything about it or what shape the new order in Europe is likely to take. Everything is still in the air and it is impossible to say anything."

I: "The most important thing for the people of Sweden is that their ancient freedom should not be interfered with in any way. Its roots go too deep in our history. Our people cannot live without it—it has been our heritage since the dawn of history. Sweden is the oldest Kingdom in Europe and Sweden has never been conquered. The Swedes are the purest Germans in Europe. Our national individuality, our national character and our respect for the law, are all qualities which should constitute useful assets in a New Europe, and ought to be held up as an example to other countries. That is why I believe that Sweden, if left entirely alone, should

have a mission to fulfil in the New Europe."

Weizsäcker: "I entirely agree with you. You may rest assured that *nothing* in Sweden shall be interfered with. No one here has the slightest intention of meddling with Swedish liberty or the national characteristics of her people. From us Sweden has nothing to fear."

I: "Is there no danger of pressure being brought to bear on our country in respect of the German National Socialist philosophy, which is alien to our people?"

Weizsäcker: "I find that impossible to believe. Sweden has nothing to fear in that respect either."

Herr von Weizsäcker then went on to stress still further that the new European order would not affect us in any way. We should be left entirely alone to manage our economic, commercial and ideological interests in our own way, and hold what views we pleased. He then passed on to the Press, saying:

"The attitude of the Swedish newspapers resembles that of the Swiss, but sensible people in Switzerland realise that in times like these they should weigh their words with a proper sense of responsibility."

I: "Yes, many of our newspapers do express their views with unnecessary openness, but latterly their tone has been more controlled."

Weizsäcker: "It is preposterous that the good, confidential relations existing between two States should be endangered by an irresponsible Press. Sweden's relations with Germany have been rendered difficult by the Swedish Press."

It was a thankless task at this time to defend the tone of certain Swedish newspapers, which was a constant subject of criticism by the German leaders and was generally brought up for discussion during my visits. I used to advise my German friends not to take what the newspapers said too much to heart. "The Swedish people is very highly cultured, and is both able and accustomed to think for itself and not follow blindly what the newspapers say. Personally I belong to the thick-skinned tribe, and none of their poisoned arrows worry me."

In conclusion we glanced at the world situation in general, and von Weizsäcker said:

"What is going to come of all this, and what will the New Europe look like? Have you any idea, *Herr Doktor*? What do you suppose the New Europe will be like?"

I: "I really have no idea! I can only hope that the new world to be created will be better and more sensible than the old. I hope that all nations, even the smallest, will be allowed to retain their own ways and customs, their own political philosophy and their own frontiers, and that the creators of the new order above all will not forget that the peace and balance of the world will be firmer and more enduring if all the peoples of the world, the citizens of the Great Powers as well as of the small marginal States, are content and safe from tyranny. For otherwise there will be discontent and unrest abroad in the world, and then there can be no question of true peace."

Weizsäcker: "Yes, you are right. That is my opinion too."

Thus ended my conversation with this noble and, in the best sense of the word, distinguished statesman, who regarded people, events and political objectives with far more humane and conciliatory eyes than any of the other leading German politicians. If it should ever be granted me to see Weizsäcker again, we shall certainly recall our conversations during this period and remember how cruelly events deceived us, and how the hopes we then entertained were crushed to dust and ashes.

I felt very much easier in my mind after my conversation with Secretary of State von Weizsäcker. But I could never feel absolutely at ease until I had met and spoken with the Führer himself. There was consequently nothing else to be done, as I have said above, but wait for his return.

On that same day, 18th November, I had an interesting conversation with Legation Counsellor Brunhoff, which was too long, however, to report in full. He told me among other things that the Spanish Foreign Minister, Serrano Suñer, was at that moment with Hitler at Berchtesgaden, and that the question they were in all probability discussing was the granting of permission for German troops to pass through Spain to Gibraltar in order to capture the fortress and shut the British Fleet into the Mediterranean. Spain, on the other

hand, would not enter the war. Plans such as these were undoubtedly under discussion, though they were never actually carried out.

At this time we often had visits from the R.A.F. in the evenings and at nights, and on these occasions the Flak guns rumbled incessantly. But one grew accustomed to this music and remained peacefully at one's writing-desk or in one's bed.

* * *

On the evening of 20th November I had a visit from the Finnish Minister Kivimäki, who knew a great deal about my endeavours. He was a genuine patriot and he feared for his country's future.

On 21st November Alma had a telephone call from the Legation asking us to receive a distinguished Swedish lady who wanted to come and see us. The Swedish lady came. She was born Alice Ankarkrona, daughter of the King's friend and hunting companion, First Royal Forester Oscar Ankarkrona, who himself was the son of King Oscar's friend, Head Royal Forester Victor Ankarkrona. Alica Ankarkrona had been married since 1920 to Archduke Karl Albrecht of Austria. After the *Anschluss* he had moved over with his family to one of his estates in Poland, and become a Polish citizen. The German leaders had regarded this step unfavourably, and the Archduke had been thrown into prison, where he had languished now for about a year. His property and lands, his great fortune, everything, in fact, that he possessed, had been taken from him, and he himself was slowly wasting away in a miserable prison cell nine feet long with a bed of straw. King Gustaf had spoken on his behalf, but it had made no difference. The Legation had no authority to intervene, and so the Minister was appealing to me to see what I could do.

Dressed entirely in black after the death of a little son, beautiful, dignified and endowed with great personal charm, the Archduchess Alice of Habsburg came to see us and told us about the tragic experiences through which she had passed in the previous year.

Just then, however, we had not many minutes to spare. I was setting off to lecture in Stralsund and various other towns and would not be returning to Berlin until 2nd December,

but then I promised to do my best. The Archduchess was under the surveillance of the Gestapo, the head of which was Himmler. I promised to apply direct to him. She herself was staying in Berlin a few weeks and we agreed to meet immediately on our return.

Visit to Some German Towns

ON 21st November we went by train to Stralsund. It is always with strange sensations that I tread the streets of this old city which for nearly 200 years was Swedish. Nor did we neglect now to visit the Nikolai Church and the Charles XII House, where the King stayed in 1714-1715 and in the walls of which a musket-ball still lies half buried—probably merely a symbolic reminder of the one of which Voltaire has such a picturesque story to tell. We also looked inside the Scheele House, where the great discoverer of oxygen was born. We were escorted everywhere by the Mayor, Dr. Stoll, and by Dr. Adler who showed us the museum and the manuscript written in French by Commandant, later General and Royal Councillor Count Axel von Löwen, recording his remarkable conversations with Charles XII, which was published by Dr. Adler in the Carolinian Association's Annual for 1929.

My lecture took place in the Stralsund City Theatre, where the audience was very largely composed of the military and school-children. I talked about the deserts and Tibet and was honoured with the city's medal in iron.

On 24th November another lecture, this time in Magdeburg, about Sweden and her connections with Germany in olden times. From thence we were taken in the mayor's, Herr Markmann's, car to Gotha, where we were given a most moving reception.

In the great Assembly Hall of Justus Perthes' Geographical Institute the Directors, consisting of Dr. Joachim Perthes, Professor Haack and the Office Manager, Herr Flicek, together with 200 workers, men and women, were assembled to greet us. Dr. Perthes made a speech about our 45 years' co-operation in the service of geography and cartographical science and presented me with a copy of Stieler's *Handatlas,*

which was remarkable in that the maps showed only the terrain but carried not a vestige of text. Only a hundred copies of this atlas had been printed and so it had acquired a rarity value.

Perthes' Institute was at work just then full swing on the great Atlas of Central Asia which I planned to publish in 54 sheets to scale 1 : 1,000,000. Docent, now Professor, Erik Norin was residing temporarily in Gotha to supervise the work. Only three sheets were completed and two were approaching completion when Germany's hour struck and, in the subsequent division into four Zones, Gotha came under the Russian administration. The last I heard direct from Justus Perthes' was the address the Institute sent me in the spring of 1945 on the occasion of my 80th birthday. Ever since then Gotha has been enveloped in a death-like silence that only deepened when the Iron Curtain fell. Not until May 1946 did I obtain—through my publisher, Hans Brockhaus, who was then, thanks to the kind offices of the Americans, establishing a branch in Wiesbaden of the nearly 150-year-old Leipzig firm —any reliable information about Justus Perthes. Brockhaus had succeeded in getting in touch with Perthes, who had asked him to tell me that all further work on my atlas had ceased, for both financial and technical reasons. At about the same time I received confirmation from American quarters of this tragic news. After 161 years of outstandingly meritorious work Justus Perthes' Geographical Institute has been swept from the earth. A few years ago the world's finest geographical periodical, *Petermanns Mitteilungen,* ceased publication.[1] What may have been carried off in the shape of books, plates, machines, etc., the outside world can only guess. An American told me that the famous annual, *Almanach de Gotha,* which celebrated its 175th anniversary in 1938, had been liquidated to the extent that all its archives of genealogical, diplomatic and statistical sources had been burnt. Mercifully I and my colleagues in Sweden had always sent our original map material, which we had drawn up in Asia, to Gotha in photostat copies only and never more than one sheet at a time, which Erik Norin took personally on his jouurneys backwards and

[1] To my joy and surprise, I received notification in August 1948 from Justus Perthes that publication of this periodical was to be resumed.

forwards. So that we had not lost a single sheet. But the atlas that we had planned with so much care and trouble, and that was to have been printed at the expense of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft—a work, too, which the German Government anticipated with so enlightened an interest—that atlas is now dead, perhaps for ever.

I cannot refrain in this connection from telling a very strange story.

On 1st August 1945 I received from my friend, Dr. Wong Wen-hao, of Chunking, a telegram begging me to send him in Chungking without delay, through the Chinese Embassy in London, such sheets of my new atlas as were then ready. The telegram stated that my atlas " is badly needed by the Geological Survey of China ". I replied telegraphically that only three sheets had been completed and that financial difficulties had prevented further work on the atlas. At the same time I explained the situation in full in a letter.

Wong Wen-hao was then Minister on the War Production Board of the National Government of China, which title was inscribed on the letter he wrote to me on 10th September 1945 and which I received on the 28th of the same month. In this communication Dr. Wong requested me to have the atlas published in Stockholm in a smaller number of sheets, and emphasised once more the immense importance of these maps of ours of the inner, little known or quite unknown, parts of Asia which had been explored by my expedition of 1927-1935. He asked for an estimate of the cost and of the time that would be required for completion of the work, and stated that the Geographical Survey of China would be willing to assist in defraying the cost.

The first thing I had to do, then, was to obtain a detailed estimate of the cost and time required for completion of the atlas of Central Asia from Esselte's. As soon as I had obtained the necessary information I sent it to Chungking. Whether owing to the renewed Communist war against the Government troops, or to the Government's transfer to Nanking and Wong Wen-hao's appointment as Vice-Premier under T. V. Sung—whatever the cause may have been, I received no reply and am still awaiting one to this day.

Just when things looked blackest of all, when I had given up all hope of support from China and did not feel I could ask for a grant from the Swedish Riksdag, another and very happy solution presented itself. But that's another story, as Kipling says, and it would take us too far afield to relate it. Suffice it to say that the atlas of Central Asia is now in full production, and is expected to be ready in a few years' time. The work has been taken in hand by an institution in the U.S.A.

* * *

To return to the assembly hall at Justus Perthes', where the 200 workers stood round the walls, I need only mention that I made a speech to them thanking them for their co-operation during all the years that had passed since I first began to work with them at the end of the previous century. The generation which, under Professor Alexander Supan and Dr. Bruno Hassenstein, was responsible for the magnificent sheets which were the outcome of my expedition of 1893-1897, was dead by now and laid to rest. But I was happy to have the opportunity of meeting personally a new generation of workers at Justus Perthes'. In conclusion I made the round of the hall and shook hands with all my fellow-workers.

Only nine years have passed since then, yet now only the memory of that time remains.

After our visit to Gotha we drove on to Dresden where I lectured in the evening after first taking a stroll through the Picture Gallery and the Zwinger, without any thought ever entering my head that within a few years these pearls of art, of irreplaceable value to all the world, would be wiped off the face of the earth—in spite of the fact that Dresden had no military importance whatever.

There were lectures to be given in Breslau and Leipzig too. We stayed with our old friends Hans and Suse Brockhaus, who showed us the letters of introduction I had been armed with when I first presented myself, nearly fifty years previously, to Albert Brockhaus, the famous head of the firm. These letters were from world celebrities—Nordenskiöld, Richthofen and Virchow.

Another Conversation with Himmler

ACCORDING to arrangement, Archduchess Alice Habsburg appeared at the Kaiserhof on 2nd December and a little later Minister Richert too. She now explained to me once more her anxieties and wishes point by point, to ensure that I should be thoroughly at home in all the ins and outs of the case on account of which I had asked for an interview with Reichsführer S.S. Heinrich Himmler, which was already fixed for 4.30 that same afternoon.

I was received at the doorway by an officer who took me up to the waiting-room and announced me. I was ushered in at once to the mighty Gestapo Chief, who greeted me politely and immediately started talking about Dr. Schäfer, the Tibetan explorer. He said:

" I have had a letter from Schäfer expressing his delight at the kindness you showed him on your visit to Munich. I cannot thank you enough, *Herr Doktor,* for encouraging him in this way; you cannot imagine what it means to a man of 29 to gain the support and understanding of an experienced veteran."

I: " I am always pleased when capable young men show an interest in my old hunting-grounds in Holy Tibet, and Schäfer and his companions have brought back some very valuable material and collections from their trip."

Himmler: " Let us form a pact to take this young explorer in hand and make him understand that he must spend the next two years working up the material he has obtained so far and making it available for science. Only after that should he think of making new plans."

I: " I am entirely of your opinion. Young people who have tasted blood and met with success are often inclined to want to rush off straight away on another expedition. For my own part I have always followed the principle indicated

by you, that of never thinking of further explorations until the results of the previous expedition have been worked up. Otherwise one runs the risk of never getting down to this work, or at best of the material accumulating until one loses the thread and forgets the external circumstances in which the observations were made. Schäfer would gain by following your directive."

Himmler: "I am glad to hear that you share my view."

I: "Schäfer told me that he anticipates with some apprehension that the Rector of Munich University, Professor Wüst, wishes to appoint him research professor in heredity and to make him the head of an institute in this subject. He himself does not wish to accept this proposal but wants to devote himself entirely to geographical research with Tibet as speciality."

Himmler: "He need have no such fears. After the war he will have further opportunities in conformity with Germany's far-reaching plans. I do not propose to let him release to the public his results, his popular book, his colour photographs and colour film in connection with popular lectures now. The sensation they would arouse would be smothered under the universal absorption in the war."

I: "There again you are right, the only weakness being that if the war goes on much longer, he might run the risk of someone else taking the wind out of his sails—It is only natural that people should be more interested in the war than in Tibetan exploration. I had an experience quite recently which brought this fact home to me. When I was lecturing last week in six different German towns, I sent to ask in advance whether they wanted a lecture about Tibet or one about Sweden, and all six replied: about Sweden. Our country is indeed, happily enough, not in the war but neutral, but the mere fact that it is a member of war-ravaged Europe is enough to make people want to hear about it."

Himmler: "This attitude of our people's it not surprising. They want to know as much as possible about our neighbours, whether they be occupied or not, and their thoughts all turn on the great problems of the war. At times like these one has neither time nor interest for secret Tibet, which is quite untouched by the war and in any case is so far away from Europe."

But now I thought it was time to bring up the subject that was the reason for my asking to be received by the Gestapo Chief, so I said:

"I have a favour to ask of you, *Herr Reichsführer,* that lies very close to my heart. It is about the Archduke Karl Albrecht of Habsburg, whose wife, who is Swedish and the daughter of one of the King's closest friends, is consumed with anxiety about her husband's condition during his trying imprisonment."

Himmler replied immediately: "I know all the details of the case down to the smallest particular. I have gone into the Archduke's life step by step."

He then reeled off a long list of criminal charges under the German wartime legislation, which in view of its unjustifiable severity I prefer to pass over.

I: "I know all that and I only ask that he should be granted conditions of imprisonment more fit for a human being than they are at present—that he should be given a bed instead of sleeping on straw on the ground and that he should be allowed in the open air for more than half an hour a day."

Himmler: "There can be no question of treating the great with leniency while the ordinary people are treated with severity. If we showed him any favours we should be weakening our own authority with other Polish friends whom we have to keep in prison. A state which makes exceptions to its own laws and principles is lost. Our strict adherence to principle is our strength. I am unspeakably sorry that I cannot gratify your wishes, as I should otherwise so gladly have done just for your sake."

I: "I know the Archduchess Alice, her father, her brothers and sisters and her home, so that it is a matter of the deepest concern to me to try to relieve her grief and anxiety."

Himmler: "What would become of us if we were to break the laws and principles we have ourselves established for the sake of other people and private individuals?"

I: "Then the Archduke is to remain under harsh imprisonment until he dies?"

Himmler: "I should not like to say that, but certainly as long as this war lasts. When the war is over many things will be changed."

I: "Can you not give me any hope?"

Himmler: "Only that it will be different after the war."

I: "So that is the only hope I can cherish for her sake?"

Himmler: "I cannot promise anything. It is never my habit to make promises unless I *know* that I can keep them."

I: "In dark times as in bright times I have always taken Germany's part, because I considered that Germany had the same right to live as other nations. This attitude of mine has cost me the friends I once had in England, France and Russia. So that I have sacrificed something for Germany's sake. Now that I come and ask for a return service of such extremely modest proportions that it would mean no sacrifice to anyone, I am met with an uncompromising no."

Himmler: "Yes, my dear *Herr Doktor,* I am terribly sorry, but you must understand that if the Archduke Karl Albrecht were granted special privileges, all the other Archdukes would want the same, and we have to be just and keep to the principles we have ourselves laid down."

The main object of my visit seemed thus to have met with failure. Though not altogether, perhaps, for some time after our return home we had news from Fru Vera af Petersens and Captain Victor Ankarcrona that their sister's and her husband's circumstances had at any rate to some extent improved. I seemed also to read a hint to this effect between the lines of Himmler's New Year's letter to me, dated 14th February 1942, which began with the words: "*In der Angelegenheit Habsburg wird geschehen was in Rahmen des Möglichen geschehen kann.*"[1] These words showed at all events that 14½ months after our conversation he had not forgotten my request. Unfortunately they also showed that it had taken Himmler that long to make up his mind to take any steps in the direction I desired.

Realising that that was as much as I was likely to get out of the hard Gestapo Chief, I rose to take my leave, but asked

[1] "In the Habsburg affair everything shall be done that lies within the bounds of possibility".

at the same time briefly and to the point:

"What do you think of Swedish policy in this war, *Herr Reichsführer*?"

Himmler: "I and the whole German people love Sweden and have always felt great sympathy for her people, but I cannot understand how it is possible that your Press can still be allowed to insult and abuse Germany in the present dangerous situation."

