# BLASTING THE HISTORICAL BLACKOUT

Professor A. J. P. Taylor's
"THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR"
Its Nature, Realibility, Shortcomings and Implications

By HARRY ELMER BARNES

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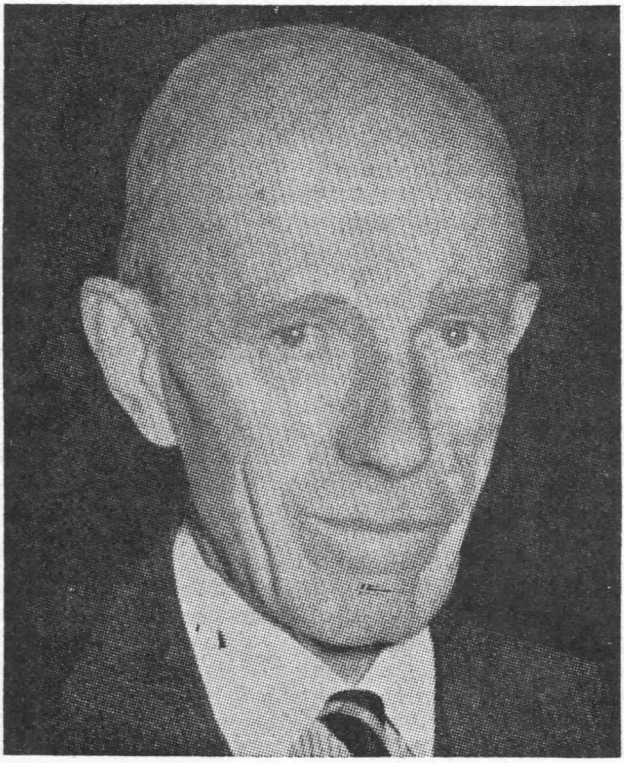

**Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1881-1959**
**Earl of Halifax**

***As British Foreign Secretary, he was mainly responsible for the outbreak of war in September, 1939.***

## BLASTING THE HISTORICAL BLACKOUT
## AN
## INTRODUCTION
## BY
## Dr. Austin J. App

What Dr. Barnes hoped had finally blasted the historical blackout was Professor A.J.P. Taylor's *The Origins of the Second World War,* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1961). His pamphlet, *Blasting the Historical Blackout,* celebrating, as it were this event, is his best single summary of the facts leading to World War II. Among other things, it shows convincingly for most honest readers that Hitler did not want war in 1939, did not threaten the world or want to conquer it, then or later, that his request of Poland was eminently modest and justified, that it was British leaders, like Lord Halifax, who plotted the war, and Roosevelt *who desired to have the European war break out as soon as possible.* (p. 20).

Dr. Barnes underlines Professor Taylor's eminence as an historian, his socialism, and his oft expressed anti-Germanism. Only facts and integrity could have induced Taylor to write this "truthful book on the responsibility for the second world war." With it, wrote Dr. Barnes, "the 'Historical Blackout' has really been blasted, at least in the English speaking world" (p.5).

Actually this brochure is less about the obstacles to revisionist publication than an analysis of the revisionist truths Taylor set down and an expression of hope that in 1962 and subsequently there will be many more such break-throughs. The booklet is the best summary of the revisionist status regarding the Munich Pact of 1938 and the Polish-German *causus-belli* in 1939. It describes the Munich Pact as a triumph of justice and good sense, and the Polish rejection of the German request for a corridor through the corridor and for self-determination for Danzig, as a stupidity and tragedy. The Poles committed it, he shows, only because Lord Halifax, British Foreign Secretary, and Sir Howard Kennard, British Ambassador to Poland, urged them to reject it, and they did so only because Roosevelt wished them to and had assured them of U.S. Support.

When in March, 1966, this brochure was about to go out of print, Dr. Barnes, saying it was too expensive for him to re-issue it himself, was glad to authorize me to get it back in print. It is therefore probably the most readily available of all of Dr. Barnes' brochures.

### ,NOTE TO THE PRESENT PRINTING
### May, 1976

The edition of 1966 was actually produced with my direct and Dr. Barnes' indirect approval, by the Christian Educational Association, publisher of *Common Sense* (Box 807, Union, N.J. 07083). Since it went out of business in about 1971, that printing of *Blasting the Historical Blackout* has been virtually unavailable. Consequently, Liberty Bell Publications (Reedy, West Virginia, 25270) has again printed it from Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes' original of May 1963.

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# THE HISTORICAL BLACKOUT AND A. J. P. TAYLOR'S "THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR"

What is known as the "Historical Blackout" is a theme with which I have dealt in a number of places previously, such as brochures on "The Struggle Against the Historical Blackout," "The Court Historians versus Revisionism," "Revisionism and the Promotion of Peace," and the first chapter of Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace.

What is meant by the term, in its more usual and current application, is the effort which has been made since the outbreak of the second World War to suppress the truth relative to the responsibility for this great conflict and the manner in which the United States entered the war. This has involved ignoring or suppressing the facts which run counter to wartime propaganda when writing books on these subjects, and suppressing, ignoring, or seeking to discredit those books which have taken account of such facts. In a broader sense, the term could be extended to include any efforts to suppress or discredit those historical works that run counter to the generally accepted views on public affairs, especially international relations.

In my writings on the subject and in most of those produced in the United States, attention has been concentrated on the manner in which this policy and technique have operated in this country but the tendency has been general all over the civilized and literate world.

After the first World War the defeated countries, such as Germany, Hungary and Austria presented such facts as they could bring forth to justify their case and demonstrate their innocence of sole or primary responsibility for the outbreak of war in August, 1914. This has not been the case since 1945. In neither Germany nor Italy has there been much activity in producing historical literature designed to present the case of these countries with respect to the events of 1939, and what is known as Revisionism —the effort to get at the truth on the second World War—has been sporadic and fragmentary in Japan. West Germany and Italy have almost outdone the victors in castigating their leaders of 1939 days and their alleged guilt, and the East Germans have been additionally throttled by the intensely Germanophobe and anti-Hitler attitude of Soviet Russia.

The most striking progress in breaking through the Historical Blackout has been made in the United States, where the literature has concentrated mainly on revealing in detail how, as Clare Boothe Luce expressed it, President Roosevelt lied this country into war, an achievement commended and praised by the distinguished veteran American diplomatic historian, Thomas A. Bailey. It has also indicated the manner in which Roosevelt needled and forced Japan into war and prevented the commanders at Pearl Harbor from

receiving the information about the impending Japanese attack which was available in Washington several days before December 7, 1941.

The more important books that have presented this material have been those of Charles Austin Beard, George Morgenstern, Frederic R. Sanborn, Charles C. Tansill, William Henry Chamberlin and a book in which most of these men collaborated, Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace, which I planned and edited. Very little remains to be told on these themes, but those who maintain the Historical Blackout have been able to keep most of the vital information from the American public and out of the historical books which are used in the schools and colleges.

A whole generation has grown up which knows little or nothing beyond President Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" subterfuge and deception. No book has yet been published in the United States which is devoted primarily to telling the truth about the causes of the second World War, whereas American historians had fully and definitively covered the causes of war in 1914 within ten years after the Armistice of 1918. There is much valuable information on the subject in Professor Tansill's Back Door to War, but it is incidental to his main theme of how Roosevelt lied us into the war he encouraged in Europe.

In no country has the Historical Blackout been more intense and effective than in Great Britain. Here, it has been ingeniously christened "The Iron Curtain of Discreet Silence" by the able English lawyer and historian of warfare, Frederick J. P. Veale. Virtually nothing has been written to reveal the truth about the British responsibility for the second World War or its disastrous results. Until the appearance of Professor Taylor's book in 1961, the only work which had been published in England that dealt specifically with the origins of the second World War was the Diplomatic Prelude by Sir Lewis B. Namier, an able historian of Polish-Jewish origins. His own field was eighteenth-century English history on which he had written with distinction. His book on 1939, written in 1946, was vehemently pro-Polish and anti-German, and the author admitted that it was based chiefly on the severely censored wartime documents and the perhaps even more unreliable material presented as evidence in the Nuremberg Trials. The only appraisal of the whole affair was a brief paperback by a courageous Scot clergyman, Peter H. Nicoll, entitled in what was for the time of publication a prophetic vein, Britain's Blunder.

There was some honest and excellent military history written by such able authorities as General J. F. C. Fuller, Captain B. H. Liddell Hart and the authors of the official British history of the war. Britain's responsibility for the cruel and lethal saturation bombing was revealed by Sir Arthur Harris, J. M. Spaight, Liddell Hart, and C. P. Snow. The brutal treatment of conquered Germany was exposed by Victor Gollancz. The

public hypocrisy and legal casuistry of the Nuremberg and other post-war trials were candidly treated by Montgomery Belgion, Lord Hankey and Veale, the latter of whom also called attention to some of the war crimes of Russia and of Communists generally. Captain Russell Grenfell ridiculed the unthinking hatred of Germany which had been promoted by Sir Robert Vansittart, Professor F. J. C. Hearnshaw, Lord Russell of Liverpool, and others, but he had to get his book published in the United States.

There has been even greater success in Britain than in the United States in preventing any such realistic and honest material from reaching the public or the schools and colleges. Only the books by the honest military historians received even a modicum of attention. The complete edition of Mr. Veale's work on Nuremberg had to be brought out in the United States, and it remained virtually unknown in Britain, although it was warmly commended in a Foreword by no less eminent and respected a Britisher than Dean William Inge of St. Pauls. Even his book which is mainly on communist or communist-inspired war crimes received the silent treatment despite a commendatory Foreword by the justly famed Lord Hankey. The British public possessed no knowledge enabling them to take summa cum grano the voluminous and pompous attempt at self-glorification and vindication by Winston Churchill. There was, of course, plenty of interest in, and approval for, the strongly anti-German and vehemently anti-Hitler historical writings of Sir Lewis Namier and Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper and the Germanophobic blasts turned out by Vansittart, Professor Hearnshaw, and Lord Russell of Liverpool.

Hence, nothing could have been more astonishing or less expected than for the best known of current British historians, and one with a long record of consistent Germanophobia, to produce a book on the responsibility for the second World War which is as resolutely revisionist as anything that appeared in Britain after the first World War. But such is Professor A. J. P. Taylor's The Origins of the Second World War.

No historian or publicist can fail to be impressed by the vast importance of the subject with which Professor Taylor has dealt in such sensational but honest, courageous, realistic and convincing fashion. The whole course of the post-war world policy and politics has been based upon the illusions and distortions concerning 1939 which Taylor has now so forcefully and factually shattered.

Even the West Germans, for the most part, including assuredly the Bonn Government of Chancellor Adenauer, have fallen in line behind the mythology which was created by the propaganda of the second World War. A good illustration is the recent statement of no less prominent a German political csientise than Professor Theodor Eschenburg, Rector of the University of Tuebingen, to the effect that: "Whoever doubts the ex-

clusive guilt of Germany for the second World War destroys the foundations of post-war politics." If the implications of Professor Taylor's book could be fully grasped by the political leaders of the West and implemented in practice, this could do much to mitigate the Cold War and save us from nuclear extinction.

It gives me particular pleasure to pay a tribute to the courage and integrity of Professor Taylor in producing this book. No other British writer has exhibited comparable fortitude in this field since Francis Neilson published his How Diplomats Make War in 1915, and Lord Lore-burn produced his How the War Came in 1919.

Aside from E. D. Morel's devastating attack on Sir Edward Grey's policy in his The Secret History of a Great Betrayal (1922), the first thorough-going British revisionist book on the causes of the first World War, G. Lowes Dickinson's The International Anarchy, 1904-1914, did not appear until 1926, after the mythology of unique German guilt for the onset of war in 1914 had already been demolished by a number of historians and publicists in several countries. The other resolute British revisionist volume on 1914, The Road to Ruin in Europe, 1890-1914, by Sir Raymond Beazley, did not appear until six years later, by which time the subject had been covered in a score or more of books in all the countries of the West. Most of Dr. George Peabody Gooch's illuminating writings about the causes of the first World War came after Revisionism was well established.

