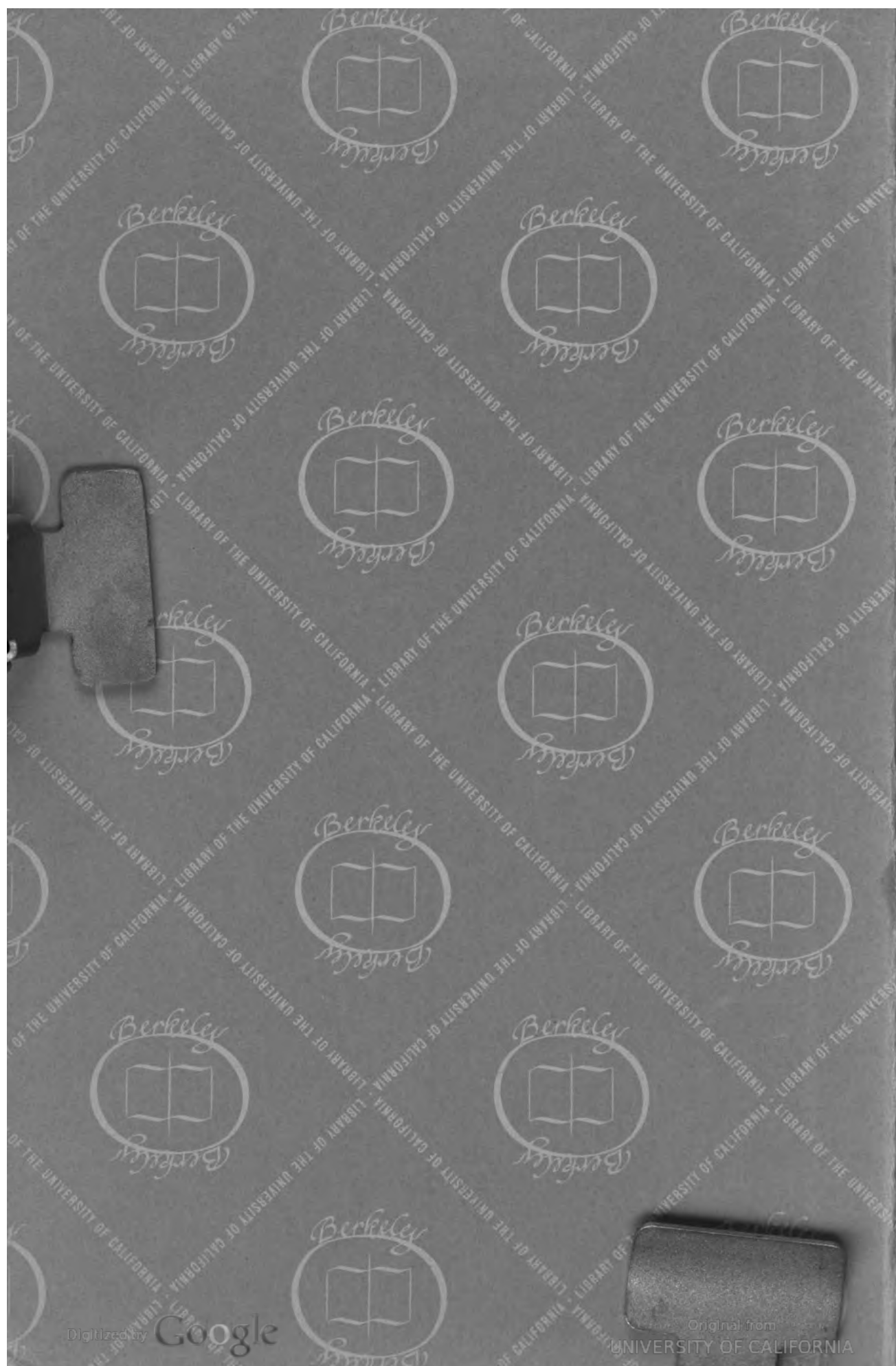


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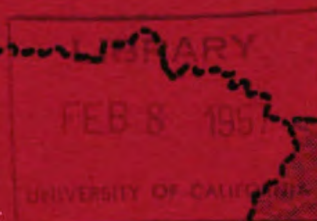
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Piotr S. Wandycz