I: "Recently the tone of our Press has grown more cautious and less aggressive. Besides, there are pro-German newspapers in Sweden too."

Himmler: "I know that there are many in Sweden who still hope for and believe in a British victory. Can they not understand what the consequences would be for themselves and all the world if Britain won!"

With that he led me over to an enormous globe and ran his right hand over the whole of the Russian Empire with the words:

"The consequences would be that Bolshevism would sweep like a storm-flood over the whole of Europe right up to the Atlantic coast. The whole of Scandinavia would be swamped. Strange that there can be people who believe that England would raise a finger to save Europe from Bolshevism. Germany is the only country that can check the Red infiltration thanks to all the various factors that render us invincible—our philosophy, our work, the order and discipline that prevail amongst us, our organisational ability, and a nation striving towards one common goal! And, first and foremost: We have a Führer!"

I: "I always think of Hitler's career as being divided into three phases: the building up of the Greater German Reich, the expansion of its frontiers, and the establishment of a strong and lasting peace. As peacemaker he would reach the climax of his career."

Himmler: "Yes, he knows what he wants and he has a goal—But how is it with you? In the event of a war between your country and ours Sweden would present no problem to us."

I: "In view of the dangers which threaten us from every side the whole Swedish nation has dropped its old party quarrels and united with tremendous energy in a common effort to achieve effective rearmament and a strong defence of the neutrality which the whole nation supports."

Himmler: "I know that, and everyone here is glad of it. The stronger Sweden is, the better for us. We admire the determination of the Swedes to defend themselves, but we also know that many of your defence enthusiasts are working for a strong Sweden simply with the idea of making war on Germany. And they do not understand that a war against Sweden, as I said just now, would present no problems for us. It would be better for the Swedes to recognise their position in the Germanic brotherhood of nations and that it is in their own interests to keep in with us. But Sweden has been at peace for 130 years now, and that means that the Swedish people have grown slack and indolent and lost their will-power."

I: "In almost every speech he has made Hitler has given it as his foremost objective to establish a stable and enduring peace, a reign of peace that would last for centuries. That objective we Swedes have already attained after almost 130 years of peace, so that in this respect we have exceeded Hitler's wildest dreams."

Himmler, somewhat disconcerted: "Yes, that is true, you are quite right. But a nation has to fight for its life and its existence." He thereupon counted up all the wars that Germany had had to fight during the 130 years that Sweden had been at peace.

I: "Germany's geographical position in the centre of Europe and surrounded on all sides by other rival Great Powers means that her political situation too is extremely sensitive. But Sweden lies on the periphery and outside the conflagration area. That is why we have been able to maintain peace ever since 1814. But during our period of greatness in the 17th century and beginning of the 18th century our people under the leadership of their great kings made immortal contributions to world history. So that in their time the people of Sweden have taken a front-line place among the

nations of Europe in the annals both of peace and war."

Himmler: "But how do things stand now?"

I: "I am absolutely convinced that the moment any enemy set foot on Swedish soil, whether he came from west, south or east, the whole Swedish nation—without exception—would rise and give battle. Thanks to the intensive rearmament that is now in full swing and is going to cost us milliards, we shall soon attain a strength that would make even the strongest Power think twice before risking an attack. Our people has a certain tendency towards internal disputes and party strife. The only thing that can unite us is some external danger that threatens all alike, our liberty and independence. That was shown again at the beginning of this year when the whole nation was fired with longing to help Finland in the Winter War. On 4th March this year I discussed this matter with the Führer. He assured me that *if* we intervened he would in all circumstances maintain strict neutrality. But he advised us most emphatically against going to war."

Himmler: "I know all about that in detail. The Führer himself told me about your visit and about the reply he had given you. It is obvious that he might have found himself in an awkward situation with his troops in Norway and his hands tied by the pact with Russia."

I: "It must be a great weight on your shoulders, *Herr Reichsführer,* to carry such a terrible load of responsibility both in Germany proper and in all the occupied countries?"

Himmler: "Yes, indeed. I assumed the post of Chief of the S.S. in 1929, which was four years before Hitler came to power. Since then my functions have widened step by step and in 1936 I took over control of the Gestapo."

I: "You must have gained a very thorough knowledge of human nature in these 12 years?"

Himmler: "Yes, I have become quite a philosopher. Actually I ought to hate mankind, but in reality nothing ever disturbs me."

I: "But you despise mankind?"

Himmler: "Those who bear the outward appearance of greatness are not worth much. Great people are few and far

between. But sometimes worthless adventurers and ragamuffins will show that they know how to die like heroes on the battle-field. So that one often misjudges. In the end one gives up judging. One tries to be just but one has to be strict if one is to build up a strong and powerful State. For my own part, as I said, I have become a philosopher."

Himmler was simple and unassuming in manner and showed not a trace of irritation when I contested his statements. He wore no outward badge of his high office, was polite and agreeable and very easy to talk to. One would never have dreamt that this modest and restrained man was the ruthless and cruel Chief of the Gestapo, the leader of the Secret State Police who signed death-warrants without a tremor of the hand and at whose orders whole villages were wiped out and every living thing within them exterminated. As he accompanied me out to the anteroom and ordered an adjutant to take me to the waiting car, I said:

"Now I have taken up too much of your very precious time."

He replied politely: "I could not have used my time better and I found our conversation most interesting."

The adjutant then accompanied me through the long, dimly-lighted corridors and down the steps. It was pitch-dark in the streets, but he piloted me with the faint blue light of his pocket-torch to the car and I drove back to the Kaiserhof.

The Archduchess Alice had been waiting in tense anxiety with Alma and Ann Marie, and when I entered our sitting-room, she rose in a flash and asked with a quiver of uneasiness:

"Well, he refused, I suppose?"

I: "Yes, the news I bring is not good."

She: "I realise that. But tell me everything, let me know what he said."

So I told her all that part of the conversation that had to do with the Archduke Karl Albrecht. Himmler, of course, was far better informed in the case than we were, and nothing of what I had to say had been new to him. She listened with strained attention to every word and could not bring

herself to regard the situation pessimistically, even though his answer had been so negative and discouraging. She thought that my visit would yet bear fruit sooner or later in some form or other, and asked if she might apply to me again when the war was over and the promised time of "changes" come. The Swedish Archduchess accepted her fate with magnificent composure. She was grand and impressive, one was captivated by the beauty of her face, the paleness of which was emphasised still further by the black mourning clothes. No man would have failed to do all he could for such a woman.

My Last Conversation with Hitler

ON the morning of 5th December 1940 Dr. Meissner rang up and asked me to be at the Reich Chancellery, entrance Vosstrasse 4, at five minutes to one. There I was met by Legation Counsellor Hinrichs of the Foreign Office and immediately afterwards by Dr. Meissner, who led me through the Domed Hall and the Gallery to the reception room. There Meissner informed me that the Führer wished to see me. He added with heavy emphasis:

" Sie können für Schweden und Finland ganz ruhig sein, Herr Doktor."[1]

Reichsleiter Bormann S.S.F., or S.S. Fahnencorps, was waiting in the room, and Meissner dictated to him a statement for the Press about the Führer having received me that day.

While we were waiting Meissner explained to me that Hitler had had a strenuous time with conferences of various sorts the previous evening and had not gone to bed until 4 in the morning. On the morning of that same day, the 5th, he had had a long conference with some of his Generals. These had just left, at 1 o'clock. Meissner was preparing me for the fact that Hitler would probably be somewhat tired.

At that moment the door opened and an adjutant asked us to come in. Meissner and Legation Counsellor Hinrichs were present all the time. The moment I entered, Hitler came swiftly towards me, evidently to pilot me between the armchairs, table and sofa, since he knew that my sight was bad and I was dazzled by the large window beside me. He took me by the arm and literally pressed me down into my customary corner of the sofa and himself sat down in the armchair close by. He was in a good humour and gave me a very friendly welcome, which I took for a good sign. At first he spoke in a low, suppressed voice, and rubbed his eyes from

[1] " You can be quite at rest about Sweden and Finland, Herr Doktor."

time to time as though he had not had enough sleep. But as the conversation went on he livened up more and more and soon was speaking with all his usual vigour and facility. I sensed from the start that he had no unpleasant surprises in store for me. I could not detect a trace of nervousness or impatience or anything to indicate that he wanted to be rid of me as soon as possible. According to Meissner he had said immediately on his return that he wanted to meet me as soon as possible. I consequently flattered myself that this time he had some pleasant news for me tucked away in his breast-pocket. He began, however, with a non-committal question:

" You have just been on another lecture-tour, are you satisfied with the results?", whereupon I mentioned the towns I had lectured in and spoke of the great interest and warm hospitality I had met with everywhere. But all the time I had the object of my visit firmly in mind, and in particular the three cardinal questions I had asked at the end of the letter to Ribbentrop I have spoken of so often—So I suddenly changed the subject and said:

" *Herr Reichskanzler,* on 16th October last year and on 4th March this year I had the honour of talking to you about the problem Sweden—Finland—Russia. Since then the political situation has radically changed. Peace has been concluded between Russia and Finland, Britain and France's plans for sending troops through Sweden under the pretext of helping Finland in her war against Russia and so creating a northern front against Germany, have come to nothing. Moreover relations between Germany and Finland have grown firmer and more friendly. This has been demonstrated recently, among other things, by the holding of the Germany-Sweden-Finland sports in Helsinki—by the many Finnish commissions which have been received with great openness and goodwill in Germany, and by the German troop transports through Uleåborg, Rovaniemi and Kirkenes. Have not all these changes resulted in certain changes in your own attitude to the Scandinavian problem?"

Hitler: " Yes, that is obvious! The changes that have taken place in Scandinavia have given me great pleasure. You mention Britain and France's plans, which were perfectly

plain to me. What a show Britain put up in Norway! There too their plans were crushed. I saw through them at once. The attempt was too clumsy. It could not and did not succeed. With regard to Finland, you and your country need have no further anxiety. The danger that really threatened Sweden then has quite passed over. I would not tell this to anyone else—but I can tell *you* in the strictest confidence—that Molotov came to Berlin with very far-reaching demands on Finnish territory, and that it was Russia's intention to occupy the whole of Finland, but I gave Mr. Molotov to understand very clearly from the start that further Russian occupation of Finnish territory was not in accordance with Germany's wishes. Never forget, *Herr Doktor,* that this information is intended for you alone and must in no circumstances go any further!"

I: "I understand and promise and I thank you most sincerely, *Herr Reichskanzler.* Would you permit me just to tell the King about it?"

Hitler: "Yes, certainly, but *only* the King! Finland has much to thank me for. Where would Finland be now if I had given in to Russia's wishes and demands? The world has abused Germany and me for giving the Russians such a free hand during the Winter War, but the world does not know that we set a limit after all to the Russian penetration. It is not in Germany's interests that the Russians should go too far in the Baltic and become too powerful there. In the present situation Finland has nothing to fear from the east and Sweden can be at rest."

I: "But if Russia in spite of everything should repeat her attack on Finland . . ."

Hitler, animated, positive and decided, interrupted me: "Russia *will* not attack Finland!"

I: "Quite so! and I do not think so either. But, if I were just to formulate the idea as a mental experiment, *if* Russia were to attack Finland and Sweden intervened officially on Finland's side, would you then, *Herr Reichskanzler,* regard such action on Sweden's part with sympathy or with antipathy and what attitude would you then adopt?"

Hitler: "I repeat once more, Sven Hedin, Russia will definitely *not* attack Finland."

I: "But it is conceivable in certain circumstances that a situation might arise in which Russia . . . "

Hitler, interrupting energetically: "No and again no! A situation of that sort simply *cannot* arise. I have given Mr. Molotov to understand with absolute clarity that we will not permit any further steps in the Baltic, and you can rest assured that he has understood me and that he will have to accept my pronouncements. From Russia you have nothing, absolutely nothing, to fear. I was a soldier in the First World War and I learnt all sorts of things then. Among others that a war on two fronts is inevitably fatal for Germany. If Germany had been fighting on only *one* front in 1914-18, we should have won that time too. I should not in any circumstances wish for a repetition of what happened then. That is why I made the pact with Russia. It has proved in the result that I was right. For the rest, I will gladly admit that Germany would have won the first war too if the internal German leadership had not been so wretched. But we, who are a great and determined people, have already won the greatest and fairest victories in the world's history and for that we have to thank our soldiers, our youth, our fresh, healthy and enthusiastic youth, who are ready one and all to give their lives for their country. If one wants to achieve anything in this world then one has to be prepared to sacrifice something too. A war that embraces the whole of Europe is a bloody business. War is serious. I hate the thought and necessity of sacrificing German blood, but you can compare our present losses in human lives with those we suffered in the First World War! Our casualty lists are amazingly small. The English gentlemen make merry at the expense of our Army, which they say does nothing at all. Very well, but for all that we have occupied the west coast of Europe from the North Cape to Biarritz! Is that not enough? Mr. Churchill says he is going to land British troops. Where? Only if I were to relinquish the coast of Holland and its hinterland to him would he perhaps be able to land. But what do the British mean? I have after all 238 divisions in the field, full of the martial spirit, with the best equipment, fresh and unspoiled, the largest and strongest army known to world history! Our Generals and Field-Marshals are all young,

enthusiastic, determined and thoroughly trained. The whole officers' corps is first-class. Our equipment is the finest in the world, and what are the English gentlemen going to do against that?"

He then said something about the war in Greece the details of which I forgot and consequently never included in my notes. But he added in this connection:

"The British imagine that they have half won the war in the Mediterranean already because they have captured a few miserable ports (in Crete?). For the present I will let them go on thinking so—but later on!—when I consider the time is ripe and when it suits me, I will teach them otherwise! England believes that she can treat Europe like another Balkans, but she is wrong. For the past 300 years they have built up with skill and energy an empire which deserves the admiration of the world. They might have been content with that and I should never have disturbed them or troubled them in their possessions. I think it most regrettable that the two greatest Germanic peoples in the world should use their strength to destroy one another. The world would have been big enough for us both, and it has always been my object to maintain peace and friendship with the British. But they did not wish it. They have treated Germany and Europe as though they were Balkan countries. Now they must reap what they have sown."

He then went on to compare the resources of the Western Powers at the outbreak of war with his own forces, and reckoned up how many divisions France, Belgium, Holland and England had and how many Germany had, and showed that the German preponderance was considerable.

I: "I should like to ask you, *Herr Reichskanzler,* whether in the event of war in Scandinavia Sweden can count upon your sending us the goods that would be essential to our conduct of the war."

Hitler, smiling: "That question is altogether superfluous since, as I told you before, Sweden will not have the least reason to fear the war you speak of. So that as there can be no question of any war, there is no need for your question either."

I: "Looking back over Sweden's military-political commitments throughout our history one cannot help thinking of an alliance or a union between Sweden and Finland, a Scandinavian group with a common foreign policy and also many other interests in common. Would not that provide a guarantee against any possible aspirations from the east, and could we not serve in that way as a guard-post in that direction?"

Hitler: "The peace treaty concluded last March, however, contains provisions which prevent any such alliance."

I: "But could not some other form of understanding or secret agreement on questions of foreign policy be concluded . . ."

Hitler, interrupting me: "Secret agreements and treaties are out of the question nowadays. Even the most secret agreements always leak out and soon become common property. Do not imagine that any such agreement could be kept secret. No, in the present situation I would advise against it. Any step in that direction would only make Russia nervous and Moscow would regard it as a provocation, a quite deliberate provocation. Finland would gain nothing by it. I advise Finland to carry out the Moscow Peace down to the smallest detail and to do nothing that might give rise to fresh misunderstandings and unpleasantness. I consider that Finland should take warning by the foolishness of the small Baltic States in irritating Russia with secret agreements, which these States have paid for so dearly. The situation in Finland is tolerable now and must be treated wisely and cautiously."

I: "*Herr Reichskanzler,* do you not think that relations between Germany and Sweden are good now and that as time goes on they tend to become better and gain in confidence? Thus, for example, the tone of the Press has become more moderate and restrained even though there are exceptions among our newspapers."

Hitler: "Yes, it would be very gratifying if the tone of the Swedish Press could improve all along the line."

I: "What part, *Herr Reichskanzler,* do you consider that Sweden and Finland would play in the restoration and reordering of Europe? The Swedes are a strange people. Our

country is the oldest kingdom in Europe, the only one that has never been conquered by a foreign army. The Swedes are the purest Germans in the world. No other country in Europe has lost two kings on the battle-field in recent times in the space of barely a century. Our collections of trophies are larger than those of Germany, Austria, France, England, Italy and Spain put together . . . "

Hitler gave a start and exclaimed: " What! Is that possible?"

I: " You need only count the banners captured in war in our Armoury and other collections, they run to nearly four thousand."

Hitler: " Wonderful, magnificent!"

I: " Yes, our history is brilliant, saga-like. For that reason also our desire for freedom is limitless. The Swedish people's demand for freedom has two-thousand-year-old roots running through all their past. Our people could never live without absolutely untrammelled freedom. A people such as the Swedish ought to be able to play a part in your system of reconstruction and reorganisation for Europe that would be a boon and a blessing to other nations."

Hitler: " Yes, indeed. And that is just what I want. But it is quite impossible yet to give any hard and fast definition of the part your country must play. All that will have to work itself out after the war."

I: " Many people in Sweden fear that Germany will exercise pressure and coercion on our country, restrict its freedom and interfere with the individual life of the nation."

Hitler struck the flat of his hand down forcefully against his knee, stretched up and shouted so that it echoed through the room:

" *Ich denke nicht daran*! I have no such thoughts! The Swedish people shall always retain their freedom unimpaired and their national individuality untouched."

I: " Yes, I have always been convinced of it, and on occasions when this question comes up for discussion at home I always say that I do not for a moment believe there would be any coercion from your side and that Germany will always respect our ancient freedom, our national character and individuality."

Hitler, eager, smiling, and stretching out both arms towards me: "Yes, Sven Hedin, we shall not interfere in the smallest degree with the freedom and individuality of the Swedes. You shall preserve and retain your old ways and customs free and untouched. My only desire and hope is that Germans and Swedes should live together side by side in trust and friendship."

I: "Yes, *Herr Reichskanzler,* that is our hope too. The Swedes with their great past are a proud, patriotic and self-reliant people. Our workers maintain that they are democrats, but in actual fact and without suspecting it themselves they are all of them aristocrats. I am sure that the future will be bright and happy for both our nations."

After a few general remarks about the war and the danger to Sweden if England were to succeed in conquering Germany, Hitler rose and the conversation was over. I said that I felt guilty to have disturbed him in his important and responsible work for the third time since the war began, but he answered kindly: "With me you are always welcome."