Professor Taylor's book is the first volume that concentrates on telling most of the truth about the crisis of 1939 to be published anywhere in the world. The nearest approach is the more comprehensive and learned book of the American professor Charles Callan Tansill, Back Door to War, which was published in 1952, but the extensive material on 1939 which appears in the Tansill volume is primarily introduced as the basis for understanding why President Roosevelt entered the second World War through the back door of Japan and Pearl Harbor.

In the light of both the public hysteria and the professional historical ferocity which have been intertwined with historical error for over twenty years in regard to the responsibility for the outbreak of the second World War in September, 1939, Professor Taylor's achievement must be regarded as one of the most courageous acts in the whole history of historical writing, a field which the reviewer has covered more comprehensively than any other historian, living or dead, and on which he has just refreshed his memory in the course of a thorough revision of his History of Historical Writing.

Moreover, since a man of Professor Taylor's reputation and prestige has now dared to bring out a truthful book on the responsibility for the

second World War, the "Historical Blackout" has really been blasted, at least for the English-speaking world. Authors and publishers who, in the future, wish to follow his precedent can do so without being so casually denounced as traitors or idiots. From the standpoint of historical science, this is the outstanding significance of Professor Taylor's book.

Due to the combination of Professor Taylor's public prestige and professional distinction, the brilliance and candor of his book, the fact that by some sort of accident it was serialized in Lord Beaverbrook's Evening Standard, and the further publicity given to the work by Professor Taylor's effective disposal of Professor Trevor-Roper in a widely observed BBC Television debate on July 9, 1961, his book constitutes the first instance in which any substantial breach has been made in Britain in the "Historical Blackout," or what F. J. P. Veale designates as the "Iron Curtain of Discreet Silence."

In a notable chapter on "Official History: Its Pitfalls and Criteria," in his History and Human Relations, Professor Herbert Butterfield of Cambridge had called attention to the defects and dangers in the works of the public chroniclers and the "court historians," with their inherent biases, special privileges, and distorted conclusions, but Butterfield has not contributed any substantial book on the second World War.

This subject of war responsibility has occupied more of my time than any other historical theme. Although I accepted the wartime propaganda concerning unique German responsibility for the outbreak of war in 1914, the articles by Professor Sidney B. Fay in the American Historical Review of 1920-1921 enabled me to see the error of my ways. In the course of the next decade, I surely did as much as any other person to promote and encourage the publication of books in both the United States and Europe which told the truth about the calamity of June-August, 1914, and April, 1917. The eminent British historian, George Peabody Gooch, the foremost authority on revisionist literature after the first World War, commented on my activity in this field as follows: "No other American scholar has done so much to familiarize his countrymen with the new evidence and to compel them to revise their wartime judgments in the light of this new material."

It may be appropriate here to point out that while I have never shared Professor Taylor's bitter hostility to Germany, neither have I been at all affected by pro-German sentiments. Of English descent, I was brought up, like most Americans of my generation, on the "Lafayette we are here!" legend. The only prominent German I ever saw prior to writing my Genesis of the World War was the famous German historian, Eduard Meyer, who gave one lecture at my university in 1912 when I was an undergraduate. I lost more in the way of prestige and popularity in Germany from the rise

of Hitler and the Nazis than any other American intellectual. Hence, I have no emotional reasons for rejoicing in Professor Taylor's setting the record straight on Hitler and 1939. I have no more desire to rehabilitate Hitler than does Professor Taylor, which is a little less than none. The leading American baiters of Germany and Hitler, such as William L. Shirer and Dorothy Thompson, were elevated from relative obscurity to fame and fortune by the rise of Hitler, and should have been personally very grateful for the Third Reich and its Fuehrer.

As a revisionist historian I am interested in the establishment of truth about the causes of the second World War. As a vigorous opponent of our entry into that war, I am happy to find the historical assumptions on Which my opposition was based confirmed by the leading English historian in this field in my generation. Due to the Anglomania of most American historians, as a result of Rhodes scholarships and the like, it is especially gratifying to have the grounds of American anti-interventionism between 1937 and 1941 supported by an English historian of Professor Taylor's eminence. It must be equally embarrassing to the American interventionists and "Blackout Boys."

During the last twenty years my main interest in the historical field has consisted in repeating these revisionist exercises relative to the far greater and equally needless calamity of 1939 and 1941. It has been my privilege to suggest, promote, encourage, edit, or all of these, a large number of the revisionist books which have appeared on the second World War in both the United States and Europe.

Of special importance is an as yet unpublished book by Professor David Leslie Hoggan on the causes of the second World War which will certainly provide the definitive account of the responsibility for this tragic and unnecessary event for a generation to come. Beginning as a learned Harvard doctoral dissertation in 1948 the author has continued work on it for some fifteen years. It may run to around 850 printed pages and, based on all available documents and much unprinted material, it not only confirms Professor Taylor's main conclusions but advances far beyond them to round out the picture for an indefinite period. It is currently going into print in Germany as The Causes and Creators of the Second World War, and will appear in the United States during 1962 as When Peaceful Revision Failed: the Origins of the Second World War.

I mention this work mainly because I have read it repeatedly in all the stages of its improvement from the 1948 dissertation through some four expansions and revisions, in keeping with further work and the appearance of new materials. Hence, I can pass judgment on Professor Taylor's book on the basis not only of my own studies but also on that of a body of

information far more complete than that which appears in Professor Taylor's remarkable and timely volume.

## PROFESSOR TAYLOR'S PAST RECORD AS A HISTORIAN INSPIRES CONFIDENCE IN HIS BOOK

The fact that Professor Taylor's book did not appear until almost exactly sixteen years after the collapse of Nazi Germany indicates how much greater has been the resistance to truth about war responsibility after the second World War than after 1918.

By 1934, a score or more of highly substantial and scholarly works had been published which told the truth about the causes of the first World War; to mention only a few, those by Morel, Dickinson, Beazley and Gooch in England, by Fabre-Luce, Renouvin and Demartial in France, by Stieve, Montgelas, von Wegerer and Lutz in Germany, by Barbagallo, Torre and Lumbroso in Italy, by Sidney B. Fay, J. W. Swain, W. L. Langer, and myself in the United States, and by J. S. Ewart in Canada.

Aside from the able and informed but incidental material on the background of the second World War in Professor Tansill's long and learned volume on American entry, the Taylor book still stands alone as an effort to replace propaganda by factual realism in relation to responsibility for the great calamity of 1939. Even those so-called revisionist scholars who have called attention to the disastrous results of the war have usually assumed that Germany was almost solely responsible for its outbreak.

It is unfortunate that Professor Taylor neglects and casts aspersions on American revisionist books dealing with the causes of the second World War, asserting that "they are not impressive from a scholarly point of view." Actually, Professor Tansill's Back Door to War easily equals if it does not excel for learning and scholarship any book on diplomatic history produced in the British Isles since 1939, and it provides a great deal of material on the origins of the second World War which corroborates Professor Taylor's conclusions. It also makes clear the large role played by President Roosevelt in promoting the war spirit in England, France and Poland between 1937 and 1939.

Even more regrettable is Taylor's failure to take proper account of Dr. Burton H. Klein's Germany's Economic Preparations for War. Taylor bases his contention that Hitler was not planning war in 1939 in large part on the lack of German economic preparations for war at that time (e.g. p. 218). The Klein volume is the definitive book on this subject, and will remain so indefinitely. Taylor could have greatly strengthened this vital sector of his work if he had thoroughly digested the Klein book. These are only two conspicuous examples of what Professor Taylor lost by his casual dismissal of American revisionist writings on the second World War. They

have been, on the whole, more impressive in their scholarship than those produced in the United States on the background of 1914.

Perhaps the weakest and most distorted phase of Professor Taylor's work is his brief treatment of Italy and Mussolini during the period covered (e.g. pp. 56-57). In the light of such books as Luigi Villari's Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini, Taylor's comments on Italy are little more than a travesty.

Few historians now alive could inspire more confidence in such a book as that of Professor Taylor than the author himself. For strategic value to revisionist writing on the second World War, even encyclopedic knowledge, prolonged thought, and earnest consideration, could not have led to the selection of a more perfect author for such a book. Had Taylor been known as a partisan of Germany in his historical writings, or a person who had, like Churchill, praised Hitler for his remarkable achievements in the rehabilitation of Germany in the 1930's, or were he a conservative who might be suspected of a furtive admiration for Nazi authoritarian ideology, there might be some valid suspicion that his conclusions preceded his researches and were shaped and warped by his prejudices. But, of all contemporary historians with a solid and well-deserved reputation for historical competence and craftsmanship, Professor Taylor was about the last one who would have been expected to produce a book that exculpates Germany and Hitler from not only total, but even primary, responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939.

His writings on contemporary European and German history over many years have been regarded by historians without any bias on the German question as rather extremely anti-German, and his personal hostility to Hitler and his regime has even equalled that of Professor Trevor-Roper. Moreover, Professor Taylor, being very congenial to the international policy of the British Labour Party, could hardly be suspected of having any cordiality to the Fascist or Nazi way of life or foreign policy. It is well to recall that not even Churchill, or Alfred Duff-Cooper and the Conservatives who attacked Chamberlain and the Munich settlement in October, 1938, were any more bitter or eloquent on this theme than Clement Attlee.

Whether they are correct or not, it is, therefore, palpably evident that Professor Taylor's analysis and conclusions are thoroughly sincere and honest, and as much the product of conscientious scruples as of historical erudition. Granted that he is in his right mind, about which I have heard no doubt expressed, it is inconceivable that his book is the product of levity, cynicism, satire, retaliation or self-amusement, as Trevor-Roper has rather more than hinted in his bitter attack on it in the July, 1961, issue of Encounter. No sane man amuses himself by expressing, and taking

worldwide responsibility for, serious opinions as repugnant to his own personal prejudices and preconceptions as they could well be to any literate person.

It is interesting to note that while Professor Taylor was the logical candidate for the distinguished post of Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, he was passed over by Prime Minister Macmillan, who apparently feared that Taylor could not be permanently trusted to avoid stating embarrassing historical truths and to maintain immaculate the "Iron Curtain of Discreet Silence." Hence, he gave the post to Trevor-Roper, who now sits in the chair once occupied by historical giants like Bishop William Stubbs and Edward Augustus Freeman, thus underlining the ravages wrought by war propaganda on the standards of British historical scholarship in the present century. But, granting his political purposes, Macmillan'e historical guesswork was beyond cavil.

## UNILATERAL REVISION OF THE VERSAILLES SYSTEM WAS FORCED ON HITLER BY ALLIED DUPLICITY AND LETHARGY

After these preliminary observations, which are indispensable for judging the importance and validity of Professor Taylor's work, we can now get down to the outstanding facts and conclusions which are expressed in the book. The readers of this brochure are not likely to be primarily concerned with diplomatic details. If they are, they can read the book.

The vital core of the volume is the contention that Hitler did not wish a war, either local, European, or world, from March, 1933, right down into September, 1939. His only fundamental aim in foreign policy was to revise the unfair and unjust Treaty of Versailles, and to do this by peaceful methods.

This is a most remarkable and unusual contention, however well defended in the book. Hitherto, even those who have sympathized heartily with the justice and need of revising the Versailles Treaty have, nevertheless, usually maintained that, even if Hitler's revisionist program was justified in its general objectives, he carried it out in a reprehensibly brusque, provocative and challenging manner, gladly or casually risking war in each and every move he made to achieve the revision of the Versailles system. In other words, even if his goal was justifiable, his methods of seeking to obtain it were unpardonably violent, deceitful and inciting.

Professor Taylor repudiates and refutes this interpretation as thoroughly as he does the charge that Hitler wished to provoke war at any time. He holds that Hitler was unusually cautious and unprovocative in every outstanding step he took to undermine Versailles. He let others create situations favorable to achieving his ends and then exploited them in a non-bellicose manner.

One thing is certain, even if one takes a most hostile attitude towards Hitler and Professor Taylor's thesis. This is that the Allies had some thirteen years in which to revise the Treaty of Versailles in a voluntary and peaceful manner. But they did nothing about it, although one of the main ostensible functions of the League of Nations was stated to be carrying forward a peaceable revision of Versailles. Professor Sidney B. Fay had proved by 1920 that the war-guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles, proclaiming that Germany and her allies were solely responsible for the first World War, had no valid historical foundation whatever.