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CZECHOSLOVAK-POLISH CONFEDERATION AND THE GREAT POWERS

1940-43

by

Piotr S. Wandycz

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CONFEDERATION

AND THE GREAT POWERS

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PREFACE

The essay on Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers is based on a shorter manuscript, prepared by the author for the Mid-European Studies Center in New York. I wish here to express my gratitude to this organization which has enabled me to do most of the research required. The work in its present form was done at Indiana University, and I would like to thank all those who have shown interest in its progress, notably Professor Norman J. G. Pounds, Chairman of the Institute of East European Studies and Professor Harold J. Grimm, Chairman of the History Department, as well as Professors Oscar Halecki of Fordham University, Stephen Kertesz of University of Notre Dame and William J. Rose of the University of British Columbia, who were kind enough to read my manuscript and offer critical comments. I am especially indebted to my colleague Professor Robert H. Ferrell who assisted and encouraged me greatly in the decisive stages of preparing the manuscript for publication. His advice was often invaluable.

Several Czechoslovak and Polish diplomats who participated in the wartime London negotiations helped me greatly by interpreting events which they witnessed. In view of these varied and excellent counsels, I feel bound to add that I alone am to blame for possible shortcomings or faulty interpretations contained in this essay.

Piotr S. Wandycz
Bloomington, Indiana

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Chapter One

CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND BETWEEN THE WARS: 1918-1939

Prague in the spring and summer of 1918 was the scene of a cordial and ever-increasing Polish-Czechoslovak cooperation. Young Poles, many of whom had studied in the Czech capital, were actively cooperating with the Czechoslovak "young generation." A mass meeting protesting the partition of Poland at the Treaty of Brest Litovsk was held in Prague. The fiftieth anniversary of the Czech national theatre, the Národní Divadlo, was celebrated with Polish political representatives—Wincenty Witos of the Peasant Party, Stanisław Głąbiński of the National Democratic group, Leon Wasilewski of the Polish Socialist Party—participating. All this appeared as a happy augury for the future relations of the two countries.¹

Yet two problems began to appear in the background, and these when combined with old feelings of resentment, were destined to develop a barrier between the two countries. These two problems were the different attitudes of the Poles and Czechs toward Russia, and a dispute over the Silesian border.

I

With regard to the first problem, the existing differences had resulted largely from past experiences as well as from the respective positions occupied in 1918 by the Czechoslovak and Polish nations.

The Czechoslovaks, living under the rule of Austria-Hungary, desired to free themselves from the Habsburg monarchy; the Poles lived under Austrian, Prussian and Russian governments,

and aspired to freedom from all three occupying powers. To the Poles, Russia had always appeared as a menace hovering over Poland and the other Slav states; the Czechs, on the other hand, felt no enmity toward Russia, and a panslavist and pro-Russian trend persisted in important quarters.

Hence the Czechoslovaks before and during the first World War were rather lukewarm toward the aspiration of the Poles to free themselves from the Russians. "The Poles reproached us," Beneš wrote, "for our tendency at the beginning of the war to favor a simple autonomy for Poland unified within the framework of Russia instead of full independence of the Polish state, which they viewed as a denial of our own Slav principles. With regard to that, it is necessary to recognize that during the first stages of the conflict we made mistakes which we corrected fully later on."² The Poles did not entirely agree with the latter qualification, and the chairman of the Polish National Committee in Paris, Roman Dmowski, emphasized that when towards the end of the war the question of Polish independence had become an international fact, Czechoslovak political leaders still advocated a Russian-Polish boundary which would have given so-called Eastern Galicia to Russia. The Czech argument was that only a purely ethnographic Poland could better avoid clashing with Russia.³

The Poles resented this attitude as a denial of Poland's right to her historic frontiers. Resentment increased when by a pact signed with the French foreign minister Stephen Pichon of September 28, 1918, Eduard Beneš secured French recognition of the historic boundaries of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

With regard to the Czech-Polish dispute over Silesia, the Beneš-Pichon pact was of extreme importance. It implied French recognition of the Czech-Polish border in Silesia which did not coincide with ethnic factors. Here were the seeds of future conflict over Teschen (Czech, Těšín; Polish, Cieszyn). The pact was undoubtedly a master stroke of Czechoslovak diplomacy. As Beneš said himself, "We must loyally admit that no one on the French side thought that the [recognition of] Teschen boundary implied a

dispute with the Poles . . . had I come with the problem of the frontier with Poland, this agreement would have never been signed in this form."⁴

The problem of Teschen which from a relatively unimportant frontier controversy was to develop later into a dispute which would poison Czechoslovak-Polish relations between the wars was of great psychological importance. It became a symbol of the mutual antagonism which characterized the relations between the two countries throughout most of the years between 1918 and 1939. There were other reasons, however, for this antagonism, reasons which went much deeper and were a product of a difference in Weltanschauung on the part of both nations.