Meissner accompanied me to the door that led out to the Great Gallery. There Meissner gave the Hitler salute, I bowed, and we passed out into the Gallery—Meissner asked me if I was satisfied and said that this conversation had been most important and interesting. I asked if he would draw up a report on what he considered had been the most outstanding features of it, and this he promised to do. Legation Counsellor Hinrichs drove me to the Foreign Press Club, Fasanenstrasse 83, where Herr and Frau Twardowski were giving a lunch for the Swedish Minister and the Legation Counsellor von Post, and several other ladies and gentlemen. A distinguished lady who did a great deal of charitable work for the party asked me if I would send a Christmas greeting over the wireless to the soldiers at the front, but on the advice of the Swedish Minister I refused her request.

On our return to the Kaiserhof we found Meissner's promised report on my table. There was also a private letter of caution to myself. What the Führer had confided to me must in no circumstances be allowed to become public knowledge, no one but the King was to be told. I informed Meissner later that the Swedish Minister, Richert, had also read his

report, and he took the news calmly and smilingly.

On a separate sheet of paper, bearing the stamp "*Presidialkanzlei des Führers und Reichskanzlers*" Dr. Meissner had drawn up the following account of what were, in his opinion, the most essential points of the conversation. I quote his account word for word, not least because it includes various details which I myself forgot when I wrote down my version of what had been said:

"Report on Dr. Sven Hedin's audience of the Führer on 5th December 1940.

"The Führer received Sven Hedin at 1 o'clock. The conversation, which lasted three quarters of an hour, dealt in the main with the following points:

"(1) Sven Hedin asked the Führer whether Finland and also Sweden had to fear a further attack by Russia or whether there were no grounds for such anxiety.

"S. H. recalled that at the time of his previous visit to the Führer the war between Finland and Russia had still been raging and that, in reply to his question whether Germany would not intervene, the Führer had stated that he intended to preserve strict neutrality. Since then peace had been concluded, but even so anxiety in Finland as also in Sweden about the possibility of a renewed attack on Finland by Soviet Russia had not been dispelled. He asked the Führer what he would do in such an eventuality and whether he would still maintain strict neutrality.

"The Führer replied: During the past winter he had been in a different situation from now. At that time he still had the struggle against France ahead of him and could not divide his forces. He never liked to make protests or utter threats unless he was able to put them into immediate military effect. Now his position was different. That was why, in his negotiations with Molotov, he had expressly emphasised that a renewal of the war against the Scandinavian countries would be intolerable to Germany. Molotov had taken this warning to heart, and both Finland and Sweden could rest assured that there would be no resumption of hostilities on the part of Soviet Russia.

"S. H. asked the Führer what Germany's attitude would be if Russia invaded Finland in spite of that, and Sweden lent

military aid to invaded Finland.

"The Führer replied that, after his clear and definite warnings to Molotov, it could be taken for granted that Russia would not attack Finland again. Such a development was completely out of the question.

"(2) S. H. then asked the Führer what attitude he would adopt on the question of a more intimate relation between Finland and Sweden, in particular the common conduct of the foreign policy of the two countries.

"The Führer replied that he did not now, during the war, recommend the conclusion of treaties involving more intimate relations between Finland and Sweden. It would merely be offering the Russians, who undoubtedly had certain offensive intentions against Finland, an excuse for further aggression. He advised Finland to conduct herself correctly within the framework of her treaty with Russia and not to give Russia any pretext for the unilateral renunciation of this treaty. It would be easier for him, the Führer, to deal with Russian aggressive intentions against Finland if Finland behaved correctly than if Russia had any excuse for offensive action.

"S. H. then asked the Führer whether he intended that Sweden should have a part to play in the new European order and would take that into account. Sweden with her sound Scandinavian stock, her national pride and her labour strength would be able to do good service, he thought, in the reorganisation of Europe.

"The Führer replied that after the war he proposed to invite the Low German and Scandinavian peoples to co-operate with Germany. The common enemy and opponent of all European nations was England, which he hoped to defeat before long.

Meissner."

The most striking difference between my notes and Meissner's consists in the fact that the former are five times longer than the latter. This is quite natural, since I wrote down everything I could remember of the conversation whereas Meissner only included what, in his opinion, had been the essentials. Although Meissner accordingly summarised his observations under two main headings, his report must be

considered to be of value as confirming the accuracy of my own notes. Meissner includes a few points which I had omitted, e.g. Hitler's remark that his circumstances had been different at the beginning of the year (1940) as he then had the war with France ahead of him.

Of particular interest in Hitler's statement was his assurance —and this in a most positive and definite form—that Finland had no occasion to fear a renewed attack, and that Sweden need feel no uneasiness for Finland's fate. It was strange that the Reichskanzler should have shown no hesitation in telling me, a private individual and a foreigner, about the extremely secret negotiations with Molotov. He said that it was him, Hitler, Finland had to thank for the fact that the Russian advance had not gone too far, and one wonders whether he meant to imply by this that he had already set a limit for it in March.

When I insisted so strongly in the conversation on the possibility of Finland's being exposed to a fresh attack, going back three times to the subject with Hitler denying it more vehemently each time and characterising the idea as impossible and unthinkable, Meissner, so he told me afterwards, got a shock—" No one has ever gone so far before in contradicting and arguing with the Führer and I was surprised that your obstinacy only amused him instead of, as I had feared, irritating him to the point of frenzy."

What was said, in Schlieffen's spirit, about the danger to Germany of a war on two fronts was correct, but that made it all the more surprising that only six months later Hitler should have broken the Russo-German Pact and launched a war on Russia which was the downfall of both himself and Germany. When on 5th December 1940 we had discussed the danger to Finland, Hitler undoubtedly had his plan of attack on Russia ready. Of course he thought that Germany would defeat Russia, and possibly that is why he was so calm about Finland and maintained that Russia definitely would not attack her. His disapproval of all, open or disguised, treaties between the Scandinavian countries was probably merely intended to convince me still further that the pact between Germany and Russia was as strong as ever and that Russian suspicions must not be aroused by concluding agreements

which might have been made with Germany's approval.

To me it was particularly gratifying to find Hitler more friendlily disposed towards Sweden than formerly. It was said by German spokesmen that Ribbentrop did not entertain particularly favourable sentiments toward Sweden, and that he tried to influence the Reich Chancellor in this direction. If that was so, then Hitler's references to Sweden on 5th December 1940 at any rate did not indicate that the Foreign Minister had met with any success in his attempts to turn Hitler against us. I do not think in general that Ribbentrop had any very great influence with Hitler. The theory that it was Ribbentrop who persuaded Hitler that Britain and France would not come to the aid of Poland if Germany attacked her is certainly quite unfounded. Hitler was absolutely impervious to advice or warnings. He took all decisions himself and asked no one's advice. In that respect too he was absolute, the complete, all-powerful despot who never hesitated to strike. That was the cause of his own and Germany's downfall. If he did not listen to the advice and warnings of experts, he ought at least to have learnt the lessons of history. If he had made himself familiar with Charles XII's and Napoleon's experiences of winter campaigns in Russia, or if he had borne in mind the fact that Hindenburg and Ludendorff in the winter of 1914-15 took warning by their predecessors, he would have thought twice before starting a war against Russia and a march on Moscow so late in the year as at the end of June. And if he did have to commit that terrible and fateful error, then he ought at least to have seen that the whole army was provided with winter equipment. Cold, snow and distance have always been Russia's best defence, a natural force against which the finest armies of history—the Swedish, the French and the German —have destroyed themselves. The Russian campaign with Stalingrad as its climax broke the strength of the German Army, and caused it a setback from which it never recovered before all was lost.

What Molotov thought when he returned to Moscow in November 1940 with all his proposals rebuffed is not hard to understand. Stalin and his immediate circle must beyond question have regarded this reply of Hitler's as a challenge

which made war against Germany inevitable. The consequence was redoubled energy in rearmament. With iron will and determination and with superb diplomatic skill Russia prepared for the war which, with America's aid, was to decide the outcome of the Second World War. In actual fact the rapid victories over Poland and France were a misfortune for Hitler. He thought it would be just as simple a matter to defeat Russia, even though in view of the greater distances it would take rather longer. But then came the cold, sharper and earlier than usual, and his fate was sealed. Now, in the spring of 1949, no one underestimates Russia's strength. Never has the balance of power in the world been so radically reversed as during and after this war.

* * *

It is noticeable in Meissner's version that in general he goes out of his way to tone down and modify Hitler's forceful language and exaggerations. He recalls that when, on 4th March, I had tried to persuade Hitler to intervene in Moscow on Finland's behalf, Hitler had replied that he intended to go on preserving strict neutrality. Now, on the other hand, he had made it clear to Molotov that any further penetration in Finland would be intolerable to Germany and he was convinced that Molotov would respect this wish.

Meissner gives an interpretation of one of Hitler's statements which, if one wished to be critical, might seem to involve a contradiction. First he says: "Both Finland and Sweden could rest assured that there would be no resumption of hostilities on the part of Soviet Russia."—"Such a development was completely out of the question."[1] But later, after sounding a warning against concluding treaties of any sort, he says, according to Meissner: "It would merely be offering the Russians, who undoubtedly had certain offensive intentions against Finland, an excuse for further aggression."[2] These two statements cancel each other out, for if Meissner understood them correctly Russia was still supposed to entertain

[1] *"Finnland wie Schweden können sicher sein dass keine Wiederaufnahme der Feindseligkeiten von Sowjet-Russland erfolgen werden." "Ein solcher Fall wäre völlig ausgeschlossen."*

[2] *"Das würde den Russen, die zweifellos gewisse Offensivabsichten gegen Finnland hätten, nur den Vorwand zu einem erneuten Vorgehen bieten."*

" certain offensive intentions against Finland." As I understood the Führer he categorically denied the idea of any such intentions.

The conversation given above was the last I ever had with the German Reich Chancellor. I never saw him again, and had no occasion to seek any further interviews with him. My two succeeding visits to Germany had no political import but were made at the invitation of academic and geographical institutions. The position of Sweden had by then been so far stabilised that we no longer needed to fear outside attack. Germany, which might, in view of the occupation of Norway, in certain circumstances have threatened our neutrality, was thereafter engaged to the limit of her resources in the war against Russia, in Africa and on other fronts by land and sea and in the air.

The link between the Führer and me was not broken, however. Two years after my last visit to him I received a letter from him explaining the reasons that had induced him to go to war with Poland and to attack Russia. But I shall return to this letter in a later chapter of the present book. The very last I heard from him was the telegram of congratulation he sent me on my 80th birthday, two months before the hour struck when he was to vanish for ever from the pages of history.

Ribbentrop on Germany's Plans and the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm

I HAD had word from the German Foreign Office that the Reich Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop, would be pleased to see me in a few days' time, and that I should be notified before long of the day and hour.

After the flight of the King of Norway and the Nygaardsvold Government to London, following the occupation of Norway on 9th April 1940, the Norwegian Legation had nevertheless remained in Stockholm and continued to function. The Norwegian Minister in Stockholm, Wollebaek, had died, and Herr Bull was acting as head of the Legation and Chargé d'Affaires. The German view was that the Norwegian Legation had no *raison d'être* since Norway had come under German jurisdiction and Norwegian affairs were being managed from Berlin. The German Government declared that the Norwegian Legation was intriguing against Germany and, among other things, getting in touch with Allied ships that came to Sweden. It was consequently feared in Stockholm that the German Government would demand the closing of the Norwegian Legation, and it was felt that it would not be very dignified for the Swedish Government to knuckle under and submit to the dictates of a foreign Power. We should therefore have to refuse the German demand, and this in turn would mean impairing relations between Sweden and Germany.

My task in my conversation with Ribbentrop was therefore to do what I could to bring about a solution of the Norwegian Legation question that would be satisfactory to Sweden and Norway. I realised only too well that I should have to use all the diplomatic tact and caution at my disposal in discussing Norway with Ribbentrop and in no circumstances give the Minister the impression that I was acting as an official spokes-

man. I must not urge the matter or try to drive it to a head, or I might easily have roused the sleeping bear and made him unmanageable and obstreperous. I should have to touch on the question, as it were, incidentally and on my own initiative. Certainly nothing, in the circumstances then prevailing, could have been more calculated to poison relations between our two countries than for the Swedish Government to be compelled, against its will and in consequence of German pressure, perhaps even under threat of reprisals, to wind up the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm.

I had been provided in good time by the Swedish Legation in Berlin with all the information I required, and felt well armed for the approaching battle. If only heaven would be as gracious to me as in my recent conversation with the Reich Chancellor! I held the trump card of having only just seen Hitler, and Ribbentrop in his capacity of Foreign Minister would have heard about the questions that were discussed on that occasion and the great friendliness and trust the Chancellor had shown me in confiding to me how he had averted Russian designs on Finland. Perhaps Ribbentrop, just for that reason, would treat me with equal generosity.

On the Saturday I was informed by the Foreign Office that Ribbentrop would receive me at 11 o'clock on the Sunday morning. A little while later the time was changed to 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when I was to present myself at the Minister's private address, Wilhelmstrasse 73, which had been restored and refurnished since the days when it served as the residence of Reich President Hindenburg. A Legation Counsellor met me in the vestibule and led me through a long, narrow corridor to the smallish-sized room to which Ribbentrop used to retire when he wanted to be at peace and where no one was allowed to disturb him.

Before the open fireplace with a pleasantly crackling fire stood two armchairs, in which we sat down while a footman served tea with sandwiches and biscuits on a little round table between us. After welcoming me courteously and regretting that owing to constant travels and urgent work he had not been able to receive me until now, Ribbentrop started off on a positive lecture on the general world situation.

"Germany's strength is immense. No power combin-

ations on earth can present any problem to the German Reich."

He compared the existing situation with that which had prevailed during the First World War. Then Germany had been surrounded by enemies on every side. Now Great Britain was isolated and had not a single ally. New States had joined the Axis and several more would soon be incorporated with it. Russia was now Germany's ally.

"We hate Asiatics and they hate us, but Stalin is a clear-sighted, realistic politician who will take care not to break with Germany and carefully avoid any steps that might lead to misunderstanding. I myself have spoken to Stalin several times on two visits to Russia, and learnt to respect his wisdom and clear-headedness. He is carrying out all his commitments. Just at present we are receiving 2½ million tons of grain instead of the million we were promised. And we get a great many materials that are very important to us."

I: "How is the transport position? The lines of communication are presumably not always in good condition?"

Ribbentrop: "Roads and railways are being gradually improved and raw materials are imported by various routes. The whole supply system is improving. If England thinks she can starve us out, she deceives herself. We can go on indefinitely without noticing anything. Goering's Four Year Plan has worked magnificently."

I: "What do you think, *Herr Reichsminister,* of America's part in this war?"

Ribbentrop: "My former friend, Lord Lothian, has made a first-class blunder. Up to quite recently he was proclaiming in Washington in season and out of season that the German air raids on England did no damage at all, and that England could never be forced to her knees by such methods as that. On his last return to America Lord Lothian struck an altogether different and quite contrary note, declaring that England was in the utmost extremities and that the U.S.A. must at all costs help. I, for my part, am convinced that these tactics are wrong, and that they will have quite a different effect in the United States from what they were intended to. The Americans, of whom 80 per cent. do not want war, will say: "Well, if England is as close to the brink of disaster

as that, we had better be careful not to get ourselves involved. Better keep outside, and then we can watch over our interests when the crash comes!" The United States will seize all British possessions in the western hemisphere, including Canada. The United States know that *if* they were to take part in the war they would have to deal with other enemies besides Germany, including Italy, Japan and several of the South American Republics.

"America will not come into the war. Her Navy will be concentrated in the Pacific. The United States have every reason to respect the Japanese Navy. The Japanese have secretly built a number of 50,000 ton battleships. The morale and efficiency of the Japanese Navy are such that the American Navy would never stand a chance if it came to a clash. The Americans know that and are on their guard. But even if the Americans *did* send ships and men to Britain's aid, what use would it be? They would go straight to their death against the new German U-boat torpedoes. It would be a hopeless proposition."

I: "The further the war develops its world-embracing drama, the clearer it should become to leading British statesmen that a peaceful agreement would have been a far happier solution not merely for England but for the whole world."

Ribbentrop: "It is all due to the amazing and incredible short-sightedness of the British. Of course the British were afraid of our young, healthy, rising power, of our unity and co-ordination, of our Führer and his genius in every sphere, and of the prospect that we should oust Britain from her influence and power on the European continent. England has always regarded it as an absolute necessity that she should retain her traditional and self-assumed right of playing off the great European Powers against one another in order that she should keep the decision in her own hands. England cannot bear the thought of Germany winning a dominating position on the European continent. A change of that description would render the position of the British Empire illusory and its continued existence problematic. No, nothing but obstinacy and short-sightedness could have blinded the leading British statesmen into committing such a terrible and fatal mistake. Perhaps I am revealing something that

ought to be kept secret when I tell you, *Herr Doktor,* that from our point of view the war has not yet seriously begun. You remember that a few weeks ago, when we launched the raid on Coventry with a great many squadrons . . . "

I: "Was it not 500 machines?"

Ribbentrop: "No, it was a thousand—our intention was to continue these raids on an increasing scale—with 5,000 machines and more step by step, but the weather turned unfavourable and the large-scale air raids had to be postponed for the time being. But as soon as the weather is favourable again, this tremendous work of destruction will continue. Has not the Führer tried time after time in his speeches to convince England of his will to mutual agreement and co-operation! It is madness that our two great nations should destroy one another, or rather that the British should force the Führer to destroy them. The Führer's dream has always been peaceful co-operation, he has loathed the thought of a major war against England, his peace proposals have been received with scorn and suspicion, and every time he has stretched out his hand in conciliation and peace he has been told that his gestures were bluff and his peace speeches signs of weakness. There can be no greater tragedy in the history of the world than that which forced the Führer against his will and conscience to go to war with England, a war which he detested and which he knew would lead to the downfall of the British Empire. It is an unspeakable tragedy. But they *wanted* it so—and they have got it. Their short-sightedness is phenomenal, inconceivable. In 1936 the Führer was on the point of appointing me Secretary of State in the Foreign Office. With my knoweldge of England and many of her leading men I said to myself that I could be more use to Germany as Ambassador in London, and I laid a proposal along these lines before the Führer at Bayreuth. He thought for a moment, then he said: *'Nun gut, fahren Sie nach London!'*[1] My predecessor in London had just died. I toiled hard to improve relations between England and Germany. King Edward VIII had mounted the throne. With him and Baldwin I thought I might do something. I wanted to bring Baldwin and Hitler together in a personal meeting. I thought

[1] "Very well, you go to London!"

that if they had a chance to speak openly to one another all misunderstandings would be swept away and a lasting, enduring peace established. But how was I received! Baldwin did not understand me. He thought that Hitler's desire to meet him was simply a sign of weakness and my plan came to nothing. Sir Nevile Henderson was not very gifted. His Government did not want reconciliation, it wanted war so as, with the aid of France, Russia and America to be able to crush Germany, and he like all his superiors in office was convinced that the outcome of a second war would be the same as of the 1914-18 one. He could not understand that British rule over the seas had really received its death-blow then."

I: "How is one to explain that British airmen have not been over Berlin for two whole weeks now? Is it due to the weather or are they beginning to realise that the damage they have done so far is negligible?"