After he came into power, Hitler waited patiently for some years for the Allies to make some practical move to revise the Versailles system before he occupied the Rhineland on March 7, 1936. Even on the heels of this action he publicly proposed on March 31, 1936, what Francis Neilson has called "the most comprehensive non-aggression pact ever to be drawn up." But the Allies made no cooperative response whatever; they totally ignored it.

In the meantime, Hitler had barely attained power when, on May 17, 1933, he proposed the most sweeping disarmament plan set forth between the two World Wars, but neither Britain nor France took any formal notice whatever of it. Even after he had introduced conscription in March, 1935, in response to the expansion of military conscription in France, Hitler declared that "The German Government is ready to take an active part in all efforts which may lead to a practical limitation of armaments." This proposal received no more response from Britain, France or the United States than that of May, 1933. Hence, if Hitler was to revise Versailles at all, it was completely evident by March, 1936, that it must be a unilateral action.

We may now consider what Professor Taylor concludes about the moves whereby Hitler accomplished all of his revisionist program except for the settlement with Poland, the failure of which brought on the European war in September, 1939. In doing so, we should always keep in mind Taylor's fundamental assumption about Hitler, to the effect that he was not a fanatical and bellicose psychopath—a veritable madman intent upon war— but a shrewd and rational statesman, notably in his handling of foreign affairs.

## NO PLANS FOR MILITARY AGGRESSION OR WORLD CONQUEST IN HITLER'S REVISION OF THE VERSAILLES TREATY

The case for Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland on March 7, 1936, was a thoroughly valid one, and the occasion was provided by the breakdown of the Stresa front, the success of the Italians in Ethiopia, and the

approval of the Franco-Soviet pact on February 27, 1936. Neither the French nor British offered any effective resistance, although if they had done so Hitler would have beaten a hasty retreat. His military situation was complete bluff. The occupation was an advantage to Britain, and no serious loss for the French: "The British were haunted by the fear that the situation of 1914 might be repeated—that they might be dragged into war for the sake of Czechoslovakia or Poland, as, in 1914 they supposed that they had been dragged into war for the sake of Russia. The German reoc-cupation of the Rhineland removed this fear. Henceforth, France had a defensive policy forced upon her, whether she would or no and most Frenchmen made no great complaint . . . Nor was the situation all loss for France. Germany, by reoccupying the Rhineland, used up the priceless asset that had brought her so many advantages; the asset of being disarmed." (pp. 100-101).

The general publics in Allied countries have not needed any specific documentary proof of Hitler's alleged maniacal determination on war; they have been satisfied with clinging to the all but unchallenged propaganda of wartime, indeed of some years before 1939. But scholars who have looked for documentary support for this damaging charge against Hitler have depended primarily on what is known as the Hossbach Memorandum, the record made by a German general staff liaison officer named Hossbach of a meeting on November 5, 1937, at the German Chancellery, which was attended by Hitler, his chief army and naval officers, the Foreign Minister, and Goering. There took place a general discussion of the European situation, present and future, and of the possible relations of German policy to this.

Most of the historical scholars who have read this document have declared that it confirms their preconceived opinions and definitely and permanently proves that Hitler here planned—or revealed his plans—for a great war of European conquest, perhaps even world conquest. This traditional attitude towards the Hossbach Memorandum is characteristically stated in W. L. Langer and S. E. Gleason's book, The Challenge to Isolation (p. 53): "The minutes of his (Hitler's) conference with the German military leaders in November, 1937, leave no doubt that only force, or at least an impressive and convincing show of force, could have stopped that demonic genius; that every concession, far from gratifying him, only whetted his appetite; and that every sign of yielding simply strengthened his conviction of his opponents' weakness and timidity. By the time of his epoch-making success at Munich, Hitler had already reached such an advanced stage of megalomania that he regretted not having insisted on much more, even at the cost of a great war." It is quite likely that Professor Taylor first approached this famous Memorandum with the usual anticipations, but he

came away from it with quite different conclusions. Facts apparently weighed more heavily with him than preconceptions.

This conference was not regarded as a meeting of any great importance by those who attended it, and apparently none of them gave it any further thought until, nearly a decade later, it was gratuitously and maliciously presented in the case against Goering at the Nuremberg Trials. Professor Taylor concludes: "Hitler, it is claimed, decided on war, and planned it in detail on 5 November 1937. Yet the Hossbach Memorandum contains no plans of the kind and would never have been supposed to do so, unless it had been displayed at Nuremberg. The speculations (of Hitler) were irrelevant as well as mistaken. Hitler did not make plans for world conquest or for anything else . . . They (his speculations) bear hardly any relation to the actual outbreak of war in 1939" (p. 134).

If the European public did not know of the Hossbach Memorandum, which most historians have used to brand Hitler as unquestionably one of the outstanding war criminals of all time, they were well aware of the spectacular Anschluss, or union of Austria with Germany, on March 12, 1938. They have used this to condemn Hitler in the same manner as scholars have used the Hossbach Memorandum, interpreting the entry into Vienna as an act of brutal military aggression.

Looking into the facts, Professor Taylor finds that Hitler was actually annoyed by the forceful manner in which the Anschluss had to be accomplished. He had intended to take over Austria peacefully and gradually by political manipulations from within. He was indignant over the fact that the situation developed in such a way that he had to seem to be accomplishing it by a show of force. The crisis was forced on him, mainly by the stupidity and duplicity of Schuschnigg.

Professor Taylor summarizes the essentials as follows: "Hitler had won. He had achieved the first object of his ambition. Yet not in the way he had intended. He had planned to absorb Austria imperceptibly, so that no one could tell when it ceased to be independent . . . Instead, he had been driven to call in the German army. For the first time he lost the asset of aggrieved morality and appeared as a conqueror, relying on force .... By the Anschluss— or rather by the way in which it was accomplished— Hitler took the first step in the policy which was to brand him as the greatest of war criminals. Yet he took this step unintentionally. Indeed, he did not know that he had taken it." (pp. 149-150).

Not much valid criticism could be made of the actual achievement of the Anschluss, since it had been recommended by most realistic and fair-minded students of the post-war situation ever since Versailles, and it was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by the vast majority of the people of Austria.

Few episodes or events in the history of civilized mankind have been more vehemently attacked and viciously pilloried than the Munich Conference of September 29-30, 1938. It has been depicted and denounced as a veritable incarnation of the cowardly betrayal of all principle and public ethics in international dealings. It gave rise to the most widely used political smear term of the present generation—"appeasement"—which is actually the procedure whereby most normal diplomacy had been carried on for centuries, namely, by rational and peaceful negotiations. Munich has also been especially portrayed as the most ignominous and irresponsible defeat Britain ever met in her entire diplomatic experience and the main cause of the second World War. Professor Taylor, on the contrary, finds that Munich "was a triumph for all that was best and most enlightened in British life."

Benes and Henlein, rather than Hitler, laid the basis for the Sudeten crisis, and the pressure for Czech capitulation was supplied mainly by Britain and France: "The British and French governments come forward as principals; and their object, however disguised, was to exact concessions from the Czechs, not to restrain Germany." (p. 161). The Munich Conference might have ushered in a new and peaceful era in European relations had it been properly supported by the principals, and it was really a triumph for Britain and rational deliberation in the handling of international problems. In no portion of his book is Professor Taylor more emphatic than on this point:

"The conference at Munich was meant to be the beginning of an epoch in European affairs. 'Versailles'—the system of 1919—was not only dead, but buried. A new system, based on equality and mutual confidence between the great European Powers, was to take its place. Chamberlain said: 'I believe that it is peace for our time!'; Hitler declared 'I have no more territorial demands to make in Europe' . . .

"The settlement at Munich was a triumph for British policy, which had worked precisely to this end; not a triumph for Hitler, who had started with no such clear intention. Nor was it merely a triumph for selfish or cynical British statesmen, indifferent to the fate of far off people or calculating that Hitler might be launched into war against Soviet Russia. It was a triumph for all that was best and most enlightened in British life; a triumph for those who had preached equal justice between peoples; a triumph for those who had courageously denounced the harshness and short-sightedness of Versailles." (pp. 187-189).

That Munich did not work out as had been hoped at the time was due more to British action and policy on the heels of Munich than to any deeds of Hitler. Chamberlain did not, or perhaps could not, stand up effectively against the myopic and bitter criticisms of Munich by both the British Con-

servatives and Laborites. Churchill proclaimed that Germany was getting too strong to be tolerated and must be smashed, if necessary by force of arms. Duff Cooper contended that the balance of power on the Continent of Europe must be preserved at all costs. Taylor fails to mention the fact that Clement Attlee attacked Munich with as great vehemence and bitterness as any conservative.

Instead of defending his Munich policy on the high level of statecraft and public morality to which Taylor has ascribed his motives, Chamberlain fell back on the lame excuse that Britain surrendered at Munich because it had been too weak to fight rather than negotiate; hence, it had to rearm speedily and thoroughly. "In this way, Chamberlain did more than anybody else to destroy the case for his own policy." (p. 190).

The usual explanation that Munich failed to preserve peace because Hitler violated his pledge not to make further territorial demands in Europe after the Sudetenland cannot be maintained on a factual basis. He actually made this pledge at a Sportpalast speech in Berlin on September 26, 1938, three days before Munich. He made no demand for Czchoslovakian territory after the Munich Conference and the transfer of the Sudetenland, and his demands for the return of the German city of Danzig, on which Poland had no valid claims, and for the motor road across the Corridor, could hardly be regarded as any literal violation of this pledge. Czechoslovakia fell apart in the natural course of the political disintegration which had been set in motion by the return of the Sudeten territory to Germany. Taylor emphasizes this fact at length.

Hitler did not provoke the movement for Slovakian autonomy, which was spontaneous. "Once again, Hitler was taken by surprise. The new crisis came on him unawares." (p. 201). His only logical move was to recognize Slovak independence. Hacha, Benes' successor as President of Czechoslovakia, appealed to Hitler, who took over Bohemia as a German protectorate on March 15:

"All the world saw this as the culmination of a long-planned campaign. In fact, it was the unforeseen by-product of developments in Slovakia; and Hitler was acting against the Hungarians rather than against the Czechs. Nor was there anything sinister or premeditated in the protectorate over Bohemia. Hitler, the supposed revolutionary, was simply reverting in the most conservative way to the pattern of previous centuries . . . Hitler took the decisive step in his career when he occupied Prague. He did it without design; it brought him slight advantage. He acted only when events had already destroyed the settlement of Munich. But everyone outside Germany, and especially the other makers of that settlement, believed that he had deliberately destroyed it himself." (pp. 202-203).

The British and French had previously expressed their determination

not to implement a casual guarantee to Czechoslovakia. Lord Halifax, the British Foreign Secretary, admitted that Hitler's action saved them from embarrassment on this point. Hence, no literal guarantee was invoked to preserve the integrity of Czechoslovakia. Taylor's failure to provide a realistic explanation for the drastic change in British foreign policy, from this time onward, is the main defect and gap in his book, a matter to which I shall return later on.

Aside from inadequate emphasis on the extent and manner in which Lord Halifax and Sir Howard Kennard, the British ambassador at Warsaw, encouraged Poland not to negotiate a settlement with Hitler in August, 1939, Professor Taylor's account of the German-Polish crisis of October, 1938, to September, 1939, accords with his general thesis that Hitler did not want war. He makes it clear that Hitler wished a permanent and peaceful settlement with Poland rather than war.

The terms Hitler suggested to Poland, beginning on October 24, 1938, were extremely reasonable—far less drastic than many British leaders had suggested between the two World Wars. Even Churchill, at about the very time Hitler came to power, had declared in the House of Commons on April 13, 1933, that the question of the Polish Corridor was a leading issue that had to be adjusted if European peace were to be preserved.

Hitler asked for the return of Danzig and a railroad and motor road across the Corridor. Indeed, he proposed much more in return than he requested; he offered to guarantee the Polish boundaries as settled at Versailles after the first World War, something the Weimar Republic would never even consider. There is conclusive evidence that the Polish leaders believed that Hitler's terms of 1938-1939 were sincere, and were not merely the first step in a sinister program to absorb Poland later on by military force or political intrigue.