The principal of these reasons marked a fundamental difference in approach to European politics. An inquiry into the Czechoslovak approach is made easier by the fact that Eduard Beneš, first as foreign minister and later as president of the Republic, exercised decisive influence over the foreign policy of his country. Hence there were few if any radical departures from this policy, and a continuity was assured. But in the case of Poland, the internal changes that were taking place after 1918—such as the coup of Marshal Piłsudski in 1926, and then his death in 1935—considerably affected the course of Polish foreign policy, which indeed went through three different periods: the first began before the coup of 1926 and continued until 1933; the second lasted from 1933 to 1935; and the last stage, which was that of the policy of Colonel Józef Beck, properly speaking, lasted until 1939. Thus it is more difficult to generalize on Polish foreign policy in the interwar years than on that of Czechoslovakia. But generalizations about Polish diplomacy are possible because although the forms changed radically the content remained usually the same.

As for general Versailles settlement, and Czechoslovak and Polish attitudes toward the new League of Nations, there were both similarities and differences in the general approach of the two countries. Czechoslovakia and Poland unanimously opposed revision of the Versailles treaty. They favored collective security

and the League of Nations, but their respective attitudes toward it were far from identical, and the reason may be found in the circumstances accompanying re-creation of both states in 1918 and their subsequent consolidation. "Czechoslovakia was successful in realizing her cardinal contentions on boundary questions. Even if some of her minor and more extreme demands had been disallowed, she had met with more than adequate recognition of her territorial needs."⁵ The western borders of Czechoslovakia were drawn in accordance with her historic rights. The principle of nationality was applied to determine her eastern frontiers. The province of Subcarpathian Ruthenia was entrusted to Czechoslovakia by decision of the Great Powers. All this naturally produced a feeling of confidence in the system of international conferences and later in the League of Nations as the best safeguard of Czechoslovak interests.

In the case of the Polish borders neither historical nor ethnic principles were applied with any consistency. In fact both principles were used against Polish territorial claims at the Paris peace conference. The main reason for this seems fairly simple. Polish borders in the east and in the west were bitterly contested by the two great powers, Russia and Germany, and the West was loathe to do anything which might have earned it the unrelenting hostility of these two states. The borders of Czechoslovakia on the other hand could only arouse Hungarian or Austrian protests, and these were usually treated lightly in Paris. This obliged Poland to make her claims recognized by adopting a policy of faits accomplis. Her rights to Silesia, for example, based on the ethnic principle, were recognized only after three armed risings in this area. She secured her eastern borders, based on a compromise between historical and ethnic principles, only as a result of the Polish-Russian war of 1920-21. In the case of Polish historical rights to Danzig (Gdańsk) and parts of East Prussia, these were not recognized by the Great Powers. This produced a feeling that collective security or international conferences could not greatly assist Poland unless she was strong militarily. A mistaken attitude, perhaps, but understandable.

Hence Polish support for collective security and the League of Nations was never as wholehearted as was that of Czechoslovakia.

These diverging attitudes did not fail to produce a feeling in the West that Poland was adventurous and unreasonable, whereas Czechoslovakia was following a constructive internationalist approach.⁶ They also tended to increase Czechoslovak-Polish animosity, and gave rise to Polish accusation of Czechoslovakia as the satellite of France and of the League of Nations. The Czechoslovaks countered by ridiculing Polish pretense of being a "would-be great power," and accusing the Poles of pursuing an adventurous policy. Lack of proper understanding of the respective national characters led to contemptuous references to Polish "aristocratic romanticism" and to Czech "bourgeois opportunism."⁷ The great personal prestige of Beneš at Geneva, and the relative unpopularity of his Polish opposite, Józef Beck, were interpreted as signs of Western partiality to Czechoslovakia and belittling of Poland. Mutual animosity increased when Czechoslovakia appeared more and more as the representative of the League for East-Central Europe, and Beck embarked upon what Professor Seton-Watson has called the "lone game." The personal antipathy of Beneš and Beck did not help matters. Beck on occasion would refer to Czechoslovakia as a "police state," and would say that Beneš "insisted on the privileged position of Czechoslovakia in Eastern Europe which necessarily made him jealous of Poland."⁸ Beneš on the other hand referred to Polish eastern provinces as the "Ukrainian and Byelorussian territories"⁹ and even in 1946 could still say that "the Beck ideology . . . was not very far removed from the political doctrines of Nazi Germany."¹⁰