Ribbentrop: "Reading the English newspapers you would get the impression that Berlin was practically nothing but a pile of rubble. The airmen who have been here have been young Canadians, who are paid a hundred pounds for every flight over Berlin. They fly here, drop their bombs generally at random before reaching the city, make a run over one of the Berlin suburbs, and return home to report. Their losses in the air and the damage to factories in England have already been immense. The British seem to be sparing their own material and men. But it is not going to help them much. They are waiting for American aid. But none of the factories in America are ready yet. It will be a long time before they are. The longer it takes, the more time America will have to realise that she needs her war material herself. England's hopes are vain. Her people will have to fight their death-struggle alone. Meantime our aircraft industry is working at full pressure. There again Goering has done great things. He has done a magnificent piece of work. British industry will be smashed to pieces. The destruction in store for Britain is unimaginable. It will take a century to build Britain up again. And the Führer says it will be *our* task to rebuild Britain.

"The shipping sunk in the past few weeks has been the work of 10 or 12 U-boats. But what do you suppose it will look like in the fairways round Britain when our new U-boats are ready! We are building almost one new one a day. And it is to go on at this pressure all the winter and spring, month after month."

I: "How long will it be before Germany wins the war?"

Ribbentrop: "The war may be over in a night, it may last six months, perhaps a year, perhaps more. How long it lasts is a matter of complete indifference to us, we are prepared and organised for it to take years. The question is how long the British people will put up with these horrors. Once the people wake up to the fact that it is the policy of Churchill and his confederates that has brought them to this pass, they will want to see Churchill and the rest hanged."

I: "One often reads disparaging comments in the Allied Press about the Italian soldiers, yet one would have expected great things of them under Mussolini's strong hand."

Ribbentrop: "The Italian reverses against the Greeks were an episode that had not the slightest bearing on the war itself. They were incautious, and ventured out in very unfavourable terrain in too slight strength. That is not to say that the Italian soldiers were poor. Only that there were not enough of them. It is in Egypt and Gibraltar that trouble is brewing for Britain. When the British Empire falls apart, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand will become independent. Remnants of the Empire will live on, but what will they amount to once the mother-country is gone! It is England, and more particularly London, that has been the heart of this great, magnificent Empire, that has been built up with such skill and determination over three hundred years. But what right had they to grudge us, a nation of 80 million, living-space too?"

I: "*Herr Reichsminister,* I am afraid it was an impertinence on my part to send you that long letter last August about Finland's and Sweden's relations with Russia?"

Ribbentrop: "No, on the contrary, I was grateful for it. I read it with great interest and was glad to gain an insight into the Scandinavian problem that I had not had before."

I: "What do you think, *Herr Reichsminister,* about the questions I asked at the end of the letter, I mean the danger that undoubtedly threatened Finland last August? Do you consider that that danger is now past?"

Ribbentrop: "Yes, I think it is. I do not believe that Russia has any further intentions against Finland. A renewed Russian attack is improbable."

I: "What would you think of an alliance between Sweden and Finland? Would it not strengthen the position of both Finland and Sweden?"

Ribbentrop: "For the present I would not advise any such alliance, on the grounds that it would cause bad blood and suspicion in Russia. The Finns must watch their step."

I: "The Führer, as I discovered on Thursday the 5th, is of the same opinion."

Ribbentrop: "The Führer told me the day before yesterday about your visit and your conversation. He found it particularly interesting."

I: "On 19th December the presidential elections will be held for Kallio's successor. In which direction do your sympathies lie in these elections?"

Ribbentrop: "I do not know the candidates. It is really a matter of relative indifference to us who is elected, provided it is not someone whom the Russians might regard as a provocation."

I then told him about the feeling in Finland and Sweden for and against Svinhufvud, whom everyone regarded as a fine and upright character, a genuine patriot and a convinced pro-German, which presumably would not be a recommendation in Russian eyes. I also told him about Mannerheim, who had been numbered among my friends for many years and of whose highly meritorious travels through the whole of inner Asia in 1906-08 I had first been told by Tsar Nicholas II when I visited him at Tsarskoe Selo in January 1909. Mannerheim had been a Russian Brigadier-General during the First World War and was thoroughly at home in Russian affairs. But he too had no prospect of gaining a majority at the forthcoming elections.

"Permit me, *Herr Reichsminister,* to question you once more with regard to what you believe will be the part allotted

to my own country in the proposed reorganisation of Europe. For my own part I do not believe for a moment that Germany will exercise any pressure after the war, or interfere in any way with our ancient freedom and national individuality."

Ribbentrop: "Of course not! Such a policy would be completely at variance with the Führer's intentions and ideals. Centuries of peace is the Führer's dream, and no one regrets more than he does that he should have been forced against his will into this, the greatest and most fateful war in the history of the world. But now he will fight it to the end!

"He had intended to invade Britain in September 1940 but refrained because he found that the operation would have cost too much healthy young German blood. Now that the intensified aerial and U-boat warfare has begun it is possible, indeed probable, that invasion will follow—and that it will go quickly! The Führer insists on 100 per cent. certainty of success. He leaves nothing to chance. Last time we lost two million men. This time, 40,000—a ridiculously low figure in *such* a war and after *such* victories!"

Ribbentrop then talked a little about the Swedish Press and its habitual anti-German tone, which was responsible for the fact that the whole Swedish people was ill-informed about the actual world situation. I assured him that the Swedish people, not least the farming and working population, was accustomed to think for itself, and not to take its opinions on vital questions from more or less tendentious local newspapers. He hoped that this state of affairs would continue.

Then I remarked:

"It is said in Swedish quarters that the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm is not looked upon favourably by the German Government."

Ribbentrop: "I cannot recall who is at the head of the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm now?"

I: "Minister Wollebaek died not long ago and the Legation is now in charge of Legation Counsellor Bull."

Ribbentrop: "Bull—I do not know him and have never heard the name before. But of course this Legation is quite unjustified, as the Government it represents has fled to England and no longer exists as a Norwegian Government. Terboven came to see me a few days ago and laid before me

a number of concrete, documented examples of intrigues and actions displeasing to us. The present Norwegian Legation in Stockholm represents elements hostile to Germany and we consequently wish it liquidated."

I: "If we were to close the Norwegian Legation under German pressure it would cause bad feeling in Sweden, and place the Swedish Government on a very difficult footing with Britain and America and, above all, Norway. Britain and America might regard the occasion as calling for reprisals against Sweden in the form of seizure of Swedish ships in British ports and Swedish property in the U.S.A. I beg you therefore, *Herr Reichsminister,* to let this matter rest until the end of the war."

Ribbentrop: "Yes, but I have already instructed Wied to make representations to His Excellency Günther. I want the Norwegian Legation to be slowly and gradually wound up. I have heard that it has a large staff and that this staff is intriguing against us and causing us difficulties in Norway."

I: "All that can be arranged by negotiation. From the Swedish point of view it would be highly desirable for the Legation to remain until the end of the war."

Ribbentrop: "At the end of the war these things will in any case automatically be radically changed; no, from the German point of view the only correct course is liquidation."

I: "When you talk of a slow and gradual close-down, how long a period have you in mind?"

Ribbentrop: "Say one to two months. One could start from the lower grades working upwards and let Bull stay on rather longer. Then, of course, Bull could remain in Stockholm, and the actual change I desire would hardly be noticed externally."

I: "Grant me the pleasure, *Herr Reichsminister,* of undertaking that you will not stand in the way of the Legation's remaining in Stockholm for the present. To your great Reich this is a very insignificant matter, but to Sweden it means a great deal. I beg you to find some solution that would not be calculated to disturb the good relations between our two countries."

Ribbentrop: "I will certainly think it over, but you must also understand my attitude on the question."

I: "Should you be surprised or exasperated with me if I were to come and see you again with further requests?"

Ribbentrop: "No, not at all! I shall always be pleased to meet you and talk to you."

I: "Thank you for your kindness."

Ribbentrop: "You have nothing to thank me for, it is I who should thank you for such a profitable visit."

With that the conversation was over, and Ribbentrop showed me all over his new home as far as it was yet completed and furnished. It was not until we reached the outer vestibule that he said goodbye, when he wished me a pleasant journey home and a happy Christmas. I replied:

"Give me a valuable Christmas present!"

Ribbentrop: "What then?"

I: "The Norwegian Legation . . ."

Ribbentrop laughed and shook his head thoughtfully.

The conversation had lasted nearly two hours.

My chauffeur had tired of waiting and gone off, but Ribbentrop's car was ready and in that I drove back to the Kaiserhof.

I then spent half the night in our sitting-room writing out from memory the conversation I had had with the Foreign Minister.

The Norwegian Legation in Sweden was left where it was —not merely for the two months Ribbentrop had spoken of, but for almost 4½ years or until the end of the war. How far this had anything to do with my intervention I cannot say.

On the "morning" of 9th December, that is to say at 12 o'clock, I was still sleeping heavily when Alma roused me with a message that Dr. Schmidt-Ott and a gentleman from the Foreign Office were waiting for me in the sitting-room. I dressed with all speed, asked the two gentlemen to excuse me —I had been working most of the night, I assured them— and took the last-named with me into Alma's room, leaving Schmidt-Ott to be entertained by my sister. He had had to wait for me before in rather similar circumstances, the occasion being as follows:

I had just returned from my second expedition, 1899-1902, to Central Asia and Tibet. I had given a lecture about it the previous evening before the Geographical Society and had been

entertained to a banquet and subsequent festivities. So I slept on late the next morning and was heavy, half-awake and irritable when the servant woke me at about twelve to announce that there was a gentleman in the sitting-room. "He can wait", I said, supposing it to be some reporter, and fell asleep again. Half an hour later the servant came back to say that the gentleman was still waiting. I rose unwillingly, slipped on my slippers and dressing-gown and went into the sitting-room. The stranger, a small, distinguished-looking man, rose with a laugh, bowed and said: "*Herr Doktor,* I apologise for disturbing your sleep. But I have been sent by His Majesty the Kaiser to confer upon you the Grand Star of the Order of the Crown."—Tableau!

And now, 38 years after this episode the same Schmidt-Ott, Minister of Culture in the former Imperial Government, now a distinguished-looking old gentleman with the title of Staatsminister, sat once more waiting until I should be pleased to rub the sleep out of my eyes, and needless to say we had a good laugh at this old memory from the days of Kaiser Wilhelm.

As I have said already, I attended first to the gentleman from the Foreign Office, who had asked for a strictly private interview. The name printed on his visiting-card was: "G. A. Baron Steengracht von Moyland, Dr. Legationsrat im Ausw. Amt"—a Foreign Office Counsellor.

Herr Steengracht introduced himself as a sort of liaison officer between Hitler and Ribbentrop, and explained that on occasions when the latter was unable to be present, either because he was travelling or negotiating with foreign Ambassadors or engaged on other important business, it was he who took the Foreign Minister's place and gave the Führer a resumé of the most important events in the sphere of foreign affairs in the past twenty-four hours. On an average this happened three times a week.

Steengracht then went on to explain his business. He had been sent to me by Herr von Ribbentrop.

"The Minister sends you his greetings, *Herr Doktor,* and asked me to say that he is convinced that you understand that everything he confided to you yesterday must be regarded as strictly secret and intended only for you personally."

I: "Yes, I understand *that*!"

He: "Not a word of what the Minister said must come to the ears of the public."

I: "I beg you, *Herr Legationsrat,* to present my compliments to the Minister and assure him that he can rely entirely on my discretion."

Herr Steengracht thanked me and assured me that my reply and promise would completely satisfy and reassure Herr von Ribbentrop. We chatted then for a time about Steengracht's function of keeping the Reich Chancellor informed of events. One had to mind one's p's and q's, he said, for Hitler was sharp as a razor, cut through everything and immediately drew his own conclusions. He wondered whether it might not be possible for me to go and see Hitler a little more often, as the effect it had on him was as though a window had been opened and he were able to breathe air from a world with which he never otherwise came into contact. I explained that I could hardly ask to be received unless I had some definite and very important business to discuss.

Steengracht's mission to me was in itself significant. It was not hard to understand that Ribbentrop had passed an uneasy night if he let his thoughts hark back over what he had confided to me that Sunday evening. He had talked without restraint about an immense range of subjects of vital importance to Germany. He had told me how the Supreme Command intended to step up the war against England in order to force her to her knees, and how the American fleets would be sent to the bottom of the sea by German U-boats. He had described in their main outline Germany's plans and resources, and had let me in to matters about which very few outside the German Government had any conception. It did not surprise me in the least that on the Monday morning he had cold shivers down his spine at the recollection that he had confided some of Germany's greatest secrets to a foreigner. But he need not have worried. Nothing of what I had learnt was ever made known—not until now in this book, now that the curtain has gone down on the most fateful and bloody drama in the world's history. Only Richert was informed.

The situation that had arisen and that had been revealed by Steengracht's visit had also a psychological side that was

not to be underestimated. The Minister's fear and uneasiness at having been betrayed by Hitler's frankness about the Russian demands on Finland into confiding to me more than, in his capacity as Minister, he ought to have confided, provided me with a valuable trump card. He realised that I had got to know altogether too much, and that he was entirely at the mercy of my discretion. This compelled him to show an otherwise quite unnecessary respect for me, and pay particular regard to my wishes. The only wish I had expressed, with great warmth and tenacity, had been that concerning the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm, and it is possible that Ribbentrop, in view of our conversation, felt it simplest not to present any demand for its removal—a demand which would certainly have caused complications in the relations between Sweden and Germany which it was highly desirable to avoid.

During the ensuing years I heard nothing of him but a few letters and telegrams, but never met him in person again. For my own part I have nothing to say against him. But for Germany it would have been better, as I have said before, if von Weizsäcker had been Foreign Minister in Hitler's Government.

* * *

As soon as Steengracht had done his errand and gone I was free to devote my attention to my old friend, Staatsminister Schmidt-Ott, who had one or two things of special interest to tell me. He had been elected President of the Geographical Society, before which I had held so many lectures ever since 1892—but he had made conditions for accepting the post; he wanted to have three experts in the same branch as vice-presidents, namely Professors Defant, Troll and Niedermeyer, all of them famous names in geographical research. The Society had great plans. The valuable work of the *Meteor* expedition under Mertz in the South Atlantic was to be continued and extended to the Pacific, although the Navy was more interested in the Indian Ocean. Africa was to be thoroughly explored. The cost of these great undertakings was to be borne by Hitler, the Army and the Navy. These ambitious plans perished like so much else in the downfall of the Third Reich.

As usual we had neither peace nor rest in Berlin. As soon as the geographical session was over Dr. Draeger and Professor Ziegler arrived, and I went with the latter to see Professor Mentzel at the magnificent premises of the German Research Association with their seventy rooms, lecture halls and library. From there I went on to the fine new Danish Legation building, where I saw my old friend, Envoy Zahle, again, who could not be other than in despair at the situation, the occupation of Denmark and his own false and incomprehensible position. But his ironical Danish sense of humour was not to be denied, and when over our tea-cups we revived happy memories of our Stockholm days he brightened up again and let the cares of the moment fall away from him for a time.

Immediately after my return to the Kaiserhof I had a visit from the Finnish Minister, Professor Kivimäki, calm and self-possessed like the philosopher he was, but uneasy for all that for Finland's future. He asked me to tell him what I had learnt in this respect on my latest vitits to Hitler and Ribbentrop, but he understood perfectly when I replied that I had given my word of honour not to reveal anything. So much, however, I felt at liberty to say, that " in my personal opinion Finland has nothing to fear in present circumstances from any quarter ". He told me about the nickel mine 22 miles from Kirkenes, on which Germany had an option, but which was owned by a Canadian company. Now Russia was making demands on the mine, and Britain was willing to part with her concession on condition that none of the nickel went to Germany.

Finally we went on a farewell visit to Minister of State Meissner, who was still chuckling to himself at my obstinacy in putting the same question time after time to Hitler, even after he had told me that " there will *be no* Russian attack on Finland!"

On 11th December we were home in Stockholm again and life resumed its normal course, along quite different lines from in the capital of the Third Reich.

The Death Sentences in Norway.

MY first concern on my return home was to report to the King on my impressions from my visits to Berlin. He followed the account with enlightened interest and made penetrating marginal comments. I also gave a verbal account to the Foreign Minister of matters that might be of interest from the Swedish point of view.

Scarcely a day passed without some visitor coming from Germany or Finland. There were Finnish patriots who wanted to discuss the new order in Europe, and the part to be played in it by Sweden and Finland. Karl Megerle, the editor of the *Berliner Börsenzeitung,* discussed the same subject with me and considered that it would be wisest for us to participate in the post-war reorganisation of Europe in respect of trade, customs barriers, communications and other things, and I made it clear to him that whatever happened the first condition Sweden should make would be absolute independence and liberty, and that there should be no interference with our national individuality.

Even by the beginning of February 1941 there were those who asserted that Germany's supremacy was beginning to fail. Her friendship with Japan and Italy benefited her not at all. In Africa the British were gaining ground. Abysinnia was lost. Russia bided her time and it grew increasingly clear that the U.S.A. was going to enter the war. Churchill said that Mussolini had had to pay for his friendship with Hitler, and that we were about to witness once more the " Decline and Fall " of a Roman Empire.

General von Falkenhorst's Chief of Staff, Colonel Buschenhagen, came to see me. He said that the German occupation troops had strict orders to show respect and consideration for the civil population. Quisling in his opinion was a queer fanatic.

At the beginning of March American aid to Britain increased by further milliards of cash and more war material, and it was believed in many quarters that Roosevelt might intervene actively at any moment. By the middle of the month the President did indeed promise to assist Britain in her fight against the German dictatorship, which was a threat to the whole world. If it were victorious that would mean the end of freedom in the world. The U.S.A. would therefore help Britain, Greece and China to the uttermost. In the United States 1½ million soldiers stood ready. Colonel Charles Lindbergh and the isolationists bitterly opposed Roosevelt's policy.

26th March: Lord Halifax declared in an after-dinner speech that Britain could *never* be conquered, and that after the war she would create a new world order in which all nations should be equally happy. Mrs. Anne Morrow-Lindbergh wrote a book, *The Waves of the Future,* the object of which was to warn the U.S.A. against increasing the destruction in the world by taking part in the war. It was not a success.

* * *

On 4th April, 1941, began a chain of events which was really only an episode, even though a very solemn and tragic episode, in the bloody drama of the war—an episode which, however, had a happy ending. The scene was laid in Oslo, Bergen, Stockholm and Berlin, and the *dramatis personae* were Professor John Tandberg, Engineer Carl Munters, myself, Col.-General von Falkenhorst, Lt.-General von Uthmann, the supreme military court in Berlin, Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler and ten young Norwegians under sentence of death, among them Christian Oftedahl, chief editor of the *Stavanger Aftenblad.* The part I played was an entirely passive and subordinate one, but as I am the only person in possession of the decisive documents in the case, I can hardly omit this episode from a book the subject of which is my relations with Germany during the Second World War. I did indeed send a copy of the texts to General von Uthmann, but as he is at present in custody in the British Zone, it is probable that he is not able to obtain access to his papers and documents.