But Beck in Warsaw refused to accept these moderate terms, and on March 26, 1939, broke off negotiations with Germany. They were never again resumed down to the time war broke out on September 1, 1939. The stubborn refusal of Poland even to negotiate with Germany during the crisis of August, 1939, is fully revealed by Taylor, although he does not bring out the extent to which Beck was encouraged in this intransigence by Halifax and Kennard, especially the latter. Strangely enough, Kennard's name does not appear in the index. Even in the book itself, it only appears casually in two or three footnotes for the purpose of identifying diplomatic messages. Yet Kennard surely played as large a role in bringing on war in 1939 as Izvolski did in 1914. Taylor does, however, make it crystal clear that the Poles were far more willing to envisage war than was Hitler. Right down to the final crisis Hitler had hoped for peaceful revision. Even during the last hours of peace he only increased his demands to include a plebis-

cite in the northern tip of the Corridor. It would have taken a year of peaceful negotiations to complete the arrangements under thus plan, and the important Polish port of Gdynia was explicitly excluded from the proposed plebiscite area.

In his final conclusion as to the coming of war in September, 1939, Professor Taylor rejects the verdict which has been accepted for more than two decades, namely, that it was the inevitable product of a long premeditated and wicked plot on the part of a maniacal Nazi dictator. He contends to the contrary, that it was a calamitous mistake, not premeditated by either side, and was primarily the product of diplomatic and political blunders on both sides: "This is a story without heroes; and perhaps even without any villains . . . The war of 1939, far from being welcome, was less wanted by nearly everybody than almost any war in history . . . The war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result on both sides of diplomatic blunders . . . Such were the origins of the second World War, or rather the war between the three Western Powers over the settlement of Versailles; a war which had been implicit since the moment the first war ended." (pp. 17, 104, 219, 278).

One of the most often cited "proofs" that Hitler was determined on war in August, 1939, is that he signed the pact with Russia on August 23rd. It has been all but universally held that he did this solely to protect his rear in the East and would, hence, feel safe in making war against Poland, and against Britain and France if the latter proved necessary. Professor Taylor believes, however, that the evidence indicates that Hitler was "aiming at another 'Munich,' not war" (pp. 260, 263). This is further confirmed by Hitler's generous and comprehensive offer of a final understanding with England on August 25th, the very day that Britain confirmed her new blank check to Poland (pp. 268-269). Taylor agrees that this offer to England was genuine and "represented Hitler's permanent policy." Although he wanted a free hand to deal with the situation in the East, Taylor points out that "enlightened Western opinion" had also pronounced this Eastern situation "intolerable." (p. 269). Russia also appears to have thought that Hitler was seeking another Munich (pp. 262-263).

While dealing with the German-Russian situation, it is desirable to correct one important item in the usual indictment of Hitler which has been regarded by some as an even more heinous public crime than his pushing Europe into war in 1939, namely, the alleged base treachery involved in his attack on Russia on June 22, 1941. This is hinted at rather definitely even in Taylor's book (p. 263).

The common view is stated with the usual abandon in W. L. Shirer's The Rise, and Fall of the Third Reich, of which, incidentally, the Taylor book is a devastating refutation. Shirer declares that the German note to

Russia on June 22, 1941, "topped all the previous ones for sheer effrontery and deceit" because it charged that Russia had practiced sabotage, terrorism, and espionage against Germany, had resisted German attempts to establish a stable order in Europe, had conspired with Great Britain in the Balkans, and had menaced the Third Reich with troop concentrations. As a matter of fact, every word in these charges was true.

Until Hitler's sensational victories in the West in the spring and early summer of 1940, Stalin did live up reasonably well to his agreements in the August 23rd pact. But the fall of Belgium and France, and what appeared to be the certain capitulation of Britain, upset all of Stalin's calculations. The war seemed about to end without Germany, Britain and France being reduced to an exhausted stalemate, and with a victorious Germany at his door. From this time onward, Stalin ordered organized Communist sabotage in all the areas occupied by Germany, and elsewhere so far as possible, and directed extensive troop movements towards the German frontier. If there was any German treachery in the attack on Russia, it had been anticipated and matched by Russian policy and actions in the year between the fall of France and June 22, 1941.

Although Hitler offered very generous terms to Poland in 1938-1939, they were nothing compared to those which he offered Molotov in Berlin in November, 1940. Izvolski would quite literally have swooned with ecstasy over such a prospect—not only the freedom of the Straits but access to the Persian Gulf and the great riches of the Middle East. The fact that Russia rejected these brusquely is the best proof that Stalin wished war rather than a peaceful adjustment with Hitler.

It will hardly be necessary for any sane person to emphasize the fact that Professor Taylor does not seek to present Hitler as any combination of Little Lord Fauntleroy, George Washington and the cherry tree, Clara Barton and Jane Addams. He could be as devious, shrewd, inconsistent, self-contradictory, cruel and brutal as Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, although he did balk at saturation bombing of civilians until he was compelled to do so in retaliation. The main point here is that, unlike Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, he did not wish to have a war break out in 1939.

Hitler at least had the logic, common decency and courage to shoot himself when he realized the ruin that he had brought on Germany, even if he had not intended to do so. Churchill did not, although the damage he did to the British Empire was far greater and more permanent, in the long-range perspective, than what Hitler brought to Germany. Even the truncated West Germany has now recovered and is the second most powerful country in Europe. The British Empire has been liquidated and the situation in the British homeland becomes more precarious each year. Yet Churchill could find millions of benighted persons in Britain and the United

States willing to spend their money lightheartedly to buy the books in which he boasted of his achievements as Prime Minister. He still totters around, smirkingly giving his "V" sign, to the plaudits of his countrymen, despite the fact that today it more accurately implies "vanquished" than "victorious."

Roosevelt did not live long enough to shoot himself, unless one of the most fantastic of the apocryphal legends of the Roosevelt-haters is true. It is doubtful if he would have done so had he lived, although one of the most learned and talented of American publicists has suggested the following as a suitable epitaph for him: "He left the civilized world in ruins, the entire East a chaos of bullets and murder, and our nation facing for the first time an enemy whose attack may be mortal." An equally appropriate epitaph for Churchill was suggested by the English journal The European: "In terms of personal success, there has been no career more fortunate than that of Winston Churchill. In terms of human suffering to millions of people and destruction to the noble edifice of mankind there has been no career more disastrous. In that sad paradox lies the tragedy of our time."

## A REALISTIC APPRAISAL OF PROFESSOR TAYLOR'S BOOK: ITS VIRTUES AND SHORTCOMINGS

The question now arises as to the soundness and validity of this extraordinary book by Professor Taylor. Professor Trevor-Roper states in his attack on the book in the July, 1961, Encounter, that it is "utterly erroneous."

I think I would not be especially pretentious if I set down my own appraisal alongside the findings of either Professor Taylor or Professor Trevor-Roper on the matter of war responsibility in 1939. If I were to do so I would unhesitatingly say that it is Professor Trevor-Roper's drastic verdict on Taylor's book which is "utterly erroneous."

But I shall not base what I have to say here primarily on my own studies or opinions but upon repeated readings of the extensive and heavily documented material on 1939 in Professor Tansill's great book, Back Door to War, and of what will be the definitive book on the causes and outbreak of the second World War for this generation, and probably for several generations to come. I have already referred to this book, which is about three times as long and comprehensive as Professor Taylor's book and surely rests upon far more than three times as much study, both in the documents and in the monogaphic literature dealing with the subject. Since Professor Taylor knows far more about the origins of the second World War than Professor Trevor-Roper, it is obvious that the manuscript with which I supplement my own personal judgment is incomparably more

reliable and conclusive than anything which Trevor-Roper could possibly say or write on the subject.

The only conclusion which can be drawn from a careful reading of Taylor's book, Tansill's volume, and this monumental new American work, as well as of a review of the Taylor volume by the author of the latter, is that Professor Taylor's account is, so far as it goes, thoroughly sound and dependable and in accord with the relevant documents on all major items save for British policy in 1939. It is, indeed, a restrained understatement of the origins of the second World War. More important, it is an incomplete statement in so far as it fails to provide a realistic and adequate account of the British role in bringing on hostilities in the spring and summer of 1939. It handles the British materials and actions down to January, 1939, in admirable fashion, but from that time onward, especially after the British guarantee to Poland on March 31, 1939, British responsibility is often neglected, obscured or glossed over, especially the role of Halifax and Kennard who were as predominant in producing the actual outbreak of the second World War as were Izvolski, Sazonov, Poincare and Berthelot in provoking hostilities in August, 1914.

This does not necessarily mean that these men, in either 1914 or 1939, were "villains" but they were responsible for the outbreak of these wars. Their whole war programs may have been colossal "blunders" in both 1914 and 1939, but they knew what they wanted and got it. Subsequent events have, indeed, amply proved that the leaders of the war party blundered fatally in regard to both wars.

Professor Taylor may be quite correct in stating that, in so far as the general publics were concerned, the second World War was one of the most unwanted wars in history, but it was not unwanted by Halifax, Kennard, and the British war party in the summer of 1939. Chamberlain was rather wavering and schizoid on the matter, but in the end he joined with Halifax and Kennard and stood out against Sir Nevile Henderson, who resolutely opposed the war to the last moment.

The one other outstanding leader who presumably wanted war in 1939 was Josef Stalin, since he believed that the anti-Communist states would either ruin or weaken themselves to such an extent by the internecine hostilities that they would no longer be an active threat or even any restraint to Communism or Russia. Yet, Professor Taylor is probably correct in holding that when Stalin signed the pact with Hitler on August 23, 1939, he did not feel that it would result in an immediate war between the capitalistic states. He had other and sufficient immediate aims in signing the pact at the time (pp. 262-263).

It is not certain that Joseph Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister in 1938-1939, actually wanted war, but there can be no doubt that he pre-

ferred war to even the slightest concessions to the extremely moderate and just demands of Hitler, which were accompanied by far more vital and generous concessions to Poland.

Although some of the Polish leaders were fatuous enough to believe that the Polish army was more than a match for the German, most of them were dominated by a fantastic delusion of future grandeur. They fully expected that Poland would be conquered by Germany, which would then proceed to vanquish Russia. This, however, would be followed by the destruction of Germany by Britain, France and the United States.

Out of the ashes of a war-devastated Central Europe would arise a new greater Poland, perhaps even larger than the old Poland before the first partition of 1772. This would appear to be the only explanation of why Beck preferred inevitable and immediate doom to German proposals that were highly advantageous to Poland.

It is well established that no responsible leaders in Germany, France, or Italy wished war in 1939. President Roosevelt apparently desired to. have the European war break out as soon as possible, pressed Chamberlain to go ahead, and encouraged Polish arrogance and stubbornness, but Roosevelt was in no position to exert any directly decisive influence on European decisions in 1939, and Halifax did not need any encouragement from Roosevelt.

It is unlikely, however, that Britain would have dared to adopt the policy she did in 1939 in regard to Poland and Germany if Roosevelt had not already promised British leaders all possible American aid in the event of war and agreed to make every conceivable effort to bring the United States into war on the side of Britain if one broke out.

It must be conceded that, aside from his errors about the nature, purpose and results of the visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Italy in January, 1939, and the defection of Italy from Germany on August 18, 1939, Professor Taylor does provide an amazing amount of material refuting the myth of official British pacifism from Munich down to the background of Chamberlain's Birmingham speech of March 17, 1939, and the initiation of the guarantee to Poland. Nobody could ask for a much better or more fair account of the Munich Conference or of the Czechoslovak crisis in March, 1939, and he by no means whitewashes British policy and conduct in regard to Poland or Germany in 1939, as Professors Langer and Gleason do Roosevelt with respect to American motives and moves in entering the war in 1941.

When all is said and done, it is likely that, beginning in the not far distant future, the scholarly chronology of Revisionism with respect to the second World War will be dated and at least figuratively divided or separated into B.T. and A.T. (before Taylor and after Taylor). This will be

even more the case than it was B. F. and A. F. (before Fay, and after Fay) in regard to Revisionism after the first World War.