Both the Swedish and the Norwegian public was horrified at the death sentences pronounced on the ten Norwegians. The Swedish newspapers I read carried lengthy articles on the subject, and indeed the whole Swedish Press was united on this issue. This fact was further confirmed by a selection of newspaper cuttings which were sent to me in a letter, dated 3rd April 1941, from Engineer Carl Munters and Professor John Tandberg, begging me to address myself to Col.-General von Falkenhorst and appeal for mercy for the condemned men.

The most factual and sober account was that given in an article entitled: "Many pray for mercy for the condemned men" in *Dagens Nyheter,* which ran:

"Many representations have been made all over Norway at the present time (beginning of March 1941) to Col.-General von Falkenhorst to pardon the ten men sentenced to death at Bergen. Private members of the Nasjonal Samling have also appealed to the Supreme German Military Commander in Norway to show clemency.

"The death sentences in Bergen have caused sorrow and bitterness all over the country. The Quisling Party, in view of the flood of anonymous letters that have poured into party Headquarters in Oslo in connection with the death sentences, has felt it necessary to explain publicly that the death sentences rest in the hands of the German military authorities. Military justice is hard, the statement runs, and the Nasjonal Samling has done what it could to establish tolerable relations between the Occupation Power and the Norwegian civil population and to bring about a relaxation of tension. It would appear to have been rather the oppositional agitation that gave rise to the crimes which have now been rewarded with the death sentence.

"The decision rests now with Col.-General von Falkenhorst. His final word on the subject of the death sentences is expected at any moment."

It was emphasised both at the beginning and end of the article that appeals for mercy should be addressed to von Falkenhorst—that confirmation of the sentences rested with him, and that his decision as to whether or not they were to be put into effect was to be expected at any moment.

After endeavouring, with the aid of such relevant documents as were available to me, to acquaint myself with the facts of the case, I too came to the conclusion that the German Commander-in-Chief in Norway, who in accordance with the provisions of military law had signed the death sentences, was also the only one who had authority to annul them and reprieve the condemned men. But this was wrong. Col.-General von Falkenhorst had no such authority. He could issue death sentences, but not grant pardons. It will be seen, from my letter quoted below, that I was under a misapprehension with regard to his right of pardon.

With the omission of certain introductory lines and unimportant passages, my letter was as follows:

Stockholm, 4th April 1941

"*Hochgeehrter Herr Generaloberst,*

. . . I understand very well that the death sentences passed on Christian Aftedahl and the nine other Norwegians were dictated by rigid and immutable military laws, and that anyone who infringes such laws, which in all countries are alike, must be prepared to take responsibility for the consequences of his actions . . .

"If I now take the liberty of intervening in this matter, I do so as an old, tried and trusted Germanophil, and because it distresses me beyond measure for any action to be taken on Germany's part that is liable to injure Germany here in Scandinavia.

"Even in the case of Christian Oftedahl I regard the matter from the point of view of a Germanophil. I mean that if the death sentences on him and his nine companions were carried out, it would arouse deep sorrow, depression and astonishment not merely in Norway but in all Scandinavia. The popular opinion here is that Oftedahl and his companions are not traitors but patriots, and that their crime is no worse than what Leo Schlageter did—Schlageter who is rightly acclaimed, now and for all time, by the whole German nation as a hero, and held up as a pattern for German youth. To carry out the death sentence in this instance would be to sow a seed in the whole of Scandinavia from which nothing can spring but sorrow, hatred and revenge, and which for Germany could only lengthen the road to the goal.

" But if sentence of death could be commuted in this case by a special act of grace to one of imprisonment or hard labour, this gesture of conciliation and mercy would be received with gratitude all over Scandinavia.

" I know that the laws of war are and must be hard. But there are times when wisdom goes much further and when far greater results are to be obtained by gentleness than by severity. The Scandinavian peoples have a character of their own. They are highly sensitive to a magnanimous gesture of mercy in such a case as this. As a pro-German and a human being I beg you, *hochgeehrter Herr Generaloberst,* spare these men's lives! By doing so you would also make my own life more worth living than it was before. If any words of mine can save these patriots' lives, I should know a happiness I have not before known.

" With deep respect

Always yours sincerely,

Sven Hedin."

The reply to this letter bore the stamp, " *Wehrmachtsbefehlhaber in Norwegen* " and was dated Oslo, 12th April 1941, Feldpost, No. 07626. It ran:

" *Hochgeehrter Herr Dr. Sven Hedin* !

"Accept my best thanks for your kind letter of 4th April, which I have just received.

" The matter in question has already been finally dealt with and final judgment passed by the supreme German military court, the Reich Court Martial in Berlin.

" The documents connected with the case are in Berlin. As reprieve can be granted only by the Führer, all I can suggest is that you apply immediately to the Führer in the above-mentioned case and lay your wishes before him.

" With the expression of my highest esteem

and German greetings

von Falkenhorst,

Generaloberst.

It was evident from this letter that the military court, the Reich Court Martial in Berlin, had already passed sentence in the case, and that all the relevant documents were in its possession. It was furthermore apparent that Col.-General

von Falkenhorst had not the necessary power and authority to reprieve anyone who had already been sentenced to death by the Reich Court Martial. All the Norwegian appeals for clemency had thus, like my own, been addressed to the wrong authority. The only person who possessed power of reprieve in Norway during the occupation was Hitler, and Falkenhorst accordingly advised me to write at once to the Führer.

This advice I should, of course, have followed immediately, but for the fact that Falkenhorst's letter only reached me on 23rd April after being eleven days on the way. This was due, according to what I was told by Lt.-General von Uthmann, to the circumstance that the diplomatic mail between the German Legations in Stockholm and Oslo passed through Berlin. As it was only dispatched on certain days of the week and was not allowed to be sent by air, a letter from Oslo to Stockholm might be held up several days both in Oslo and Berlin. Falkenhorst's letter to me was addressed to Uthmann who handed it to me immediately on its arrival on 23rd April.

During those eleven intermediate days the condemned men might well, of course, have been executed and buried. But mercifully the following information had reached me in the meantime.

After dispatching my letter to Falkenhorst on 4th April I went in constant daily anxiety as to the effect it would have. On 13th April I had a telephone call from the German Military Attaché in Stockholm telling me that he had heard from Falkenhorst that the question of the ten condemned men was not being decided in Oslo but in Berlin. The Military Attaché (i.e., von Uthmann's deputy during his absence on leave) said that Falkenhorst had informed him that he, Falkenhorst, immediately on receipt of my letter (i.e. on 12th April) had sent it by special courier by air to the Reich Court Martial in Berlin. He added that it was 100 per cent. certain that my letter had been submitted to Hitler. I asked the Military Attaché whether in this case it would be desirable for me to write to Hitler too, seeing that the contents of such a letter would be in all essentials the same as of my letter to Falkenhorst. The Military Attaché replied that it seemed superfluous, as Hitler would have already received and undoubtedly read my letter of 4th April to

Falkenhorst and quite possibly the matter was already decided. The Military Attaché emphasised for his own part that such an important letter from me, which moreover had been sent direct from the Supreme Commander in Norway to the Reich Court Martial, must inevitably be read by the President of the Court, which was Hitler. The Military Attaché said in conclusion that the General had instructed him over the telephone to convey his greetings, but that he would of course acknowledge receipt of my letter personally.

As usual after important telephone conversations I immediately wrote down word for word what had been said while it was still fresh in my memory. An appeal for mercy from me could hardly have been conveyed to Hitler in a more effective manner than had now occurred. It needed no imagination to understand that Falkenhorst had been glad to receive my letter, and that it had but lent support to his own personal desire to save the ten Norwegians. Had he been indifferent to their fate he would never have sent my letter on with all possible speed to Berlin but would have regarded my appeal as a personal affair between himself and me. It was also clear that the death sentences had not been passed, as I had supposed, in Oslo, but in Berlin.

On 23rd April the German Military Attaché, Lt.-General von Uthmann, now returned from leave, came to see me bringing the above-quoted letter of the 12th from Falkenhorst. We read it together and Uthmann was as pleased as I at the news that Falkenhorst, according to what he had told Uthmann, had immediately sent my letter on to Hitler personally. We had, on the other hand, no notion how Hitler would react to the appeal. I asked Uthmann whether he thought it would be a wise move for me to write direct to the Reich Chancellor repeating my appeal. His reply was:

"No, it would not be desirable and at best a meaningless gesture. I think the most diplomatic thing you can do is to leave your letter to Falkenhorst to take its effect. Whether the outcome will be life or death for the condemned men we shall know all in good time."

It was certainly an eternity that we had to wait! We were kept in uncertainty for the whole of May and most of June, every day expecting a telephone message or letter. And then,

at last, I received from the German Military Attaché a letter dated 28th June with the following contents:

" Deutsche Gesandtschaft der Militärattache.
Hochgeehrter Herr Doktor! Stockholm, 28.6.41.

" With reference to your letter on behalf of the condemned Norwegians I am instructed by General von Falkenhorst, who is not at present in Oslo, to convey to you the following decision of the Führer.

" The death sentenes are commuted to ten years' hard labour, sentences of hard labour have been reduced in some cases to imprisonment and sentences of imprisonment have in some cases been shortened. Sentences of loss of civic rights remain and will be enforced.

" I am happy to be able to give you this news and hope that all is well with you and your sister. What wise foresight you have once again shown!

" With kindest regards, and the expression of my deep gratitude and esteem

Yours sincerely

Uthmann."

So not only had the condemned men been reprieved, but they had even been spared life-long hard labour in that their sentences were reduced to imprisonment for at most ten years. Without Col.-General von Falkenhorst's goodwill, swift action and determination this appeal could never have succeeded.

On 5th July it was reported in the Swedish newspapers that the appeal had been allowed in the case of the thirteen Norwegians, and that this had been done on Hitler's orders and had been received with satisfaction in Norway.

After finding out exactly how matters stood I wrote to Col.-General von Falkenhorst to thank him warmly for the kind manner in which he had taken up my letter of 4th April, and thus saved the lives of the condemned men.

* * *

The above account is based exclusively on my own knowledge of the case, and on the information I received from German quarters. As I felt, however, that there must also be important information to be obtained from Norway, I wrote at the end of May 1946 to the Swedish Minister (since 1947

Ambassador) in Oslo, Baron Johan Beck-Friis, and asked him to see if he could find anything out about the matter with the aid of the Norwegian authorities concerned. Baron Beck-Friis promised, in a very kind letter dated 28th May 1946, to do his best.

In a further letter dated 6th July he informed me that he had had a conversation with Herr Oftedahl, who then held an important position in the Storting. Herr Oftedahl himself had no idea of the reason why clemency had been shown, and had referred the Minister to the then Defence Advocate, Supreme Court Advocate Albert Wiesener. To Herr Wiesener Baron Beck-Friis accordingly applied and received from him the following letter dated 4th July, to the publication of which Herr Wiesener also kindly gave his consent. For this interesting document I am indebted both to Baron Beck-Friis and the Supreme Court Advocate, Herr Wiesener. The letter, which requires no comment, runs as follows:

" Supreme Court Advocate Albert Wiesener
Killingmo st.

To the Swedish Minister, Oslo.
Royal Swedish Legation,
Oslo.

" I am in receipt of your letter of the 2nd of this month and of a similar letter of the 17th of last month, which has been forwarded to me, relating to the spy case tried by German Court Martial in Bergen in February 1941.

" I beg to enclose a copy of the letter of 5.6.41 from the Führer's Headquarters to the C.-in-C., the Wehrmacht, giving news of the granting of the appeal. This letter gives the names of the men and particulars of their sentences and the extent to which they were commuted. (It should be noted that in the case of No. 16, Risanger, it is not an error in the copy that his sentence was reduced from three years' hard labour to four years' imprisonment. Whether or not this was originally due to a typist's error can never be known. In any case no one would have dared to correct it, as the document had been signed by Hitler in person. Risanger died in prison a few days before the expiry of the four years.)

" It will be seen that there were ten death sentences at

this trial. At a previous trial in Bergen (of Branum and others) sentence of death had been passed on three of the accused. Altogether there were therefore thirteen.

"The defence received many letters in support of our appeals for mercy. Some of these we used in evidence. I know also that various individuals and institutions appealed direct to the German authorities, among them Dr. Sven Hedin. Most of these appeals certainly had no effect on the decision. But I believe that Dr. Hedin constitutes an exception as he had a very good name with Hitler, who on this occasion took the question of a reprieve into his own hands. How much he meant and what, in the last resort, the decision was based on it is impossible to say. There were many reasons for and against. For four of the condemned men, namely Jacobsen, Hellesen, Börseth and Oftedahl, Hitler's indulgence was particularly hardly given and these four had to earn their reprieve additionally at their own expense, in that their pardon was made conditional upon their defusing unexploded bombs after a British air raid on Höyanger. But that they were given this chance at all may very well have been due to Dr. Hedin.

"A German official at a later court martial in Berlin, von Ramdohr, mentioned to me that there were two men in particular in Scandinavia to whom Hitler was disposed to pay regard in such questions, namely Dr. Hedin and Knut Hamsun. But even they sometimes had to take second place to military-political considerations. . . .

Your obedient servant

Killingmo, 4th July 1946. Albert Wiesener."

Certified Copy.

"*The Führer and Reichskanzler.*

Führer's Headquarters, 5.6.1941

To the C.-in-C., the Wehrmacht.

Ref: Appeal on behalf of the following Norwegian nationals sentenced by the 3rd Senate of the Reich Court Martial on 24th February 1941 for espionage and aiding and abetting the enemy, for espionage, for assisting in espionage, for assisting in espionage and in aiding and abetting the enemy, and for assisting in aiding and abetting the enemy.

1. Sigurd Jakobsen, journalist,
2. Gunnar Hellesen, insurance inspector,
3. Helge Børseth, business man,
4. Siegmund Brommeland, business man,
5. Peter Andree Hjelmervik, wireless instructor,
6. Siegmund Rasmussen, first mate,
7. Gunnar Carlsen, goldsmith,
8. Knud Gjerstad, farm labourer,
9. Christian Oftedahl, newspaper editor,
10. Frithiof Lund, author,
11. Carl W. Mueller, optician,
12. Knud Naerum, dyer,
13. Peder Fagerland, elementary school teacher,
14. Ottar Ryan, musician,
15. Tor Gerrard Rydland, customs inspector,
16. Hans Bernhard Risanger, wireless operator,
17. Arne Sørvag, business man.

The sentences of death passed on Jakobsen, Hellesen, Børseth, Brommeland, Hjelmervik, Rasmussen, Carlsen, Gjerstad, Oftedahl, and Lund I commute to sentences of ten years' hard labour each.

The sentence of three years' hard labour passed on Mueller I commute to one of two years' imprisonment.

The sentence of five years' hard labour passed on Naerum I reduce to one of three years.

The sentence of six years' hard labour passed on Fagerlund I reduce to one of three years.

The sentence of eight years' hard labour passed on Ryan I reduce to one of five years.

The sentence of four years' hard labour passed on Rydland I commute to one of three years' imprisonment.

The sentence of three years' hard labour passed on Risanger I commute to one of four years' imprisonment.

The sentence of eight years' hard labour passed on Sørvag I reduce to one of five years.

The appeal in respect of the sentence of loss of civic rights passed on Hjelmervik and Sørvag I reject.

In the case of all the sentenced men I retain the right to grant further remission of sentences at the end of the war.

(signed) Adolf Hitler

(LS) The Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht

(signed) Keitel

Certified true copy:

Berlin, 17th June 1941.

Copy confirmed: (signed) Grossewski.

Stuart Nilsen. Chief Inspector of Reich Courts Martial.

How strange and unexpected the ways of the world often are. The above story of the reprieve of the Norwegian patriots was to have its epilogue after the German catastrophe. The same man, Col.-General von Falkenhorst, whose swift and energetic intervention had done so much towards saving the Norwegians' lives, was himself brought before a court martial in the British Zone and, according to a statement published in the newspapers and on the wireless on 2nd August 1946, condemned to death. As telegraphic communication with Germany was non-existant, I sent an express telegram instead to the British Legation in Stockholm saying that I was in possession of evidence of Falkenhorst's energetic action to save the lives of ten Norwegians and that I would gladly place this material at the Legation's disposal. To this offer, as was perhaps only natural, I received no reply.

Unlike Keitel and Jodl, Falkenhorst was allowed the privilege of being shot—not hanged.

On 26th August 1946 I received from Frau Margarete von Falkenhorst a letter written on 7th August imploring me in the most touching and moving terms to do my utmost to persuade the British military tribunal to show her husband mercy. She also gave me the name and address of the president of the court and I immediately sent off the following telegram, of exactly one hundred English words, which, since as mentioned above there was no direct telegraphic communication with Germany, was transmitted via America:

"General MacGreary G.O.C. Rhine Army, Bad Oeynhausen Deutschland—Regarding sentence of death I possess all data in a case where Falkenhorst in June 1941 saved ten Norwegians from sentence of death—stop—In a personal letter I appealed to Falkenhorst to save these men—stop—he

replied that he had no power to decide between life and death but sent my supplication letter by immediate special courier to Reichskriegsgericht in Berlin who delivered my letter to Hitler who ordered grace and amnesty to all ten men—stop—Falkenhorst's human and energetic action saved the ten Norwegians' lives—stop—If not too late please await my detailed information sincerely yours Sven Hedin Stockholm."

I informed Frau von Falkenhorst of the contents of this telegram. At the same time I had a number of talks with the Swedish Chief of Staff, General Thörnell, who told me that he too, who knew Col.-General von Falkhorst personally, had done everything in his power to obtain remission of the death sentence.

Later in the autumn General Sir Sholto Douglas, Military Governor of the British Zone in Germany, spent a few days in Stockholm as the guest of Count Folke Bernadotte, after which he was to fly direct to Germany to meet General MacGreary. General Thörnell asked him to convey a letter from him appealing to the British military court on purely military grounds to acquit Col.-General Falkenhorst. He advised me to send a letter by General Sir Sholto Douglas, a piece of advice which I also followed. My letter, which was transmitted through Count Bernadotte, was based on humanitarian considerations only.

It was not long before General Thörnell received an assurance from the military court that " full consideration " would be given to his appeal.

On Wednesday, 4th December, 1946, I returned home after a meeting of the Academy of Science. It was just striking 10. As usual I turned on the evening news bulletin. Amid the welter of items from all over the world I at last picked up a welcome piece of news: " Generaloberst von Falkenhorst has been reprieved!" The following day a short notice appeared without comment in the Swedish newspapers: " Herford Germany Wednesday: The former German C.-in-C. in Norway, von Falkenhorst, who had been condemned to death, had his sentence commuted on Wednesday

to one of 20 years' imprisonment, according to a British Headquarters report."

Since then I have had a number of letters from Frau von Falkenhorst, and it is easy to imagine her joy and gratitude that her husband's life has been spared.

Russia and America in the War

AT the beginning of April 1941 tension in the countries round the Mediterranean increased. Large bodies of German troops were on the march from Derna towards Sidi-el-Barrani and Egypt. Hitler declared in a broadcast to the German people that now the turn had come for Greece and Yugoslavia to be sacrificed for Britain's sake. Between Russia and Germany, too, tension increased to an ominous degree after conclusion of a pact in Belgrade between Russia and Yugoslavia.

I myself followed the events of the day in newspapers, telegrams, the radio, books and journals, though most of my time was devoted to the publication of my own results and those of my companions from our travels in Central Asia. Correspondence, as usual, took up a great deal of time, and in this I had the invaluable help of my sisters, my brother Carl, and the indefatigable Dr. Paul Grassmann, Press Attaché to the German Legation in Stockholm.

An interesting piece of news was that the Danish Minister in Washington, Herr Kauffman, an old friend of mine from Peking, had handed over control of Greenland to the U.S.A. but that the Copenhagen Government had refused to ratify this. Of far greater importance, however, was the telegram about Matsuoka's mission to Moscow and the signing of the pact of friendship between Russia and Japan. An equal sensation was caused by the fact that Stalin himself was present on the occasion of Matsuoka's departure, and that he had conversed cordially with the German Ambassador, von der Schulenburg, and declared that the friendship between Russia and Germany was indestructible. Indeed Stalin had even embraced the German Military Attaché, General Krebs. One began to wonder whether a Russo-German-Japanese alliance had been concluded! If that had been the case, Great

Britain would have been in a very grave predicament. The mystery was to be solved in a little more than two months' time. But until then the question was discussed on every hand. The Soviet Union had bound herself in the Russo-Japanese treaty to remain neutral in the event of Japan being attacked by a third Power. On the other hand it would have been a relief for Germany if Japan had fallen into hostilities with Britain and America. For Japan it would have been a valuable aid if the Germans had succeeded in closing the Suez Canal, and thus impeding the transport of British troops to India and East Asia. When on 12th April the Germans under Rommel captured Sollum on Egyptian territory, the Japanese had cause to hope.

The Yugoslav campaign was concluded at *blitzkrieg* pace. According to Russia's view the Germans had been weakened by this campaign, and the possibility of war between Russia and Germany was discussed more and more openly in National Socialist circles. Germany's motto was: "All that is certain is that the peace that will follow a German victory will not be a Peace of Versailles but a peace for the good of all nations. The peoples in the occupied countries will recover their freedom, but must submit to certain common laws for the general welfare."

An unexpected guest in my home was the German Minister of Health, Leonardo Conti, a serious and energetic man of about forty, who had wonderful things to relate of all that was being done in the Third Reich to improve the people's health.

A frequent guest at my home during the war years was Dr. Paul Grassmann, who was married to a Norwegian and was the father of seven children, all of whom but one had been born in Sweden. Dr. Grassmann was of inestimable help to me and I shall never forget the debt of gratitude I owe him. We must have collaborated in at least a hundred cases to try to save unfortunate Jews from being transported to Poland, or to help Germans, Swedes or Norwegians who in our opinion had been unjustly sent to concentration camps. Dr. Grassmann used to go through the mountains of letters about such cases that were constantly piling up on my desk.

Everyone knew that I had friends in the inmost circles and the number of those who thought that I could rescue them by merely a word or a line was legion. In many cases we succeeded, but in many more our prayers fell unanswered on the ears of the two Ministers, Frick and Himmler. Without Grassmann I could never have mastered this type of correspondence. My study was like an unofficial information bureau. Besides, I had other things to attend to and often used to load great piles of letters on to Grassmann, who never complained but was always ready to help in his gentle, good-humoured way. He might have deserved a better fate than to be detained by the Occupation Powers in Lübeck for three years, most of which time he spent in hospital. When his condition was hopeless he was at last given leave to return to his family in Stockholm. But it was too late. He died in the train not far from Copenhagen.

On 22nd April I was called upon by an emissary from Berlin, who brought me a curious message from the Foreign Office. This was no less than a proposal or request that I should fly by Clipper to the U.S.A., talk to the leading politicians and dissuade them from an American entry into the war! The outward cloak or pretext for my journey was to be to lecture at various universities in the U.S.A. about my scientific publications or something of the sort, but the real object was to be the talks with Roosevelt and other influential politicians.

They must have had pretty exaggerated ideas of my capabilities. I replied, of course, with a flat rejection and asked the Foreign Office emissary to lay before those who had sent him three weighty reasons for my refusal. In the first place I was a member of a neutral country and as such not suitable as an ambassador between two foreign Powers. In the second, I was personally convinced that the United States would enter the war sooner or later and that nothing would persuade them not to, least of all the remarks of a notoriously pro-German private individual on a lecturing tour. In the third place, it was far too late for any such idea, as the United States were already *de facto* in the war by reason of the aid they were sending to Germany's enemies. And apart from all that, I had reached an age at which one tries to spare

oneself any such physical and mental exertions. With that the proposal was removed from the agenda. That it had been raised at all showed, however, that the German leaders were beginning to recognise the frightful danger that they might yet find the United States, and possibly the greater part of South America, among their active and declared enemies.

On 4th May I had the honour and joy of once more meeting my old friend and Asiatic colleague, the great Marshal of Finland, at a lunch with the Crown Prince and Princess.

Another of my visitors at this time was Dr. Paul Schmidt, Ribbentrop's Press Chief, who told me that Rudolf Hess regarded war between Germanic peoples as the greatest lunacy and that he was tormented by the thought that Britain would be crushed. He was consequently prepared to sacrifice himself in the hope of being able to contribute towards peace and conciliation. Schmidt believed that Sweden would occupy a very important position in the new Europe as export port to America.

Dr. Schmidt made a few remarks to me which were interesting in so far that they echoed the views and opinions of his superior, Ribbentrop. Schmidt said:

"I deplore the '*Gauleiter* mentality' that I have found prevalent in Stockholm. It is as though Germany were trying to obtain a position of command in Sweden, a thing which, of course, we have never dreamt of. We want to counter this hide-and-seek and shadow-play of distrust and unjustified fears. I was present recently at a conversation in Berlin in the course of which someone remarked that Germany ought to keep part of Yugoslavia for her own account, to which Hitler, who was also present, replied that he did not want any part of Yugoslavia but that his desire at present was to concentrate his attention on Scandinavia, because Sweden would have a particularly important part to play in the new European order as one of the Continental export ports to America." Schmidt continued:

"For myself I do not consider that Scandinavia need cause us any anxiety, but I do think that, for Sweden, future Scandinavian policy is a problem of the first order. These problems will have to be dealt with 'on the first floor' and between

Government and Government."

By "on the first floor" he meant the Swedish Foreign Office in Gustaf Adolf's Torg. He also said:

"To us it is a matter of indifference; but Sweden should make clear her position now, before the war ends. And from us Sweden will get a clear and reassuring answer. To us it is of vital interest that Sweden should be strongly armed. The future will lay heavy burdens on Sweden's shoulders and it is going to be important for her to keep a steady course, and know what she wants. If relations between Sweden and Germany are properly established, then all the other problems will solve themselves."

* * *

The month of June (1941) set in. The political atmosphere was tense and electric. There were rumours afoot of fresh military undertakings. Chiefly these had to do with America and Russia. Grand Admiral Raeder stated that the invasion of America was an impossibility, and Hitler in an interview he granted to the former American Ambassador to Belgium declared that such an invasion was as unthinkable as an invasion of the moon. In Swedish officers' circles it was considered that the German expansion in various directions was dangerous to Germany herself, as her forces were being scattered over too wide an area, and that the whole thing might slip away in the sand and end in an untenable situation.

On 11th June Dr. Hans Draeger came to Stockholm. He announced straight out, without beating about the bush, that war with Russia was imminent. What! War with Russia! It was hard to believe one's ears and straighten out one's thoughts. Had Germany not enough irons in the fire already, and how could she take the risk of breaking with an empire that stretched from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the Arctic Ocean to the Black Sea, and that had at its disposal inexhaustible reserves of men and raw materials! It was said that Hitler wanted to secure his rear to the east before attempting the invasion of England, and that that operation must be over before America was ready to invade Europe. It was also estimated that it would be in Russia's interest for the war to last as long as possible, so that Britain and Germany should exhaust their strength against one another. The danger of

Sweden's becoming involved in a Russo-German war did not seem great, since a neutral Sweden would be of greater advantage to the Germans in view of their requirements of iron ore and other raw materials.

On 22nd June 1941 the war broke out, and while the German divisions poured over the Russian frontier the statesmen of Europe and America made their flaming speeches. " To help the Bolsheviks is the last thing we went," declared Roosevelt, while Churchill held that the Bolsheviks were fighting for Britain and that anything that weakened Germany was to Britain's advantage. Mr. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, declared that " now that Germany is so deeply engaged, the time is ripe for the U.S.A. to join in the war. One fine day Hitler may stand on the Aleutians and threaten the U.S.A." Colonel Charles Lindberg, who like Hoover and Senator Wheeler and other isolationists spoke against war, was called the Quisling of the United States.

On 28th June I wrote in my diary: " If the Anglo-Saxons win, then Europe will be turned into a desert and Stalin will get his great chance "—two predictions which came true.

At about this time *The Times* published a leading article describing Hitler's path. First he had consolidated Germany, then built up a Greater Germany, consisting of all the German lands. After that followed the demand for *Lebensraum,* which extended over all the countries of Europe. Then Russia was to be liquidated, at which the whole of Asia would be brought into submission. The final step on Hitler's path was mastery of the western hemisphere, and he would have achieved world domination. *The Times* believed that Finland would regret her willingness to follow Germany, and warned Sweden, which had already abandoned her strict neutrality.

On 8th July we gave an afternoon tea-party at our home for General von Uthmann and his wife and the Minister, Schnurre, also with his wife. Herr Schnurre, whom we later met on many occasions both in Stockholm and Berlin, had a great deal to tell about his impressions from some twenty flights to Moscow during the days of the Russo-German Pact. He described his conversations with Stalin

and Molotov, and said that personally both were pleasant and agreeable.

"Stalin understands the situation," he said, and did not want war with Germany. Neither did Hitler want war with Russia, and had hoped that eastern Europe might be settled by peaceful means. But when he saw 150 Russian divisions or more brought up along the whole Eastern Wall, he began to wonder; and realised that Russia was making preparations to attack Germany if Britain proved tougher than he had thought, or if America came to her aid. For the sake of German security he dared not wait too long, but determined to make an end once and for all of the threat from the east before the war in the west began in earnest. That was why he was striking now. It was generally believed in German circles that the Russian war would be over before the winter and that America would not intervene before it was over. That America would come in was regarded as certain, among other things because she had already occupied Iceland, which was regarded as a direct challenge to Germany. Germany was being challenged step by step by the U.S.A., but refrained from anything that might be regarded as provocation.

Another official from the German Foreign Office who came to see me considered it tragic that Sweden "did not realise how late the hour was". Sweden did not think that this trial of strength had anything to do with her, but she was wrong. Just now the scene was set for Sweden to play a great historic part, he believed. Sweden thought it was enough if she sent a few companies or a battalion to Finland. That was aid from individual Swedes, but not Swedish aid or any serious assistance from the Swedish State. He thought we were neglecting our historical opportunity and our task. Hitler had recently regretted Sweden's attitude. "Sweden has lost her old Carolinian spirit," he had said. The German official gave me clearly to understand that Finland would forge straight ahead, but that Sweden would fall into the doldrums and lose the authority that is a natural consequence of having done one's duty while there was yet time. He predicted that Finland would outstrip us. When later on the new order came to be introduced, we should not have any great achievements to point to. In 1918 and in 1939-40

we had left Finland in the lurch. Now we were being tried for the third time. Were we going to fail Finland again? One did not win a place in the sun as easily as that, he declared. I replied simply that Hitler himself, in the conversation I had had with him in December 1940, had taken a quite different and more broadminded view of Sweden's future than he did.

It is strange to look back on these German dreams now, many years later, when Germany has gone under and Sweden, thanks to the wise and cautious policy pursued by her King and her Government, has avoided being ground to pieces between the millstones of the Second World War and is free to live out her life as one of the best situated countries in Europe.

On 11th July the Press announced that Mr. Strong, of the U.S.A., had been given permission to inspect the German prison camps and had reported that the treatment accorded the prisoners was far better in 1941 than in 1914-18.

19th July. Mr. Hopkins, Roosevelt's right-hand man, made a speech in London in which he declared that the whole of U.S. production was geared to aid for Britain. In 1942 there would be six million tons of shipping, and more later.

On the Eastern Front too the figures were rising. Nine million soldiers were fighting, three million of them German.

The battle of Minsk was said to be the greatest that had ever been fought. After 20th July the Germans swept round the Pripet Marshes and drove Budenny's cavalry forces before them into the Ukraine. After Smolensk had fallen Russian resistance hardened, and the advance went more slowly. The Russian soldiers fell and died, but never gave way. Stalin's soldiers were better than the Tsar's, and their resistance stronger than that of the French in the summer of 1940. Their reserves were greater than had been expected. Strong Russian units hid themselves in the forests and broke out in the rear of the advancing German armoured columns to cut them off from their supporting forces. Moscow radio announced prophetically that the Germans would be beaten by the endless Russian steppes. The frightfulness, the hopelessness of trying to break Russia had begun to be apparent to many even by the end of July. An invading army could

penetrate to the Urals, to Omsk, to Irkutsk, why even to the Pacific without breaking Bolshevism. Only from within, never by outward force, could the Red doctrines be uprooted.

Meantime America was extending her air and naval bases to form a system comprising both oceans.

Charles Lindbergh stated in a speech that America's entry into the war could only lead to chaos that would last for generations. In August too, Churchill and Roosevelt, after their meeting on the 14th in the battleship *Augusta,* issued their still-famous Atlantic Declaration. A week later came Roosevelt's message to Congress, in which was the passage: "A peace now which would assure Hitler supremacy over the occupied countries would be to recognise Nazism and make another war probable. We want freedom, including religious freedom, for all." Russia was to receive aid on a large scale, so that Hitler would be tied down in the east and Britain gain a breathing-space.

On 13th September I received a proposal from the German Foreign Office that I should bring out a new edition of my book, *Germany and the World Peace,* bringing it up to date. They suggested that in this new edition I should cut out everything that had been unacceptable in 1937, particularly about the Jews and the Church. I refused the proposal as I did not want to abandon the attitude I had adopted in 1937. So this time too it was I who prevented the publication of the book in Germany.

The great drama moved on through the autumn. Some thought that Germany's fate, as in 1917 and 1918, would be decided if America came in this time too. The British War Minister declared that the situation would be critical for Britain if the Germans succeeded in defeating the Russian armies before the winter. He said that a British landing on the continent of Europe would be suicide. Russia must have all aid to hold down the German Army as far to the east as possible so that time would be gained for America to assist Britain. The German Army did indeed march further and further east, one great city after another fell, but Leningrad was left in peace, because, so the Germans said, they would otherwise have had four million civilians to feed. Senator Wheeler and Colonel Lindbergh and the whole isolationist

movement lost ground. Their newspapers one by one closed down. Mr. Knox, the Naval Secretary, declared that only one step remained to be taken and America would be in the war, and General Smuts was convinced that America would set the seal on Britain's victory. Senator Wheeler said in a speech that *homo sapiens* was mad and sick, and that the world would go under unless a new order were created after the war.

On 4th October a speech of Hitler's was published in which he stated that the occupied part of Russia was twice as great as the German Reich he had taken over in 1933. "I have striven for peace, but always been rebuffed. I have been forced into war." On 9th October came the Press Chief's, Dietrich's, unfortunate conference for the foreign Press in which he declared that Russia was beaten, the Russian Army lost, her reserves beyond the Urals inadequate; 17,600 tanks, 21,600 guns and 14,000 aircraft had been destroyed.

Roosevelt asked Congress to alter the neutrality law to allow of the arming of merchant ships. Only a few days later Cordell Hull, Secretary of State, ordered that merchant ships should be armed and navigate in the war zones. This meant, in reality, war.

In Russia the German front ran in a straight line from Lake Ilmen to the Sea of Azov. The strongest resistance was met with west of Moscow and east of Kharkov. The Germans recognised Marshal Timoshenko's brilliant defence, and the Russian soldiers' contempt of death.

Churchill declared that all rumours about peace feelers were foolish talk. There would be no peace until Germany had been defeated and Hitler removed.

On 20th October the Russian Government moved to Kuibyshev (formerly Samara). Stalin himself stayed on in Moscow. From Poltava to Kharkov the roads were terrible —rain, slush, mud, and worsening day by day. The marching columns sank to their knees in mire, guns stuck fast and tanks got nowhere. The Russians burned all the buildings to deny the enemy shelter.

Unlike the other great leaders in this war Stalin seldom made speeches, but when he did he always had something weighty to say. He never bluffed and never threatened, but merely acted, wisely, skilfully and diplomatically. His figures,

on the other hand, were often grossly exaggerated. Early in November he made a speech urging a British invasion to force upon Germany a real war on two fronts. Germany would be crushed within four months or a year, he thought. Twenty-four years ago there had been no Red Army. Germany had lost five million men. They had overrun much territory, but Russia was vast and had inexhaustible masses of people. While he was speaking German aircraft circled over Moscow. The " all clear " sounded just as Stalin ended.

A few days later, on the fateful 9th November, Hitler announced that the Russians had lost 10 million men. On Armistice Day, Roosevelt spoke.

The U.S.A. was prepared for war to all eternity if necessary. America was fighting for freedom. Without freedom civilisation or even life would be unthinkable. A few days later neutrality was thrown aside.

The great problem seemed only to become more insoluble, more involved for Germany as time went by. No one could deny that Germany's military strength was enormous, and her military leaders highly skilled in the arts of war. Yet one could not but ask oneself how she could ever contrive to defeat the United States and Russia. Sooner or later the British and American fleets would control all the oceans and even if Britain itself were occupied, the war in the west would not be won for that. And to occupy Russia right across to the Pacific would be a superhuman task. Even at the end of November, when the war had been going on for five months, the Germans admitted that it had taken them twice as long as they expected. The black earth was converted by the ceaseless rains into seas of mud in which it was impossible to distinguish roads from fields. Added to that, resistance grew stronger the further east they went.

Towards the end of November representatives of thirteen States assembled in Berlin and concluded the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact. The Communist party was recognised now in only three States of Europe: Russia, England and Sweden.

On 3rd December the Germans had to evacuate Rostov.

The U.S.A. announced that by July 1943 there would be five million American soldiers in Europe to destroy Germany. On 7th December the Japs made their attack on Pearl

Harbour, a deed which four years later was to cost the Emperor his authority and Japan her East Asiatic Empire.