## WHAT PROFESSOR TAYLOR HAS OMITTED OR GLOSSED OVER

Aside from glossing over Britain's major responsibility in encouraging and stiffening the German-Polish dispute, which actually produced the outbreak of the second World War, Professor Taylor's chief error lies in his handling of the Anglo-Italian situation in 1939, its effect on German-Italian relations, and the impact of both on the coming of the war. The pattern was set by the visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Rome on January 11-14, 1939. Professor Taylor's version reads as follows:

"In January 1939, Chamberlain and Halifax went to Rome. They came empty-handed. Mussolini expected concessions at the expense of France. Instead he got a high-minded plea from Chamberlain for some assurance that Hitler was not going to war. Mussolini 'thrust out his chin', and retaliated with an attack on the British press. The visit to Rome, which was designed as the culmination of Chamberlain's policy, marked instead the end of the Italian illusion. More, though the British did not know this, it pushed Mussolini further on to the German side." (p.200).

It would be difficult to imagine a statement of the same brevity which contains more errors of fact and interpretation, although the real truth is such that one may be sure that Professor Trevor-Roper will not take advantage of this one valid opportunity to question Taylor's material.

Actually, Chamberlain and Halifax, or better, Chamberlain under pressure from Halifax, who had by October, 1938, seized control over British foreign policy from Chamberlain, came to Rome to try to scare Mussolini out of the Rome-Berlin Axis, or at least to frighten him out of agreeing to stick by Hitler in the event of war. Far from seeking to get assurances from Mussolini that Hitler did not contemplate war, they sought to convince Mussolini that Hitler meant to drag Europe into war, and that Britain and France were preparing for war to resist him. Instead of the reluctant termination of the British policy of peace and good-will towards Germany, it was the formal beginning of the repudiation of Munich which led to the second World War. And this decision to make the crucial change in British foreign policy had been decided upon by Halifax weeks previously, when Hitler had done nothing whatever to indicate that he had departed from the Munich agreement. Of course, he had not even by January 11, 1939. Instead of threatening to get further concessions from France, Mussolini promised to try to improve Italian relations with France. Far from pushing Mussolini "further on to the German side," the British visit frightened Mussolini out of any intention to stand with Hitler in the event of war.

Chamberlain and Halifax succeeded in their ominous mission to Italy. Mussolini was alarmed at the implication that the British intended to make war on Germany as soon as they were prepared, and from this time onward he laid plans to avoid any absolute commitment to stand with Hitler in the event of actual war. In this fateful decision, he was aided mainly by his son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, and Bernardo Attolico, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin. Their combined timidity and duplicity created the specific situation in late August, 1939, which permitted hostilities.

This story is too long and complicated to be told here, but the essentials are as follows: the French, especially Georges Bonnet, the Foreign Minister, ardently desired to keep out of war in 1939, and we now know that Bonnet would have been able to do so if he could have faced his colleagues and Halifax with a firm Italian promise to stand by Germany in the event of war. But Ciano, with Mussolini's approval, wavered and welshed, and during the final crisis Attolico made a special trip from Berlin to Rome to strengthen Ciano's stand and to urge Mussolini to refuse to promise to line up with Hitler in the event that hostilities broke out. He brought back to Berlin the utterly impossible demands that Mussolini deliberately stipulated as the price of his participation in the war.

The Italians were not even clever enough to bluff and at least promise to stick by Hitler, although they might not have intended to do so. A forthright Italian bluff was all that Bonnet needed. But Ciano stupidly told the British Ambassador in Rome privately on August 18, 1939, that Italy would not go to war along with Germany. This crucial news was passed on quickly to Halifax, who eagerly used it to undermine Bonnet's stand. Bonnet had also been weakened by some unjustified bragging by General Gamelin as to the military prowess of the French army. Actually, Gamelin, like Bonnet, was opposed to war, but he did not wish to assume the responsibility for the rejection of the Halifax war policy. He had declared at the French Defense Council meeting on March 13, 1939, that France was not prepared for war. The only conceivable excuse for his different interpretation at the August 23, 1939, Defense Council meeting was that Italy, in the meantime, had deserted Germany. No action between Munich and the outbreak of war paid off better in assuring the success of Halifax's war plan than the visit to Rome in January, 1939.

Mussolini immediately passed on to Hitler the news of the bellicose change in British policy towards Germany, but apparently even this was not enough to convince Hitler that Britain would make war in any final showdown. Not even this January news nor the British guarantee to Poland at the end of March served to convince him of the actual British plans.

The British guarantee of Poland on March 31, 1939, did not have the

slightest moral or political justification. Hitler had been more friendly to Britain than had Poland. His plans for a reasonable understanding with Poland were well known to Halifax. They had even been discussed with Halifax when he visited Hitler at Berchtesgaden on November 19, 1937, and were implicitly approved by him (see Taylor, pp. 137-138).

The restraint in Hitler's original proposals to Poland in October, 1938, became known to the British government very quickly. They recognized that they were far short of what many responsible British statesmen and publicists had recommended, and Hitler's demands on Poland carried with them offers and assurances to Poland that the Weimar Republic would never contenance. Professor Taylor has made it clear that Hitler was not responsible for the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and the setting up of a protectorate over Bohemia, and that Britain very casually repudiated a guarantee to Czechoslovakia. The break-up of Czechoslovakia provided no factual or logical basis for any British rapprochement with Poland.

Poland was selected by Halifax and the British war group because it was known by autumn of 1938 that Germany was making an effort to bring about a final peaceful adjustment with Poland and that Poland was almost certain to reject the German proposals, especially if Britain and France did nothing to curb Polish arrogance and stubbornness and to urge upon Poland sincere negotiations with Germany to reach a peaceful settlement. Hence, Poland was an ideal choice if the provocation of war was the goal of British foreign policy by the outset of the year 1939.

The public announcement of the final shift of British policy to hostility to Germany and to granting a blank check to Poland, which was forecast in Chamberlain's Birmingham speech of March 17, 1939, rested on a twofold fraud: (1) the charge that Germany was preparing for widespread military aggression—indeed, world conquest; and (2) a hoax concocted through Virgil Tilea, the Rumanian Minister to London.

As noted earlier, Taylor makes it crystal clear that the German policy in regard to Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1938-1939 in no way involved or envisaged aggressive military action. Even more nonsensical was the charge made -by leaders of the British war party that Hitler's occupation of Prague was proof of a program of world conquest.

Tilea was induced, some allege that he was directly or indirectly bribed, but in any event he was persuaded and coached by the British Foreign Office, namely by Vansittart, to draw up a false statement charging Germany with seeking to seize the Rumanian economy and announcing that Hitler had just presented an ultimatum to Rumania along these lines. This fraudulent subterfuge was sadly needed since the alleged British official indignation about Prague was so palpably mendacious that it was only useful to incite the more ignorant and credulous sectors of the British public.

The Rumanian Foreign Minister, Grigorie Gafencu, immediately repudiated Tilea's statement, revealed its falsity, and rebuked Tilea. He would have recalled him had he not feared offending the British. But the British Foreign Office paid no attention whatever to Gafencu's repudiation and continued to use the Tilea fraud as though it were gospel truth. Taylor mentions the Tilea fabrication and admits its falsity, but he does not point out the role of the British Foreign Office in arranging for it or timing it to fit in with Chamberlain's Birmingham speech, (pp. 206-207).

Any such rash and unprovoked act as granting a blank check to Poland was almost without precedent in the history of rational British diplomacy. Assuming that Britain wished peace, it was a type of action more in accord with decisions which might have been made by somebody like King John, Richard III, Titus Ootes, Queen Anne, or George IV.

The Kaiser was bitterly criticized for granting a blank check to Austria in July, 1914, and it was a mistake. But in 1914 there was a very substantial provocation for it: the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne had been assassinated by Serbian underworld characters with the advance knowledge, if not the connivance, of the Serbian Cabinet, which had done nothing to frustrate the plot. Germany, under Hitler, had been more friendly to Britain than Poland and would have been a far more powerful ally. Nothing in known German policy in the spring of 1939 offered any threat whatever to Britain.

Moreover, the guarantee to Poland, either when made on March 31, 1939, or when confirmed on August 25th, was a hypocritical fraud which did not offer any honest or comprehensive protection to Poland, and was not intended to do so. It merely encouraged Poland to stand firm against reasonable German demands and thus make inevitable a war against Germany. It was Hitler who offered the real guarantee to Poland.

When, in the autumn of 1939, Russia brazenly occupied eastern Poland, the question was raised in the House of Commons as to whether the guarantee of Poland covered aggression against her by Russia. Richard A. (Rab) Butler, who answered for the government, had to admit that it did not. It was only a guarantee against Germany, which at the outset did not contemplate annexing any Polish territory. Rather, Germany offered to guarantee the Versailles boundaries of Poland.

The British guarantee to Poland was, therefore, a gratuitous and unprovoked act, in harmony with the British policy to bring about a war which, in Churchill's terms, would "smash Germany," or, in those of Halifax and Duff Cooper, would preserve the balance of power on the Continent. The hostile attitude of Churchill was well expressed in a statement he made to the distinguished American military administrator and industrialist, General Robert E. Wood, as early as November, 1936: "Germany is getting

too strong and we must smash her." This accorded with the sentiments of Churchill's great and good friend, and his chief unofficial contact in the United States, Bernard M. Baruch. The latter observed to General George C. Marshall in 1938: "We are going to lick that fellow Hitler. He isn't going to get away with it."

Halifax and the British war group also handled the situation in the summer of 1939 very cleverly in its psychological aspects. The wild enthusiasm of the British and French publics at the return of Chamberlain and Daladier from Munich at the end of September, 1938, had demonstrated the tremendous extent and potency of the desire of the British and French peoples for peace.

It was necessary to prevent this peace sentiment from being revived a year later when the German-Polish-British impasse would threaten war. A great public demonstration in behalf of peace in the late summer of 1939, especially when there was no real cause for war, might have frustrated the bellicose plans of Halifax and his associates. Hence, the guarantee to Poland, in late March and early April, 1939, was kept quiet and given little attention in the newspapers. Poland, with British approval, had discontinued its negotiations with Germany on March 26, 1939, and no hint was given by the British government of any impending crisis. In this Halifax and his group were unwittingly aided by Hitler who kept very quiet on foreign affairs from May to August, 1939.

The British public was thus lulled into a false sense of peace and security all through the summer of 1939. There was no such alarm or fear of war as there had been in the previous summer. Hence, there was no opportunity or apparent reason for mobilizing the powerful but then dormant peace sentiment of Britain. The country was taken entirely by surprise and suddenly thrown into a war which ultimately reduced it to a third-class power and protracted austerity, almost without warning and with no understanding whatever of the actual reasons for the bellicose action. Both Chamberlain and Halifax falsified their reports of Hitler's favorable reaction to a proposed international conference on September 2nd, which might still have both stopped the German-Polish war and prevented the European war.

It would, of course, be absurd to load all the blame for the British refusal to accept the Munich gains and opportunities and the decision on a policy of hostility and war against Germany on Halifax's shoulders. He was aided and abetted, perhaps influenced to adopt this change of policy, by the British leaders who attacked Chamberlain and the Munich settlement. They were an impressive group, of which the following are only representative. From the conservative side, there were Churchill, Duff Cooper, Leopold Amery, Anthony Eden, Harold Nicolson, Duncan Sandys, Harold Macmillan, Roger Keyes, Sidney Herbert, General Spears, Lord Cranborne, and Lord

Wolmer. From the Labour group, Attlee, Ernest Bevin and Harold Laski fully matched the conservatives in their bitter invective against Chamberlain and Munich.

Nevertheless, Halifax, as Foreign Secretary, was the responsible leader of the war group, and he carried through the war program in a ruthless and undeviating manner and with consummate skill and determination, from mid-October, 1938, to the sending of the final ultimatum to Germany on September 3, 1939. If there was any "villain" in 1939, it was Lord Halifax, far more so than Churchill. The latter had little to do with British diplomacy at the time, and actually did not know much about what was going on at the end of August when Halifax was craftily and skillfully piloting England and Europe into war. While affecting a personal piety almost akin to that of Thomas a Kempis, Halifax planned, engineered and gratuitously let loose on the world the most cruel and devastating war in history, the ultimate result of which may be the extermination of the human race, with no more justification than the perpetuation of an obsolete British political tradition fashioned in the sixteenth century.