On 21st December Field-Marshal von Brauchitsch resigned command of the German armies in the east and Hitler himself assumed supreme control of the Army.

Churchill, in a speech to the Senate in Washington, said that victory was not to be expected in 1942, but that in 1943 it would come and that then there would be a lasting peace for all nations, in which the rights and future of the small States would be assured.

On the last day of the year things looked black for Germany. The Russian cold put an end to the advance, exactly as it had done in the days of Charles XII and Napoleon. America announced that Germany would be crushed by vast squadrons of bombers. In Germany it was said that Britain was abandoning Europe to Bolshevism, which would mean the end of western civilisation.

At the turn of the year 1941-42 it became clearer than ever that one of the greatest mistakes that had been made over the Russian campaign was that it had been begun two months too late, which was due to Mussolini's unfortunate adventure in Albania and Greece and the war against Yugoslavia. As I have said before, the leaders drew no moral from the defeats of Charles XII and Napoleon. To this must be added the terrible blunder of not providing this army of millions of men with winter equipment in the form of clothes and furs. The men got their hands and feet frost-bitten by tens of thousands and were crippled for life. A national winter clothing collection was opened, and everyone joyfully sent contributions. By 4th January 32 million warm garments and one and a half million furs had been sent to the front. But this winter equipment came too late, the damage had already been done and the Army had suffered a blow which reduced its striking-power. The mistakes committed and the tactical errors round Moscow were probably the reason for von Brauchitsch's departure.

From Moscow, Lossovsky proclaimed that the Russian counter-offensive would never pause until the last German soldier had been driven from Russian territory. A week or so later Sir Stafford Cripps declared on the London radio

that Stalin's Empire would be the greatest and most powerful in Europe. He would generously and nobly protect all the small States on the Continent! At about the same time the Japs took Singapore. A few days later the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* made their bold dash through the Channel from Brest to Texel, slipping safely past the heavy Dover batteries. Germany had now only three battleships, these two of 20,000 tons and the *Tirpitz* of 35,000 tons.

In the middle of February Churchill made a broadcast in which he admitted Britain's difficulties with his usual candour. They would be overcome and victory was assured. "We shall draw from the heart of misfortune the vital impulse of victory." After the fall of France, Britain's position had been desperate. Now that the U.S.A. and Russia were in the war at Great Britain's side, all was changed. The two allies played the first and second violins, Britain the third. But Hitler was losing millions of soldiers and victory was certain.

On Germany's horizon rose threatening clouds, particularly in the Ukraine and the Rostov area. Germany's objectives on Russian territory were no longer set so far east as formerly. She contented herself with the line Archangel-Astrakhan, but also strove for the Baku oilfields. In a letter dated 14th February 1942 from which I have quoted before, and which constituted a reply to my thanks for the improved conditions granted the Archduke Karl Albrecht, Himmler wrote: "Germany of 1942 will continue to fight Bolshevism until the power of Stalin and Moscow is broken. It is deeply to be regretted, however, that all Germanic nations are not united in this struggle and that your own nation, Sweden, with some few exceptions, is playing no part either in deed or even in word in a war that must be decisive for the whole Germanic world." In March Litvinov urged a second front in Europe to relieve the burden on Russia. He declared at the same time that the Germans would be driven back to Berlin, indeed perhaps even further west. In May 1942 Churchill once more saw Britain's future in brighter colours. The successes of the German Air Force had been due to the fact that Britain had then been inferior in the air, but now the positions were reversed, as Germany would learn to her cost under a terrible bombing offensive that would rise in

crescendo all through the year. Russia was being provided with thousands of tanks from the U.S.A. and Britain. Germany's downfall was imminent. Churchill thanked the British people for their demand for a second front.

On 12th May I had a visit from an American, Professor Hopper, who had been several months in Sweden on some special mission. Some of my friends had prepared me for the fact that he would probably want to ask me what I considered to be the most suitable frontier between Finland and Russia, and I was consequently well primed on the subject and had my maps out ready before he came. He started off at once, however, on Central Asia and Mongolia, where he had been himself, and then for the space of two or three hours plunged deeper and deeper into Asia. He evidently enjoyed the chance to talk about something other than the war, and assured me that he had had a delightful time. Finland's name was never once mentioned. To me it was a rare pleasure to meet such a broadminded and sensible man. How glorious, peaceful and fruitful life on this earth could be if everyone were made of the same stuff as this, physically and mentally, big American!

Another Visit to Berlin

IN the spring of 1942 I had received an invitation from the Geographical Society in Berlin to go and give a public lecture on the scientific results and publications from my expedition to Asia in 1927-1935. I had been working hard without a break ever since the Christmas of 1940 and although the lecture was not to take place until June, I decided all the same to travel down on 16th May so as to allow time for a little "rest" in the southern sun on our balcony at the Kaiserhof. I was accompanied once more by my faithful secretaries, Alma and Ann Marie, and we were received in Berlin with the same cordial hospitality as ever.

In conversation with Germans, Norway often came under discussion. All the Germans to whom I spoke agreed with me when I said:

"If you want things to calm down in Norway, then drive out Quisling, Terboven and the N.S. and let the military and elected representatives take control of the administration."

The Germans thought it would be easier to introduce a change directly after some great victory. Dr. Draeger told me that on 9th April 1940 he had been offered the post of Reich Governor in Norway, but had refused. I said:

"The situation in Norway would have looked better now and feeling between Sweden and Germany would have been different if you had accepted the post. Why did you refuse it?"

"I had too many personal friends in Norway."

"Why not a change of guard now, and for you to replace Terboven?"

"Because it would look as though we meant to stay, and actually the occupation of Norway is only temporary."

On 4th June a magnificent reception was given at the Haus der Flieger for Marshal Mannerheim. It was his 75th birthday, and speeches were made in his honour by General

von Dittmar, Dr. Hans Draeger and the Finnish Minister, Herr Kivimäki. Military bands played nothing but Finnish pieces and "Finlandia" rang out proudly above the heads of the distinguished gathering.

The following day my lecture took place in the large hall of the Philharmonie, which was full to capacity.

On 9th June the Geographical Association gave a grand banquet at which I met a number of old friends, among them the 85-year-old Professor Albrecht Penck, Richthofen's successor at Berlin University. He was still remarkably spry for his years and took himself home alone through the blackout by underground railway. He died a few years later in Prague.

I had been prepared in advance as to the object of the strange deputation which waited upon me in our sitting-room at the Kaiserhof on 10th June and which was led by Professor Wüst, the Rector of Munich University, and consisted for the rest of various doctors, among them the energetic Tibetan explorer Dr. Schäfer. The plan, which Professor Wüst read out from a sort of deed of foundation, was that a Reich Institute for the Exploration of Central Asia should be founded by and at Munich University. When I first heard of the scheme I had objected that the Institute ought not, as proposed, to bear my name but rather one of the great German names that will always be associated with Asiatic exploration —Carl Ritter, Alexander von Humboldt or Ferdinand von Richthofen. I had been told in reply that a refusal on my part would be misunderstood by and might offend the high authorities that had approved the plan, among them the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment in Berlin, the Ministry of Education in Munich, and not least Reichsführer S.S., Heinrich Himmler, who was personally interested in Tibetan exploration. A letter from Himmler on the subject was also read out by Professor Wüst.

It only remained for me, therefore, to express thanks for the great honour that had been done me, and to await the foundation and opening of this institute which was to take place later on, a ceremony at which I promised to be present. It was held, in my presence, in the middle of January 1943.

The strategic situation on the various fronts as it stood at the middle of June 1942 was described to me by a neutral

Military Attaché in the following terms: The Germans are finding it heavy going, he said, but they are better equipped in every way and their soldierly qualities are of an altogether different class. The Russian soldiers are determined, nationalistic and patriotic. The Communist attitude is falling further and further into the background. A large-scale offensive is expected against Stalingrad, the old Tsaritsyn, on the Volga, the capture of which would mean the cutting off of the Caucasus and the oil fields. But it would also lengthen the German supply lines and make them still more unmanageable. Leningrad was a hard nut to crack. Although 1½ million women and children had been evacuated during the winter, the city still had three million inhabitants. A German offensive was to be expected at Murmansk. Bands of partisans numbering 300 to 700 men were in action behind the German lines and being fought from the air. The Russians were not short of petrol. The yearly production of raw oil in the "Ural Neft" was 6 million tons, in the Baku district 23 million, at Grozny (Vladikavkas) 6 million and at Maikop 1½ million.

A few days later I had a very instructive conversation with Herr Kivimäki, the Finnish Minister, at his Legation. He had just seen Ribbentrop, who took a particularly optimistic view of the situation.

On 18th June Frau Suse Brockhaus had come to Berlin and with her we went to see General Field-Marshal and Frau von Brauchitsch at their villa in Dahlem. After coffee we took a walk in the glorious park, where flowers had had to make way for potatoes and tomatoes. The Field-Marshal, who wore his uniform and had sentries at the gate and entrance, took me later into a room where we had an hour's conversation. "Britain could have saved her greatness if she had thrown in her lot with Germany."

Not by word or hint did Brauchitsch give me the slightest indication of what in his inmost heart he thought of his own position. He was imperturbably calm, collected and controlled, and avoided discussing the Russian campaign and its prospects. But it was not hard to understand that he must be suffering acutely from not being allowed to take part in it any longer, for to a commander of Brauchitsch' stature it

could not but feel bitter not to be able to serve his country in its hour of need. Of course he still followed the Russian campaign in all its aspects, and watched with bitterness and indignation the mistakes which were committed and of which he, if he had been allowed to remain as *Oberbefehlshaber Ost*, would never have made himself guilty. It was one of Hitler's greatest mistakes to dismiss him just when he was most needed.

One of my German friends told me on a later occasion that Brauchitsch had wanted to go over to position warfare as early as at the beginning of October 1941 in order to straighten out the front and save men. But Hitler wanted to press ever further forward and did actually reach within 11 miles of Moscow. Fresh reverses had resulted in Brauchitsch asking to be relieved of his post, to which the Führer had replied: "That is for me to decide." Brauchitsch had suggested in good time an appeal in Germany for the collection of winter clothes. But nothing had been done, because they did not want to let the Japanese get the impression that the German Army had not been perfectly well equipped. It was considered, so people said, that the Japanese might have grown suspicious and refrained from going to war with the U.S.A. Not until the Japs, by their attack on Pearl Harbour on 7th December 1941, were helplessly and irrevocably committed to war, was the German appeal sent out, and immediately afterwards Brauchitsch was dismissed so as to make it appear as though he were responsible for the neglected winter equipment. Generals Guderian, Höppfer, von Rundstedt, von Bock and Halder were on Brauchitsch's side. The Field-Marshal's departure gave rise to a great deal of talk. Later on it was said that he had been obliged to rest on account of heart weakness and was not allowed to receive visitors. He died in October 1948 at a hospital in Hamburg.

On 26th June we drove out to Wannsee, Am Sandwerden, where Dr. Walter Funk, Reich Minister of Finance, had a luxurious and expensively furnished villa. He himself was in his best form, friendly and jocular as ever. I presented him with a copy of the book Suse Brockhaus had published: *Sven Hedin und Albert Brockhaus, eine Freundschaft in Briefen zwischen Autor und Verleger*, 1942. He asked me jokingly

when the correspondence between himself and me was to be published. Little did I think then that it would be printed in only a few years' time, and in such tragic circumstances for Germany.

With regard to politics, Funk entertained the same optimistic views as all the other leading Germans at this time. In Russia a decision would shortly be reached that would result in the establishment of a *limos* or frontier wall from Archangel along the Volga to Astrakhan. But the real decision in the major war would come in the Middle East, where three continents and three oceans meet, i.e. in the Eastern Mediterranean, Egypt and Suez. The danger he feared most for Germany was the sixty thousand aircraft the Americans were proposing to send over. But before that happened Germany would have at her disposal a corresponding number of anti-aircraft guns. Destruction would be colossal, the sufferings of the civil population would drive them to despair, but Germany could never be conquered from the air, neither could such a war as this be decided at sea. Only by the armies and on firm ground could the final decision be forced.

Afterwards we passed on to the Norwegian question. Funk said: *" In Bezug auf Norwegen ist der Führer stur "*, that is to say, where Norway is concerned the Führer is pig-headed, obstinate, headstrong and nothing will make him alter his ideas. Terboven was to go and see him on 29th June. Funk said that the Reich Governor disapproved of much that had been done in Norway! He thought that I ought to talk to Terboven, but I assured him that I considered such a task too thankless, not to say hopeless. I had spoken many times to outstanding Germans about the policy, objectionable in itself and damaging to Germany herself, that was pursued in Norway and had always received the answer that I was perfectly right. Funk repeated: *" Ja der Führer ist stur und lässt in Bezug auf Norwegen nicht mit sich reden."*[1]

I had learnt from Hans Brockhaus that the old-established publishing firm of F. A. Brockhaus of Leipzig was threatened with being closed down, and I asked Funk now whether it was possible that a firm that had spread German culture and

[1] "Yes, the Führer is obstinate and refuses to listen to reason where Norway is concerned."

German knowledge throughout the world from its presses with so much honour for 133 years could suddenly be paralysed by a Government ukase. That sort of thing could only be possible if Germany had been occupied by a foreign Power. He replied:

"The principle which I, as Reich Minister of Finance, feel I should follow is that those printing-presses which produce the best results with the least number of workers and the least consumption of coal should be allowed to continue, the rest must close down."

I: "I should be very sorry if you were to give any orders depriving me of my old publisher."

Funk: "Oh no, it will not be as bad as that. Brockhaus can continue to print your books at other printing-presses and he will always be able to pay your royalties. The publishing firm will remain, only the printing and book-binding departments will be closed. And even that is only a temporary measure. When we are through with the Russians the troops will come home again and return to the factories and work will resume its normal course."

I: "For the past 44 years all the German editions of my books have been printed by Brockhaus. I should be deeply grieved if any restrictions were to be imposed on this world-famous firm."

Funk: "Well, I will consider the case and let you know the result. You need have no fears."

No drastic close-down orders were issued to Brockhaus now. The temporary liquidation of the old firm 1½ years later was due, not to any German ukase, but to the American bombers that laid the whole Querstrasse quarter of Leipzig in dust and ashes on 3rd December 1943. I do not know how many thousands of my books went up in smoke on that occasion. Throughout the whole of 1944 Brockhaus had my books printed at eleven different printing-presses and distributed them all over Germany. The Russian authorities have treated Brockhaus with great generosity and helpfulness. The same goodwill and equal courtesy is being shown now by the Americans to Hans Brockhaus in Wiesbaden, where he has been busy ever since 1945 founding a branch of the firm. No one can tell what the future may bring, but it may

be that one day Wiesbaden will prove to have been the new but only temporary capital of the German books.

On 27th June we were invited to a garden party at Minister of State Meissner's, where we met a number of well-known and interesting personalities. Meissner said that the Führer had had a terrible burden of work on his shoulders recently as he had been pondering day and night on the Russian and Egyptian campaigns, and when the previous evening he had gone to his headquarters, Meissner had had to stand and wait for hours before he saw his opportunity to present certain messages that had recently come in. He added that if I wanted to meet the Führer I should have to be patient for a while yet, but I assured him that I had no wishes in that direction.

We were called for on 29th June in brilliant sunshine by General Friedrich, Mayor of Potsdam, who drove us out at break-neck speed to his town, where lunch was served. The head waiter at the restaurant came in and announced that Mersa Matruh had fallen and 6,000 prisoners been captured. Afterwards we drove out to Frederick the Great's theatre at the New Palace, where we heard a wonderful concert with Edwin Fischer at the piano, and some glorious songs were sung. The most moving thing about the famous theatre, however, was the audience, which consisted for the most part of severely wounded soldiers. Many of them were carried in on stretchers, which were laid along the seats. Numbers had lost an arm or leg, others were blind, others again had their heads swathed round with bandages. The General made an encouraging speech to them and thanked them for having sacrificed themselves for their country's victory and their people's freedom. We sat in a front box together with General Oshima, the Japanese Ambassador, Madame Alfieri, wife of the Italian Ambassador, and a number of Italians and Japanese. Oshima was interested to hear that in 1908 I had been the guest of his father, who was then Commandant in Port Arthur. He told me that his father was still alive and was in his eighty-seventh year.

After the concert we took a short drive in the wonderful park round Sans Souci, and saw the graves in which Frederick the Great's favourite dogs lay buried. Finally we drove out to

the Garrison Church, at the door of which we were received by the pastor of the church, Professor Kaniz, the historian. While the organ entoned " Our God is as a mighty shield," we moved into the church, where, to subdued strains of the works of immortal masters, Professor Kaniz gave us a brief lecture in which Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII and Frederick the Great shone as stars of the first magnitude. When the lecture was over we stepped into the small sepulchre where in the dim half-light the great King rests in a small, unassuming zinc tomb. Afterwards in the church General Friedrich made a charming speech in honour of his Swedish guests, which was duly answered by me, and we drove home after an unforgettable day.

On the first day of the second half of the year von Tschammer und Osten gave a dinner for thirty guests in the banqueting hall at the Palace of Sport. This dinner was of a sportsmanlike simplicity and instead of wine we drank iced cup. But when, later on in the evening, our host prayed for silence and told us that a telegram had just arrived announcing the fall of Sevastopol, and that Rommel was only 50 miles from Alexandria, there were calls for champagne and the atmosphere grew festive.

* * *

On 10th July 1942 we were back in Stockholm and busy again with our normal occupations. The great drama moved on its course, to the impoverishment and destruction of the world. Both in Britain and America demands for a second front grew louder. Germany was beset from every side. I myself did not believe that Germany could ever suffer military defeat, but on the other hand I did not consider it possible that she could ever defeat America, Great Britain and Russia, whose forces were constantly growing whereas Germany's were on the decline. The greatest danger to Germany I considered to be the superiority of the American bombing force. At the end of the month Air Chief Marshal Harris reminded the Germans that American manufacture of aircraft was to be doubled, and that every town in Germany and the whole of her industry would be wiped out. We too, in Sweden, had a reminder of our mortality when eight bombs were dropped by two foreign aircraft on 25th July only a few

hundred yards from Borgholm. The German advance continued through Rostov, Kuban and Maikop. Even a layman could not help but recognise the danger to a victorious invader of penetrating too deep into enemy territory. The lines of supply lengthened day by day while the Russian reserves grew to an alarming extent. About the middle of August resistance round Stalingrad stiffened. The German armies were only 15 miles from the Caspian Sea.

We in Sweden had yet another reminder when the *O. F. Liljewalch* was sunk on 18th August with the loss of the crew of 33 and the captain, near Västervik, at about the same place as the *Luleå* had been sunk. The Russians made determined thrusts at Vyazma and Rzhev and there was bitter fighting at Kaluga and Stalingrad. Armies of millions were locked in the death-grip. The flower of a generation of German and Russian youth vanished in blood.