Just why Halifax made this shift and took over the leadership of the war program and group is not certain, but one thing is obvious, namely, that it was no trivial or spontaneous affair such as Professor Taylor suggests (p. 205): "Perhaps Halifax heard the call of conscience in the watches of the night." It was a far more deliberate and long-planned decision than this implies and surely was not dictated by conscientious scruples. As to when Halifax superseded Chamberlain in the control of British foreign policy, one may say that it certainly dated from October 6, 1938. Even Taylor indicates that he had begun to break with Chamberlain before Munich —as early as September 23rd. (p. 180). Kennard, to be sure, exerted no dominant influence over British foreign policy in general from October, 1938, to September, 1939, but as Ambassador to Poland he played a leading role in late August, 1939, in bringing on hostilities through his vigorous pressure on Beck and the Poles not to negotiate with Germany.

As to the motives of the group which backed up Halifax, they were both varied and numerous. Some were chronic German haters. Others were alarmed by Germany's economic recovery and the methods whereby this had been accomplished. Some may have honestly feared that Hitler did have a program of extensive military conquest, although surely none of them believed that this would be directed against Britain. Some, like Churchill, believed that they might improve their political status in the event of war.

Whatever the lesser deviations and differences of the conservatives on this matter, they were all united in the fear that German growth and renewed power would upset the balance of power on the Continent, and they

believed that a war to crush Germany was preferable to this. They did not realize then that the conflict would result in the permanent destruction of any balance of power, in which the dominant role would be played by an inveterate enemy of Britain rather than a would-be ally. The supporters of the war party from the Left were opposed to Hitler's ideology, his destruction of German democracy, his dictatorial methods, his treatment of the Jews, and the wiping out of the traditional German labor unions.

To summarize the matter of war responsibility in 1939, one may quite safely say that Professor Taylor is entirely correct in holding that the broad general responsibility, running over two decades, was divided among all the parties and was the outcome of blunders by all of them. In regard to the direct and immediate responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939, the blame for the German-Polish War was divided between Poland, Britain and Germany, with the so-called guilt ranking in this order. The primary and direct responsibility for the European War, which grew into the second World War, was almost solely that of Great Britain and the British war group, made up of both Conservatives and Laborites. If Britain had not gratuitously given Poland a blank check, which was not needed in the slightest to assure British security, Poland surely might have risked a war with Germany. Nevertheless, in this case there would still have been no justification for British intervention in such a war or for the provocation of a European war. This sole British responsibility for the outbreak of the European War in September, 1939, stands out in contrast to the immediate responsibility for starting a European war in August, 1914, which was divided between Russia and France in the order given. If Alexander Izvolski, the Russian Ambassador to France in 1914, was more responsible than any other individual for war in 1914, so was Lord Halifax more to be blamed than any other person for the coming of war in 1939.

Looking at the matter realistically, it is probably for the best that Professor Taylor did not tell in his book all the truth about the onset of the war, especially the primary role of Halifax and Kennard in bringing it on in late August, 1939. The shock of what he has actually told has been staggering. Aside from the writings of Air Marshal Harris, C. P. Snow and Secretary J. M. Spaight on the British responsibility for the saturation bombing, the works of military historians such as General J. F. C. Fuller and Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, the revelations of F. J. P. Veale and Montgomery Belgion on the Nuremberg Trials, Victor Gollancz's courageous books on the barbarous treatment of Germany after the war, and some parts of the official history of the war, virtually no truth has been told in England on the second World War since 1939. No public, even the British public, can stand too large a dose of truth all in one batch. A complete account of the origins of the second World War could not have been digested or accepted all at one

time. Even Professor Taylor's personal safety might have been placed in jeopardy.

In the opinion of this writer, his book is almost ideal as the first volume to break through the historical blackout on this fundamental question of war origins. It is concise, clear, readable, and convincing with respect to the great mass of revelations it does set down, and as such it has both rendered the greatest service of any historical work published since September, 1939, and constitutes, perhaps, the most impressive example of personal courage of any historical work of this generation.

As was hinted earlier and should be repeated and emphasized here, far the most important result of the publication of Professor Taylor's book is its inevitable and vastly beneficial effect in undermining the Historical Blackout in the Western world and making it much more difficult in the future to discredit offhand serious and substantial books which seek to divulge the truth about the responsibility for the second World War and related topics. Professor Taylor's wide fame and vast prestige, and his long record as a consistent Germanophobe and Hitler-hater which he has reaffirmed since his book was published, have now made it impossible to continue to deride and denigrate, even summarily to laugh out of court, any book which approaches 1939 in a realistic manner, no matter how learned and scholarly.

Even the forthcoming magisterial volume on 1939 to which I have made frequent reference, would have met just this fate because the author does not happen to be a person of extensive international reputation or one known to be a chronic Germanophobe. That it will be bitterly attacked even now there is no doubt, but after the appearance of the Taylor book those criticisms which are not based on careful factual analysis will prove rebounding duds. Any statement of truth about 1939 can no longer be disposed of casually as a demonstration of mental defect, moral perversity, or original sin. Clio never had a more striking and salutary "rendezvous with destiny," to use the words put into President Roosevelt's mouth by his speech writers in 1936, than in the case of the writing and publication of Professor Taylor's memorable volume. It may even entice her away from her far too prolonged rendezvous with the Gadarenes for more than two decades.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PROFESSOR TAYLOR'S BOOK FOR CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES

It may be worthwhile here to indicate briefly the significance of the book by Professor Taylor for citizens of the United States. So far as revisionist scholarship is concerned, this is greatly strengthened and its basic contentions are confirmed. As just made clear, it will now be possible

to treat the causes of the second World War realistically and honestly without being accused of mental defect or moral depravity. The awe and reverence with which English historians are customarily regarded by the American historical guild will make it the more difficult and embarrassing for the latter to laugh off Professor Taylor's confirmation of the ba6ic tenets of American revisionist historical scholarship.

The book underlines the accuracy of American anti-interventionism which had been supported by revisionist historical writings in this country. The interventionists based their policy on the assumption that the United States was in mortal danger of infiltration and attack by Nazi Germany. Professor Taylor's book further emphasizes the grotesque fallacy of this contention. Hitler did not even wish to attack England or France, to say nothing of proceeding westward across the Atlantic. Nor was it necessary for the United States to enter the war to protect Britain or France. Hitler sought peace after the Polish War and after the fall of France and Dunkirk. Had he obtained it, his only plan was to turn eastward.

In the light of the facts brought forward by Professor Taylor, which are not at all new to American revisionist historians and had previously been well stated by Professor Tansill and others, President Roosevelt's allegation that Hitler planned to invade the United States by way of Dakar, Rio de Janeiro and Panama—his notorious timetable for the Nazi occupation of Iowa—is shown to be as fantastic and untenable as his statement that he was "surprised" by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

A realistic approach to American foreign policy from 1937 to 1941 thus receives impressive indirect support from a courageous British historical scholar. American entry into the war, whatever the various pressures of many groups for intervention, was overwhelmingly the plan and program of President Roosevelt himself, who turned from isolation to armament, intervention and war in order to produce the economic recovery which the New Deal had failed to bring about, to achieve a third term, and to enjoy the glory and prestige of being a war president. No informed person can any longer support with a straight face the assumption that he was motivated primarily by fear of "the Nazi rattlesnakes" or a sense of urgent need to protect the United States from invasion, either in the 1940's or in any predictable period. Whether taking this country into war made the United States safer can be most rationally assessed by reading the daily newspapers of our time.

Although it would be grossly unfair to accuse President Roosevelt of being knowingly and deliberately under the influence of communist pressure in working for war, communist influence here was very powerful. The vigorous Liberal support of his war policy was based primarily on the

communist-inspired Popular Front internationalist ideology which had been effectively propounded by Litvinov at Geneva. Roosevelt was surrounded with communist sympathizers and some undoubted Communists, one a member of his official family at the White House who exerted a powerful influence on Roosevelt and Secretary Hull. Hull's ultimatum of November 26, 1941, which brought on the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, was based in large part directly upon a memorandum handed to him by Harry Dexter White, surely a communist agent if not a card-carrying Communist himself.

One myth that should be debunked is that Roosevelt was pushed into war by American Jews. Although some of the latter, such as Samuel Untermyer, may have "declared war" on Hitler as early as 1933, Roosevelt did not need any pressure from the Jews to create his interventionism and war policy. There is little evidence that he was deeply disturbed by Hitler's anti-Jewish policy; he was much more annoyed by the fact that Hitler's "New Deal" had succeeded in spectacular fashion while his own had failed to bring prosperity to the United States. Roosevelt's angry outburst when he learned that Governor Lehman of New York had come out against his Supreme Court plan in 1937, and his statement at Yalta in 1945 that he would like to give the American Jews to Ibn Saud, afford ample proof that the Jews cannot be saddled with the responsibility for Roosevelt's foreign policy from 1937 to Pearl Harbor.

The Taylor book could not have appeared at a better time in the United States as an instrument of historical sanitation. There was never a time when historical garbage collection paid off so handsomely, although its procurers and vendors may be encouraged by their very success to overplay their hands. Scattered through nearly 1,200 pages, W. L. Shirer's Rise and Fall of the Third Reich treats tens of thousands of American readers to such obsolete duds and legends as the allegation that the Nazis burned the Reichstag building, although a year before the book went to the printer careful historical research had proved that they had no more to do with it than with sinking the Maine. The whole frame of reference and leitmotif of the Shirer book revolves around fundamental assumptions which Taylor has fully and authoritatively refuted. It is doubtful if a more extensive anthology of errors concerning the personality and policies of Hitler and the causes and responsibility for the second World War has ever been assembled, even in wartime. What may fairly be regarded as the children's edition of the Shirer book, Hitler and Nazism, by Professor Louis L. Snyder of the College of the City of New York apparently proceeds on the premise, for which there is considerable justification, that the American public has already been as thoroughly brainwashed in regard to Germany in the 1930's as any defecting American soldier was brainwashed during the Korean War period by his Chinese captors and mentors.

It is worthy of note that this recent tidal wave of hate-Germany literature has been tied in very closely with the effort of the Communists to stir American antagonism against West Germany. It has been perfectly timed to support this communist program. Walter Lippmann has repeatedly emphasized the fact that neither southeast Asia, Africa nor Latin America even begins to concern Khrushchev as much as the increasing prosperity and reviving military power of West Germany. Hence, it is unfair, as so many do, to attribute this flood of smear literature against Germany wholly to Jews and Jewish pressure. If this were true, the inundation would have come ten or fifteen years ago when the memories of the Nazi persecution of the Jews were much closer and fresher.

The Taylor book could also nip in the bud the plan of the ambitious lawyer, O. John Rogge, to retry in book form, The Official German Report, his ill-fated Sedition Trial, free from the embarrassment of having Lawrence Dennis rise to his feet every few minutes to make Rogge look ridiculous. He presumes, which he can do safely, that not one in ten thousand of his readers will know that his methods were devastatingly exposed and refuted by Dennis and Maximilian St. George in their book, A Trial on Trial, away back in 1946. When the security campaign began against radicals with the coming of the Cold War, and the leftwingers got a dose of something like the same treatment that Rogge applied to conservative American anti-interventionists in 1943-1945, he shrieked to high heaven about the invasion of American civil liberties.

Indeed, if the hatred of Russia and Communism should ever reach the fever heat that hatred of Germany had attained in 1943-1944, Rogge might be in grave danger of having his very tactics of those days applied to him. He proceeded in the Sedition Trial on the principle of "guilt by association." Both the German government of that time and the American anti-interventionists, whom Rogge prosecuted for sedition, favored keeping the United States out of the second World War. Hence, Rogge charged the anti-interventionist defendants with deliberately and seditiously serving the German cause. Today, both Rogge and Soviet Russian Communists aim to stir up hatred of Germany, now our indispensable ally. Under sufficient pressure of hostility to Russia and Communism, the formula of guilt by association could logically be revived and applied to Rogge.

## WERE NAZI WAR CRIMES MORE EXTENSIVE AND BRUTAL THAN THOSE OF THE ALLIES?

Already there has arisen a line of criticism designed to discredit the significance of Professor Taylor's book, even granting its accuracy as to the general responsibility for war in 1939. It is held that, although Hitler

and the Nazis may not have started the war in 1939 or even wished to start it, the brutal outrages of which they were guilty after the war got started proved them such degenerate gangsters that Halifax and his associates were justified in resorting to any degree of plotting and duplicity required to produce a war to smash and annihilate them and that President Roosevelt performed a great moral service in "lying the United States into the war" to make it certain that this salutary and needed act of extermination would be accomplished.

Any such argument is even more fallacious and deplorable than the ex post facto jurisprudence on which the Nuremberg Trials were founded. Further, there is no reason whatever to believe that any such brutal wartime actions as have been alleged against Germany would have taken place if peace had been preserved. Finally, as Milton Mayer, Victor Gollancz, and others, have already suggested, it seems likely that the whole question of the alleged wartime crimes of Germany will ultimately be submitted to as drastic a type of revisionism as the conventional views about the responsibility for the second World War have been subjected by Professor Taylor.

It may also be observed that the question of brutalities and atrocities associated with the second World War is a rather dangerous topic for either side to examine too thoroughly or to overemphasize. Only those committed by the Germans have been subjected to searching investigation and given world-wide publicity. Even assuming that all the charges ever made against the Nazis by anybody of reasonable sanity and responsibility are true, the Allies do not come off much, if any, better.

There were the millions killed by the saturation bombing of civilians, which the official British authorities have long since admitted was launched by the British who rejected the repeated proposals of Hitler to ban this form of barbarism. Now, C. P. Snow, in his Harvard lectures on Science and Government, has revealed the fact that the British Air Force, with full approval of the British government, followed the Lindemann Plan of concentrating, not on military objectives but upon the closely crowded homes of the German and Italian working people, on the ruthless assumption that this would cause the greatest possible number of civilian casualties per bomb. Until the atom bombing of the Japanese cities and the bombings in the Korean War, no horrors in warfare exceeded the incendiary bombing of German cities, such as Hamburg. No single isolated act proved against the Nazi matches for wanton brutality the bombing and destruction of the beautiful city of Dresden which had no military significance whatever.

Then, there were the wholesale butchery of Polish officers and leaders by Stalin in the Katyn Forest and elsewhere, the Russian extermination and

expulsions in the Baltic countries, which some observers regard as worse than the Katyn episode, and the massacre or enslavement of an estimated five million Russian soldiers and other anti-communist refugees who were rounded up and turned back to Stalin by the Allies after the war. The slave labor camps maintained by Stalin contained many more persons than the German concentration camps and their treatment was far more cruel and brutal. No reliable statistics have been available as to the mortality in them, but it certainly greatly exceeded that in the German camps.

There is little in the history of mankind more horrible than the sufferings of the Germans expelled from their eastern provinces, the Sudeten area, and other regions, some four to six millions perishing from butchery, starvation, exposure, and disease in the process. Their sufferings were obviously far more hideous and prolonged than those of the Jews said to have been exterminated in great numbers by the Nazis. The tragedy of Lidice was re-enacted by the Czechs hundreds of times at the expense of the Sudeten Germans during the expulsion. The Morgenthau Plan, which was inspired by Stalin and his associates and passed on to Henry Morgenthau by Harry Dexter White and other Soviet sympathizers, envisaged the starvation of between twenty and thirty million Germans in the process of turning Germany into a purely agricultural and pastoral nation.

In a slightly revised form as JCS 1067 it was actually applied for several years in occupied Germany. While it may not have produced as many deaths, it certainly brought about more actual suffering than such Nazi extermination of Jews as took place. From the standpoint of public morality, at least, if there was to be an Eichmann Trial there should surely have been a Morgenthau Trial. Indeed, if one were to accept Nuremberg juristic concepts and practices, there was even a sound legal basis for a Morgenthau Trial. Extremely severe sentences were imposed on Germans convicted at Nuremberg of "plotting" evil deeds, and it is doubtful if anything more evil than the Morgenthau Plan was ever plotted. Even the American officials who executed JCS 1067 would not be immune from trial and punishment if Nuremberg precedents were applied to their cases. Promoting "aggressive war" was an especially heinous crime at Nuremberg, and one which figured prominently in the Trials. If, however, one can believe the documents, no prominent Nazi leaders, nor all of them combined, were as busy "plotting aggressive war" in 1939 as were Morgenthau and Harry Dexter White during the year 1941.

The Allied treatment of German S. S. prisoners of war matched, if it did not exceed, any of the brutalities of German concentration camps, and in this case there was no excuse of lack of food, clothing, drugs or medical care. No record has been kept of the multitude of Germans who perished as a result of executions, exposure, malnutrition, and disease during the

period immediately after the war, when they were limited for a considerable period to rations not over half those given to the inmates of Auschwitz prior to the final collapse of German power in the East.

Virtually the entire Japanese population of the American Pacific coast were dragged out of their homes and herded into concentration camps without the slightest need from the standpoint of national security. After their return, there was never any complete restoration of property. While few were killed in the process, and they were relatively well fed, it was a humiliating and arbitrary act which few fairminded American citizens will remember with pride or good conscience.

Finally, there was the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki some seven months after the Japanese had been trying to surrender on the same terms finally accepted in August, 1945—terms submitted in January, 1945, to President Roosevelt through General MacArthur, who vainly urged Roosevelt to consider them. This utterly needless bombing has been described by no less an authority than General J. F. C. Fuller as something which would have "disgraced Genghis Khan and Tamerlane."

A colorful summary of what went on was provided by Edgar L. Jones, a highly literate American veteran of the second World War, in an article entitled "One War Is Enough," in the distinguished Atlantic Monthly, February, 1946: "What kind of a war do civilians suppose we fought anyway? We shot prisoners in cold blood, wiped out hospitals, strafed lifeboats, killed or mistreated enemy civilians, finished off enemy wounded, tossed the dying into a hole with the dead, and in the Pacific boiled the flesh off enemy skulls to make table ornaments for sweethearts, or carved their bones into letter openers. We topped off our saturation bombing and burning of enemy civilians by dropping atomic bombs on two nearly defenseless cities, thereby setting an all-time record for instantaneous mass slaughter."

Two great wrongs do not make a right but even a casual survey of Allied atrocities, which does not even include those in the Asiatic area, aside from the atom bombings, or the tortures of German prisoners in the Malmedy and Nuremberg Trials, makes it amply clear that there is no validity to the argument that the second World War had to be waged to rid the world of a totally unique gang of German scoundrels—unique both as to moral depravity and deeds of brutal violence. Hitler's evil deeds have been told and retold, beginning long before 1939. After the Cold War started, the Western World began to learn something about the monstrous and nefarious doings of Stalin—that "man of massive outstanding personality, and deep and cool wisdom," as Churchill described him—which far exceeded those of Hitler. But we have heard little of the horrors which were due to the acts and policies of Churchill and Roosevelt, such as the saturation bombing of civilians, the atom bombings of the Japanese cities (plan-

ned by Roosevelt), the expulsion of about fifteen million Germans from their former homes and the death of four to six millions in the process, and the cruel and barbarous treatment of Germany from 1945 to 1948. The greatest horror that could be fairly traced to their doings is still held in reserve for us—the nuclear extermination of mankind.

Professor Taylor, logically and wisely, deals only slightly and incidentally with the domestic policy of Nazi Germany, although he does hint correctly several times that this probably did more to produce the war than Hitler's foreign policy. Of all of Hitler's domestic policies, the one which brought upon him the greatest opprobrium and hatred and the only one which played any important public role in encouraging war on Germany, was his treatment of the German Jews, a piece of folly which I have condemned for nearly thirty years in numerous articles, books and lectures. Indeed, the famous American Rabbi, Stephen S. Wise, reprinted a series of articles I wrote for the Scripps-Howard newspapers criticizing Hitler's anti-Semitism and distributed thousands of copies.

There could, however, be no greater paradox in history than a war in behalf of Poland on the basis of the Jewish issue. There were in Poland, in 1933, six times as many Jews as in Germany, and they were surely treated as badly as were the German Jews under Hitler. Moreover, by 1939, Hitler's anti-Jewish program had moderated and more than half the German Jews had left Germany, whereas the Polish Jewish population had declined relatively slightly and their treatment had not improved to any notable extent. In the 1930's, when I was actively engaged in journalism, I received much praise from Jewish readers for my columns and editorials criticizing Hitler's treatment of the Jews, but this was interspersed with frequent and insistent suggestions that I should not overlook the far more extensive plight of the Jews in Poland. Several of my more responsible correspondents on this theme charged that the Polish government was laying plans to exterminate the Polish Jews as communist revolutionaries. This was several years before it is even alleged that Hitler started his extermination project.

## THE UNNECESSARY WAR: WILL THERE BE ANOTHER AND FINAL ONE?

Whatever quarrels one may have with details of Professor Taylor's interpretations, he may surely agree with his basic contention that the second World War was an unnecessary war. This fact has been admirably summarized by the author of the forthcoming monumental work on 1939 to which I have already made reference:

"A definite and hopeful trend towards a new arrangement of European relations, based on a peaceful revision of the Versailles settlement, was

rudely interrupted and permanently frustrated by the unexpected outbreak of the second World War in September, 1939.

"Germany had regained her rightful position as the dominant power in Central Europe in 1938, and at that time it seemed only a question of months before she would succeed in establishing relations with all of her immediate neighbors on a solid and dependable basis. Germany had become prosperous by 1938, and there were numerous indications that France, Great Britain and Italy were recovering from the world depression that had begun in 1929.

"There were also hopeful indications that the leaders of France had become fully aware of the new realities and were prepared to abandon their old policies of active intervention in Central Europe. This meant that the last obstacles to a workable Franco-Germany amity could be removed, because there were no longer any territorial problems or disputes between the two countries. Italy had gracefully accepted the reunion of Austria with Germany, and there were no longer any clouds on the horizon of German-Italian relations. German-Polish relations had exhibited general improvement for several years, and Hitler's moderate and reasonable attitude towards Poland was highly auspicious for the prospect of successful cooperation between the two countries in the future. There was also a friendly attitude between Germany and Hungary, and there was increasing friendliness and confidence in the contacts between Germany and such Balkan nations as Rumania and Yugoslavia.

"The Soviet Union had been excluded from the deliberations of the Munich Conference in September, 1938, and there was every indication that the communist colossus would remain isolated behind the cordon sanitaire established shortly after the first World War. Hitler's friendly attitude towards the British Empire was an almost notorious fact, and it was evident that Germany had no intention of seeking to resume her former rivalry with Great Britain in naval and colonial ambitions. British world trade was increasing along with German prosperity; hence, there was no reason to expect that new economic tensions of any serious nature would arise between these former principal rivals for world trade.

"All of this should have meant the institution of a new era of peaceful development for Europe. Instead, in the following year, western Europe began to suffer the horrors, decline and eclipse which accompanied the second World War".

Another important and very timely lesson which may well be drawn from Professor Taylor's book is that democracy, by itself alone, is no safeguard whatever against war, a fundamental consideration set forth with much force and learning by the American historian and expert on interna-

tional relations, Professor George Hubbard Blakeslee, at the end of the first World War.

I submitted the manuscript of the impressive work on 1939 which I have mentioned above to one of the foremost political scientists in the United States for a critical examination. His main practical observation as to its import for today was the following:

"The longer one reads the book, the more interesting and absorbing it becomes, but I could hardly resist a feeling of discouragement after I had finished it because it reveals so forcefully how a handful of leaders can put democratic nations into war and, in fact, by manipulating public opinion change otherwise peaceful, just and humane peoples into irrational and belligerent individuals with intense hatred for other peoples hundreds or thousands of miles distant from them who have done them no harm. It is almost enough to cause one to lose faith in democratic processes, but I suppose we have to believe in democracy in spite of the way it works at times rather than because of the way it works. If people can learn by experience, this book should help prevent the repetition of the two previous world wars of this century."

This sagacious observation applies equally well to Professor Taylor's work, and should serve as a warning that a third world war will not be prevented by merely mouthing arrogant platitudes or benign homilies about the virtues and superiorities of democracy and the "Free World." These semantic gestures must be supplemented and implemented by all the wisdom, precaution, foresight and statecraft that can be drawn from the disastrous experience with two world wars and their ominous aftermaths. Failing this, we shall not have another opportunity.

We are not likely to succeed so long as we resolutely reject searching self-examination but continue to seek a scapegoat on whom we may lay the blame for all international tragedies. The effort to make a scapegoat out of the Kaiser and Germany after the first World War produced the Versailles Treaty and, in time, the second World War. The same process was continued on a more fantastic scale after the second World War, and it has already led us to the brink of nuclear war several times, most menacingly as these lines are being written. Professor Taylor has made clear the folly in seeking to make Hitler's foreign policy the cause of all the miseries and anguish of the world since 1939 — or even 1933.