On 3rd September three years had passed since the outbreak of the unhappiest of all wars. In 1917, too, it had looked quite promising for Germany, but after that the weight of superior force had become too much. One seemed to detect a certain likeness between the two world wars. The objective was in both cases the same: *Praeterea censio Germaniam esse delendam*! But most Germans believed in victory. The iron ring round Stalingrad was drawn tighter and tighter, and on 6th September the city was cut off to north and south. In Africa Rommel was on the retreat. In the latter half of September the Germans forced their way in to Stalingrad, and there were murderous street battles and house-to-house fighting. Women and children were evacuated. The Russians sent their élite troops to relieve the town. In England it was said that if the town could hold out for another thirty days then Germany would have lost the war. By the time this period had expired the Germans had captured 24 of Stalingrad's 28 districts. The Russian troops and their commanding officers fought with dazzling bravery to save at all costs the Volga city that bore Stalin's name.

On 30th October Eden made a speech in which he said that Britain's objective was to put an end to Germany. Britain's chief concern was to decide the place and shape Germany ought to occupy in the new Europe.

At about this time improbable rumours were current about

a separate peace between Britain and Germany, by which Britain would have abandoned her allies, the U.S.A. and Russia!

By the beginning of November Rommel was retreating still further. Stalin declared, and rightly, that Germany could never be defeated without a second front. In Germany it was thought that he wanted Britain and America to have as bad a time as he had had. It was also said in Germany that the war would continue until Bolshevism had been exterminated.

On 17th November the newspapers reminded us that Senator Barkley had said on 31st March 1941 that if Germany had wanted to attack the U.S.A., she would have had more than sufficient pretext in the aid that was being sent to Britain. On 3rd June 1941, according to Gallup, 83 per cent. of the American people had been against war. After the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7th December the position was changed. Then war against Japan became everyone's duty. Not until after America's entry was the drama converted into a world war which embraced the whole earth except for the Antarctic. A humanity that follows its leaders as light-heartedly as that is committing suicide.

A Chinese diplomat whom I had met in Berlin came to see me about this time and made the following interesting comment: "This war is not a war in the old accepted sense. It is as though there had been an earthquake and people of quite a different kind had grown up. The men who now hold Britain's fate in their hands are blinded and besotted by the First World War. They conduct the war on the same principles as then, and cannot see that a new age is breaking through and that the old, out-of-date ideas will no longer do. That is why new, young, clear-sighted men ought to step forward and take the leadership as happened in Germany in 1933. If they did that they would force an agreement with Germany for the salvation of Europe against Russia and America. Only in that way could the British Empire and Europe be preserved from destruction. If that does not happen the British Empire will go under and Europe fall a prey to Russia, which five or ten years after this war will come back again in colossal strength."—This forecast from the end of 1942 deserves consideration in view of the spectacle we are now daily witnessing.

Another Conversation with Secretary of State von Weizsäcker.

MEETING Herr von Weizsäcker at the Swedish Legation I had asked whether I might call and see him at his office one day before my return to Stockholm, and he had told me I should be welcome at 5 p.m. on 2nd July. I accordingly presented myself at the appointed time at the Foreign Office at Wilhelmstrasse 74. The Secretary of State received me with the same warmth of manner and the same charming smile as I had come to expect from my previous meetings with him.

It was clear from the start that he regarded the latest strategic and political developments as taboo, a sphere in which he did not intend to reveal his innermost thoughts by a single word. When I congratulated him and Germany on the latest successes, he merely replied:

"I know too little of these events to be able to judge of their military importance."

I: "But the rapid advance on Alexandria must imply a serious threat to Egypt, Port Said, Suez and the canal, and so also to the mastery of the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea."

Weizsäcker: "Yes, probably."

I: "In Russia, too, things seem to be moving ahead. The fall of Rostov cannot be far off, and after that the road will lie open to Stalingrad. By that operation the Caucasus and the oil will be cut off from Russia proper."

Weizsäcker: "The occupation of Stalingrad would in any case prevent all further use of the Volga by shipping. Both Russia and Egypt are such tremendous strategic problems, with such far-reaching ramifications, that only the highest staff circles are capable of understanding them."

With that he had disposed of politics and strategy and

contrived with diplomatic finesse to give me the impression that these subjects had not the slightest interest for him. He expressed himself with all the greater interest and all the more lack of restraint on a subject which he had also touched upon in our former conversation, namely the Swedish Press. After we had thoroughly discussed this subject, which was always brought up on the German side in all my talks with their leading personalities, I said:

"One thing that has always had a great deal to do with sharpening and embittering the tone of the Swedish Press is the hopeless and lamentable state of affairs in Norway. Even to sincere Germanophils, such as myself, it is incomprehensible that a Great Power with such a high culture as Germany can treat such a fine and intelligent nation as the Norwegians in the humiliating way she has been doing for more than two years now. The news from Norway that pours in an uninterrupted stream over Sweden gives rise to a hatred and indignation that only grows with time. In this respect the nation sees eye to eye with its Press."

Weizsäcker: "Yes, I know! To us too—Norway is a child of misfortune. That the situation prevailing in Norway now is lamentable is the universal opinion here in Germany. But now it is too late to alter it.

"During the time I was Minister in Oslo I used to meet King Haakon often and I believe I know him well. I have the greatest respect for him. At the decisive moment of his life he attached very great importance to the sworn constitution."

I: "When I came to Berlin six weeks ago, I thought that if a suitable opportunity offered I might talk to the Führer about Norway."

Weizsäcker: "I strongly advise you not to. You would gain nothing by it. It is possible, of course, that if you had caught the Führer in a particularly good humour, just after the fall of Sevastopol for example, he might have consented to discuss Norway, but you would never have moved him an inch."

I: "If I had had the opportunity of bringing up the question of Norway with the Führer I should, needless to say, not have done so as though I wanted to administer

good advice. I might perhaps have led round to the subject in connection with the Russian demand for a second front in Europe and the possibility of an attempted Anglo-French landing in Norway. The whole Norwegian administration could have been placed in the hands of the army of occupation. A change of that sort, coupled with the release of all Norwegian prisoners, would have been received with delight not only in Norway but all over Scandinavia. The consequences would have been as valuable as a victorious campaign. But unfortunately, I know very well that the Führer, even faced with such a perspective as that, would have struck his fist on the table and shouted: 'I want no advice, I know exactly how Norway should be treated.'"

Weizsäcker, laughing: "Yes, just so, just so, you obviously know the Führer."

I: "What is quite certain is that, after the introduction of a gentler and more humane system in Norway, the Swedish Press would have changed its tone altogether and shown more restraint in its comments upon Germany."

Weizsäcker: "I am not so sure about that. I certainly think that those of your newspapers that drew material from Norway simply in order to abuse us, would have been silenced on that point. But they would have continued to attack us on other points, and in general the tone towards Germany would have remained what it was."

I: "Everywhere in Sweden there is a deeply rooted conviction that a wise change of régime in Norway would be greeted with joy and satisfaction by the entire Swedish nation, and that as a result the baleful influence which the treatment of Norway now exercises on our feelings for the Germans and on the relations between our two countries would be removed at one blow. That is my personal opinion too. If I were an enemy of Germany's I should say: 'Let them go on treating the people harshly—they harm themselves more than anyone else and make themselves hated and loathed in all the Scandinavian countries!' But as it happens I am a sincere friend of Germany's, and so it is with sorrow and anxiety that I watch the ill-fated policy Germany is pursuing both in Norway and Denmark. For her own sake Germany must change this dangerous policy, for it can never be good for

Germany or her future to sow hatred and ill-will in our Scandinavian countries."

Weizsäcker: "Unfortunately the Foreign Office has practically nothing to say in the Norwegian question. Norway does not come under the German Foreign Office but under the direct jurisdiction of the Führer, who at present and until further notice regards Norway as part of Greater Germany. So that our Department can do nothing at all to bring about any change in Norway. It has happened that we have made representations and proposals from the Foreign Office, but then we have always been told that we were going beyond our brief."

Towards the end of the conversation we also touched on the subject of Finland after 1939. The Secretary of State was extremely interested to hear of my conversation with Hitler about the danger that had threatened Finland and her independence. He was particularly surprised that on my visit to Hitler on 5th December 1940 he should have confided to me the import of the conversation he had had just previously with Molotov in so far as it concerned Finland. I took good care not to commit the solecism of reminding the Secretary of State of the reply he had given at a dinner-party to my undoubtedly over-inquisitive question as to the part Finland had played in the conversation between Hitler and Molotov. Herr von Weizsäcker had replied on that occasion that in his opinion Finland had not come into the conversation at all. And what else could he have replied to such an improper question? He knew everything and it was his duty as a German official to be as close as an oyster, so that he *had* to put an end once and for all to any further indiscreet questions about Finland. After I had been told by Hitler what had been said and warned by him to keep the secret to myself, I realised how wise and right von Weizsäcker had been to set an impenetrable barrier round my curiosity.

As I rose now and we were moving towards the door, von Weizsäcker said:

"I promise to do everything in my power, when opportunity offers, to bring about an improvement in the situation in Norway in the direction you have indicated."

I: "I thank you most heartily, *Herr Staatssekretär*."

No improvement in Norway ever took place, but that was not von Weizsäcker's fault, for I realised very well from the conversation we had had that at heart he held just the same views on the question as I did. His term of office as Minister in Oslo in 1931-32 fell, it is true, under the days of the Weimar Republic, but perhaps for that very reason he would have got to know the Norwegians as they really were —open, proud and freedom-loving—and it must have distressed him to see how this people was being treated now.

I am convinced that, while he must grieve and sorrow at the terrible fate that has overtaken his own country, he must rejoice that Norway has been able to recover her freedom.

In this connection it cannot be considered out of place to quote a comment on German policy in Norway which was made to me on 12th January 1943 by Field-Marshal Keitel. It was at a dinner-party given by Goering on his fiftieth birthday, to which 160 guests had been invited. My place was on the left of Keitel, who himself sat opposite our host. Among the fourteen guests at the same table were: Funk, Bormann, Lammers, Alfieri, Himmler, Speer, Ohnesorge, Stoiay, myself, Dörnberg and the Hungarian War Minister. The dinner was held at Goering's flat in Leipzigerstrasse and began at 2.30 p.m. Towards the end of the meal there were speeches by Funk and Keitel. The latter, who had been abstracted and self-absorbed until his speech on behalf of the Army and in particular the Air Force was over, became open and talkative as soon as he had it off his mind. I turned to him then and said:

"*Herr Feldmarschall,* you will understand that as a Swede I naturally follow events in Norway with the closest interest. It is well known to us in Sweden that the conduct of the German occupation troops towards the civil population in Norway is irreproachable and that there can be no complaint about them. On the other hand we cannot but deeply deplore the methods that are only too often employed by the German civil administration, and the treatment, as unfortunate as it is unpsychological, accorded the Norwegian patriots. I myself regret this state of affairs not least because it damages Germany, and lowers the respect in which her name is held

in the world—to arouse hatred and loathing among all the Scandinavian peoples cannot help Germany forward towards her objective. Is there no possibility of bringing about a change for the better in this deplorable situation?"

Keitel: "Yes, *Herr Doktor,* I know and am very well aware that our policy in Norway is mistaken and that it took the wrong course right from the start. No one could regret this more sincerely than I do. In all great campaigns and in all world-shattering wars mistakes and errors are inevitable, and are generally not apparent until it is too late to alter them. We have committed a mistake of that sort in Norway. From a military point of view the occupation of Denmark and Norway was necessary and correct, and it was done not least in order to anticipate the British and prevent them from creating a northern front against us. It was after the occupation that mistakes were made, and now it is too late to correct them."

We had not had time to say any more before the dinner came to an end, the company rose and the guests all made their way out to the vestibule and dispersed.

Keitel's view of the German régime in Norway was thus the same in all essentials as that of all the other Germans, high or low, military or civil, with whom I had discussed the question ever since 9th April 1940. He openly admitted the mistake and regretted that it was too late to change the course of events.

A Letter from Hitler

THE letter from the Reich Chancellor which I received on 11th November 1942 through the German Legation and which was dated Führer's Headquarters, 30th October, and had accordingly been eleven days on the way, can only be properly understood in its full meaning and significance if seen against its historic background. Before proceeding to give the text of the letter itself, I will therefore remind the reader in concentrated form of the political events and the statements of my own which prompted Hitler to write the letter.

In the summer of 1941 one did not need to be a prophet to realise that the American aid being sent to Britain would sooner or later result in America's open and active entry into the war. Neither did one need to be a prophet to realise that such a development would be fatal for Germany and so for Europe as a whole.

My first visit to the United States took place in 1923 and was followed by two further visits, in 1929 and 1932. Altogether I spent not quite twenty months in America. During this time I learnt to know, love and admire this remarkable continent with its able, intelligent pioneering people. It was not as Buddhist pilgrims that Docent Gösta Montell and I erected a Lama temple in Chicago, but rather to satisfy the whim of a countryman of ours, Vincent Bendix, who also with regal generosity put us in a position to acquire a magnificent collection of Lamaistic and ethnographical objects for Sweden and America. In the U.S.A. I also got to know and formed friendships with a great many fine men and women, foremost among them Dr. Harvey Cushing, the most famous brain and spinal surgeon of his day. One of Cushing's

daughters was married to one of President Roosevelt's sons, and it was obviously thanks to the intermediary of Cushing that, when I was about to start out on a motoring trip through Central Asia in October 1933, I received a very kind telegram of good wishes from Roosevelt, inviting me to go and see him on my return. This visit to Washington was postponed, however, year after year until it was too late.

My publisher, Hans Brockhaus, tried time and again to persuade me to write a book about my experiences in the great and flourishing land to the west. The plan got no further than a work on the Grand Canyon, that deep gorge, perhaps the most impressive and grandiose natural feature which the modelling forces — the deposition of sediment, erosion, weathering and denudation—have created on the earth's surface. During the war we again discussed the travel book that never got written. But as it began to grow increasingly clear that America would enter the war against Germany, my thoughts of a book about this country revived, though not of my personal memories from former years, but a book that would provide food for consideration and carry a warning against an expansion of the war.

In the middle of July 1941 I began to collect material, both in the form of printed sources, particularly American newspapers of more recent years, and live information. My hope was to bring the book out in America before the war broke out. By the autumn it was finished. With the help of Hearst's agent in Stockholm a telegram was sent to this great newspaper combine proposing that Hearst should be responsible for publication. To send a manuscript by air was considered impossible on account of the strict censorship, under which the Clippers' mail was closely examined even on reaching the Bermudas. I offered to telegraph over the whole book at my own expense, 30,000 words, which at 13 kronor for 25 words, " night letter ", would have cost 15,000 kronor. Brockhaus guaranteed that the royalties I could expect from a German edition of the book would more than cover the cost of this expensive telegram. Hearst advised against telegraphing the book over. These negotiations and other attempts failed. And then the war broke out.

That, at all events, settled the matter and the book could no longer be considered for America. During the following year I expanded certain passages and the book was translated into German. More than a hundred thousand copies were sold in Germany. Later it was also published in Sweden.

In the present connection it will be sufficient to quote the chapter headings: Connections between America and Germany since the establishment of the Union—The United States and Germany in the First World War—Why did it come to a Second World War?—Social conditions in the United States between the two World Wars—The first year of the war — Roosevelt and the Totalitarian States — The Dictators of Democracy—America and the Second World War — America and Russia — America and Finland — American Imperialism—Britain's and America's war objectives—Postcript: North American foreign policy.

* * *

On 27th October the German edition of my book, *America in the struggle of the Continent,* appeared. I had sent dedication pages to Brockhaus in advance, which were fixed during binding into some hundred copies for my German friends. The first to be sent out from the publisher's was the copy I had dedicated to the Reich Chancellor.

I heard later that the Führer had received the book on 29th October and begun to read it that evening and continued through the night until he had finished it. The following day he dictated the letter, which was sent from his Headquarters to Meissner. I did not receive it, as I have already said, until 11th November. The letter, bearing the customary red stamp with the words *" Der Führer und Reichskanzler "* round the eagle above the swastika enframed in a laurel-wreath, ran as follows:

" Führerhauptquartier
den 30. 10. 42.
Sehr verehrter Herr Doktor Sven Hedin!

You were kind enough to send me, with a personal dedication, your book, *Amerika im Kampfe der Kontinente,*

published by the firm of F. A. Brockhaus of Leipzig. I thank you very much for the attention you have thus shown me.

I have already read the book through and am particularly pleased that you have dealt so thoroughly with the offers I made to the Poles at the beginning of the war. When I look back on that time to-day, it all seems so far away and feels so unreal that I positively reproach myself for having gone so far in my proposals. For there again people who thought to do evil have done good. If Poland had been prepared to accept the agreement I offered, then it would never have come to war. But in that case Russia would have been able to complete her armaments to a scale that we only now know and are in a position to estimate. Another five years of peace, and Europe would simply have been crushed flat under the weight of the Bolshevik war machine. For it is obvious that, once the German-Polish disputes had been settled, the Reich and above all the National Socialist movement would have turned their attention in the first place to culture and above all to the social questions. Even if we had not directly neglected armaments, they would at all events have been allowed to remain within limits which in a few years' time would inevitably have resulted in our helpless inferiority to this Asiatic colossus. Europe's destiny and with it a several thousand-year-old culture would in these circumstances doubtless have met its end. For if it is primarily the man, i.e. the soldier, who fights the war, yet the weapons that are placed in his hand are no less decisive. But Bolshevism would have succeeded in sending a synthesis of millions of fanatical and brutal fighting men with an inconceivable weight of armament to pound its way across harmless old Europe.

Unquestionably the man who bears the guilt for this war, as you state at the end of your book, is exclusively the American President Roosevelt. Only, when he and his confederates let loose this war, they roused at the very last minute, even though doubtless unintentionally, the continent that boasts the most beautiful human culture, and enabled it to go with eyes open to meet a danger which only a few years later it would probably have been unable to overcome. I do not doubt now for a second that we and our allies will go on

battering at this colossus until in the end it collapses.

It is in any case my unalterable decision never to lay down arms until Europe can be considered as firmly secure both from east and west, and so as safe.

I take this opportunity of sending you, *verehrter Herr Sven Hedin,* my best wishes for your health and continued prosperity, and remain with kindest regards

Yours sincerely,

Adolf Hitler."

I never answered Hitler's letter. It was simply a letter of thanks for the book I had sent him, and as such required no answer. Neither in the present book have I any occasion to enter upon an analysis of its contents. It can speak for itself. All I shall add is a few brief commentaries on it.

When Hitler spoke of the agreement he had offered Poland and the acceptance of which by the Poles would have prevented the outbreak of war and so of the Second World War, he must have had in mind the famous sixteen points which Ribbentrop read aloud to Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador, at a meeting with him late in the evening of 30th August 1939, but without letting him see the written text. I do not propose to comment any further on the circumstances of this occasion, which are already known to the public.

In his letter Hitler attaches particular importance to the closing words of my book: "This war will go down in history as President Roosevelt's war," a name which first originated in isolationist circles in America.