We can get no valid comfort from the illusion that nuclear warfare will be withheld in the third World War, as poison gas was in the second. As F. J. P. Veak pointed out so well in his Advance to Barbarism, the Nuremberg Trials took care of that. These showed that the rule in the future will be that defeated leaders, military and civilian, will be executed. Hence, no leader in wartime will spare any effective horrors which may avert de-

feat. Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery got this point when he stated in Paris, June 9, 1948: "The Nuremberg Trials have made the waging of unsuccessful war a crime: the generals on the defeated side are tried and then hanged."

As cartoonist Clarence D. Batchelor sardonically observed: "During the latter part of the twentieth century the prevailing mode in post-war 'neckties' will be durable hemp or nylon. They will be de rigueur among losing leaders!"

## DR. A. J. P. TAYLOR AND "THE ORIGINS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR": AN ENGLISH REPORT

By Frederick J. P. Veale

Author of Advance to Barbarism; War Crimes Discreetly Veiled, etc.

The conclusions reached by Dr. A. J. P. Taylor in his recently published book, The Origins of the Second World War, were naturally received with surprise and gratification by the German public. They had long been convinced by intensive propaganda that it had been judicially proved beyond any shadow of doubt at the Nuremberg Trials that the Second World War was the outcome of an attempt by a megalomaniac named Adolph Hitler to conquer the world. If the subject was indeed res judicata it seemed strange that Dr. Taylor or anyone else should find anything in this subject to investigate.

Dr. Taylor's conclusions are summarized in the following passage from his book:

"The war of 1939, far from being premeditated, was a mistake, the result on both sides of diplomatic blunders. This is a story without heroes; perhaps even without villains. It was a war less wanted by nearly everybody than almost any war in history. In retrospect, though many were guilty, none was innocent."

The British public, also brought up to believe that the judgment delivered at the Nuremberg Trials had made the subject res judicata, was equally surprised. In view of Dr. Taylor's reputation as a violently anti-German Leftist, his conclusions were received in Britain with widespread dismay, especially since they could not be silenced or suppressed.

Owing to his oft-stated strong anti-German views, Taylor had long been a welcome contributor to newspapers controlled by the now fanatically anti-German press baron, Lord Beaverbrook. It was thus impossible to deal with Taylor's book by the usual procedure adopted in the case of books written by unknown authors expressing unwelcome views, namely by rigorously boycotting all mention of them in the Press—the silent treatment. In fact, possibly because the implications of this book were not realized by the

editor, it was given special publicity by being serialised in Lord Beaverbrook's Evening Standard.

The consequences which would follow general acceptance of Dr. Taylor's conclusions did not escape the notice of Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, a leading exponent of orthodox views, who promptly published a strongly-worded article in Encounter condemning Dr. Taylor for being so irresponsible as to cast doubt upon a sanctified belief which was of the greatest practical importance to contemporary British foreign policy.

The combined outcome of Dr. Taylor's book and Professor Trevor-Roper's article was that a discussion between these two Oxford University historians was arranged to take place on the B. B. C. television. This discussion was duly broadcast on the 9th July, 1961.

It should be stressed at the outset that the point at issue was no mere academic problem of interest only to scholars, such as what were the intentions of Hannibal when he laid siege to Seguntum: did Hannibal intend merely to round off the Carthaginian possessions in Spain or did he intend to provoke a war with Rome? Upon the point at issue discussed on the B. B. C. television on the 9th of July, British foreign policy will be based during the next few years.

If, as Professor Trevor-Roper maintained, the Second World War was the outcome of the crazy ambition of the megalomaniac Hitler to conquer the world, Great Britain, France and Poland were merely defending themselves from a possibly mortal and unprovoked attack In such circumstances, they were clearly justified in using any means for their self-protection. Seen in this light, even some excuse can be found for Professor F. A. Linde-mann's plan to conduct terror bombing against the German civil population, bombing particularly directed against working-class dwellings because a higher percentage of bloodshed could be obtained per ton of bombs dropped by attacking these densely populated residential areas. Self-preservation justified any measure however intrinsically barbarous.

Not only does acceptance of the view of the origin* of the second World War propounded by Professor Trevor-Roper justify any act committed by Germany's opponents but it also renders every act committed by Germany after the outbreak of war a culpable effort to promote and achieve the criminal intentions of Hitler.

No doubt it was with this assumption at the back of his mind that Air Marshal Sir John Slessor wrote to the Sunday Times on the 9th July, 1961: "Public opinion among our allies regards the acquisition by the Poles of the territories beyond the Oder-Neisse Line as only reasonable compensation for the terrible wrongs they suffered at the hands of Hitler's Germany."

The Air Marshal's argument only makes sense if we assume, as he clearly does, that Germans wantonly plunged Europe into war in 1939. As-

suming this, every wrong suffered by every people who were involved in the subsequent hostilities can be laid to Germany's account. For this alleged crime of September, 1939, it is fitting the German people should pay a harsh penalty and it happens that it is expedient that the Poles should be the sole beneficiaries of the payment of this penalty by Germany.

On the other hand, if, as Dr. Taylor maintains, the first shots fired near Danzig in September, 1939, were fired through diplomatic blunders on both sides, then the subsequent course of the conflict appears in a new and totally different light. Seen thus, the German people were only fellow-sufferers with the British, French and Polish peoples, helpless victims of the blundering recklessness of their rulers.

Once involved, the view became generally adopted that any act was justifiable if it would help stave off the frightful consequences of defeat. To escape so appalling a calamity any measure seemed justifiable, even the carrying out of the Lindemann Plan or Hitler's alleged "Final Solution" of the Jewish Problem.

The question of responsibility for the outbreak of the Second World War is, therefore, a topical question of the most far-reaching practical importance. Indeed, even a prominent German political scientist, Professor Eschenburg of Tuebingen, has stated that: "Whoever doubts the exclusive guilt of Germany for the second World War destroys the foundations of post-war politics."

If the orthodox view, as expressed in England by Professor Trevor-Roper, be accepted, the plausible excuse outlined above of Air Marshal Slessor will be available to extenuate the annexation by Poland of the German territories east of the Oder-Neisse Line.

On the other hand, if the view of Dr. Taylor wins acceptance, sanctioning this annexation by Poland will appear as a flagrant repudiation of the sacred principle of self-determination, the establishment of which has been generally regarded as the one great blessing conferred on mankind by the First World War.

Repudiation of this principle on the simple ground of expediency would only be approved by the British public with the greatest reluctance. National self-respect demands some face-saving formula, and the fiction of Germany's sole guilt for the outbreak of war in 1939 provided exactly what was needed.

In realization of the importance of the issue at stake, it was decided to invite Dr. Taylor to a public debate of the unwelcome opinions which he had had the temerity to express. No doubt it was believed that, if sternly cross-examined on what he had written, he would be compelled to admit that his opinions were contradicted by well-established historical facts. At the very least, the threadbare weakness of his case would be devastatingly exposed to all. As Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford—a post

once held by such eminent historians as Bishop William Stubbs and Edward Freeman—Trevor-Roper was selected to conduct this expose of his brother historian.

It can hardly be said that this televised debate when it took place threw any extensive light on the disputed question of the origins of the second World War. The plan adopted was for Robert Kee, the chairman, to read out selected passages from Dr. Taylor's book in tones of mingled horror and surprise and then to ask the author whether he could say anything to support such astonishing assertions.

Dr. Taylor took each passage in turn, and in a quiet, even voice, justified what he had written. He began by taking the wind completely out of his opponent's sails by agreeing that his views would unquestionably be welcome in Germany. His own views on Germany were well known and he had not changed them. "I dislike the Germans," he declared, "I hope we shall have nothing to do with Germany either now or in the future."

He admitted frankly that, when he started to write this book, he expected to come to very different conclusions from those he actually arrived at, but the facts which he had found in the documents had forced him, as an honest scholar, to come to his present conclusions.

Throughout the discussion, Trevor-Roper looked thoroughly uncomfortable: his manner was both defiant and apologetic. Contrasted with Dr. Taylor, he looked extremely youthful—he is in fact only eight years younger (47)—and the general impression given was that of an interview at a public school between a senior monitor (Trevor-Roper), called upon to explain some misdemeanor, and a grave and kindly headmaster (Taylor).

Probably the recollection of the deliberately offensive article which he had written for the July issue of Encounter, weighed on Trevor-Roper's spirits. It must, indeed, have been an uncomfortable experience for him to find himself seated at a table face to face with a man against whom he had directed a number of tasteless and baseless gibes—for example, that Dr. Taylor had written his book "as a gesture of posthumous defiance to his former master, Sir Lewis Namier, for some imagined slight."

It was generally agreed in the British Press next day that the honors of the debate had fallen entirely to Dr. Taylor. As one reviewer put it: "Dr. Taylor walked away with the argument. He made his points trenchantly and at times Trevor-Roper did not even seem to be able to grasp them fully. Robert Kee's presence as chairman was a nuisance. It would have been a better programme if he had kept silent."

Regarded simply as a means of discrediting Dr. Taylor's views on the origins of the Second World War—apparently the original intention—this televised debate was a complete failure. The only result it achieved—the one least of all desired by its promoters—was to make Dr. Taylor's con-

clusions known to a vastly wider public than the relatively few who had read his candid, trenchant, and fairly expensive book, or even the readers of the serialization in the Evening Standard.

For once—almost the first time since September, 1939—"the Iron Curtain of Discreet Silence", which in Great Britain is always carefully draped round unwelcome facts, failed to prevent the truth concerning the origins of the second World War from reaching the British public. The results may be of incalculable significance.

## THE OUTLOOK FOR REVISIONISM AND HISTORICAL TRUTH IN 1962

On the face of current events and trends it would appear that the outlook for the revival of historical truth relative to recent world affairs is bleak indeed. The blackout brainwashing process has grown apace for a generation with little opposition from educational agencies, historical science, or journalism.

Yet the factual basis for the restoration of historical truth has increased, despite the efforts of the blackout contingent to consign embarrassing documents to the Orwellian "memory hole." All that is required to restore some respect for historical truth are favorable opportunities, a bit of luck, and a few courageous authors and publishers. The year 1961 indicated that we may be on the eve of shattering the historical blackout which has prevailed for a quarter of a century.

Due to an unusual concatenation of fortunate circumstances, Professor Taylor's volume shook up Britain more than any other book of its type since the writings of E. D. Morel forty years ago. Because of the traditional awe of English historians in the United States, it is bound to have a comparable impact here, even by frenzied and desperate attacks on it.

Dr. Herbert Grabert and his associates have stirred renewed interest in historical truth in Germany which may grow into something like the revisionist work of Max Montgelas, Alfred von Wegerer, Hermann Lutz and Erich Brandenburg in the 1920's. Realistic Germans are awakening to the fact that there is little prospect of successfully opposing Soviet propaganda so long as Bonn remains in full agreement with Moscow as to the responsibilities and consequences of the second World War. In France, writers like Maurice Bardeche and Paul Rassinier are reviving something of the spirit and integrity shown by Alfred Fabre-Luce, Georges Demartial and their associates after the first World War.

The recent flood of bitterly anti-German books in the United States by W. L. Shirer, O. J. Rogge, Louis Snyder, and others, is likely to be discredited by the publication of the books by Taylor, Hoggan and Bewley. The more Americans who realize the extent of their deception by the Germanophobes, the more there will be to resent their intellectual betrayal.

The vast two-volume work of Dr. James J. Martin, *American Liberalism and World Politics, 1931-1941,* makes it clear how the communist propaganda in the Popular Front and Litvinov's "collective security" program furnished the basic ideology for the American interventionists before Pearl Harbor. This should awaken Americans to the fact that Germanophobia is once more becoming the "transmission belt" of Soviet propaganda in this country. Recent developments on the Pearl Harbor front indicate that it is unlikely that any future befuddlers of historical materials, however eminent, will again be willing to risk the travesties that cleared President Roosevelt of all guilt and saddled the blame upon the innocent commanders at Pearl Harbor. It is possible that 1963 may prove an even more startling year, revisionist-wise, than 1961.