The personalities of these two statesmen were indeed clashing. There was certainly much of the temperamental approach in Beck's foreign policy; matters of prestige played far too important a part; an ex-soldier, Beck had many of the qualities of a good fighter, while he overplayed the part of a cool, calculating diplomat of the old school; he did not always have a flair for real statesmanship. Beneš on the other hand was in many ways an excellent diplomat

and negotiator, but less of a fighter. Beck's animosity against France and Czechoslovakia, coupled with a certain belief in German, although not Prussian, "sense of responsibility," had a most pernicious influence upon the very subtle policy which Poland was to pursue in the years 1935-39.¹¹

What, then, were the essential differences between the Czechoslovak and Polish approaches to European politics? Both states looked on France as their natural ally in the West, but while Czechoslovakia put her trust in French diplomacy and relied on France in her political activities in East-Central Europe, Poland viewed France with a dose of skepticism which increased as years went by, and she asserted in much stronger terms than Czechoslovakia ever did the right to be treated as an equal partner.

The two countries also envisaged in a different way the problem of organizing East-Central Europe. Poland felt that she was menaced by both Russia and Germany—her historical experiences accounted largely for that—and she feared the possibility of a German-Russian rapprochement directed against her. Hence, the Polish Government favored an organization in East-Central Europe, totally independent of either big neighbor, and which would best safeguard her interests. These were the motives which inspired Piłsudski in his federalist ventures with the Ukraine and Byelorussia in 1920.¹² But Czechoslovakia was not, or thought herself not to be, directly endangered by either Russia or Germany, with the difference that she viewed Russia as a potential ally in case Germany assumed a menacing attitude. Generally speaking she was loathe to lend herself to any alliance which might appear directed against Russia or Germany. The Czechoslovak idea of an organization in East-Central Europe within the framework of the League of Nations became embodied in the Little Entente, which aimed at preservation of the regional status quo. Hence arose the difficulty of cooperation in building a strong security system in East-Central Europe, between Poland which had never ratified the treaty of Trianon and was unwilling to participate in any anti-Hungarian combination, and Czechoslovakia determined to avoid

entering a larger system which might endanger her position vis-à-vis Russia or Germany.

The attitude of the two countries toward Russia was basically different. Many people came to believe that in the period between the two wars, "no nation was on better terms with the Soviet Union than was Czechoslovakia" and that "no country was more concerned that the former be brought out of its isolation into the League of Nations and the general concert of European nations."¹³ This may have been an exaggeration, because Czechoslovakia granted a *de jure* recognition to Soviet Russia only in 1934. Yet fairly cordial relations between the two states had prevailed since 1922, and Russia had her representative in Prague.¹⁴ As Beneš' secretary, Eduard Táborský, has said, Beneš "worked hard to bring Soviet Russia into the commonwealth of civilized nations."¹⁵ Poland on the other hand, while maintaining outwardly correct relations with Soviet Russia—the latter did not question the validity of Poland's eastern border until 1939—always considered the Soviet Union as a potential threat to her security.

The history of Czechoslovak-Polish relations between the wars can be divided into three periods. The first of them falls into two distinct phases, that of the Teschen drama of 1918-20, and then what may be called a return to normalcy. The dividing point is that of the settlement of the Teschen dispute, followed by the end of the Russo-Polish war.

II

The dispute over Teschen, which even after the end of actual hostilities contributed so much toward an estrangement between the two countries, was not in itself very significant. The area of the duchy was small, about 850 square miles, but it was important economically because of its rich coal deposits and a strategic railway. In the fourteenth century it had passed from Poland to the crown of Bohemia. Ethnically, according to the last Austrian census of 1910, it was inhabited by 54.85 per cent Poles, 27.11 per cent Czechs, and 18.04 per cent Germans.¹⁶ There were, however,

districts with distinct Czech and Polish majorities.¹⁷ It is true that the Czechoslovak claims were based on sound historic and economic arguments. The possession of the Bohumin (Bogumin) -Jablonka Pass railroad was very important for the Czechs, since it linked Moravia and Slovakia; the pit coal from Karvina was essential for the Czechoslovak economy. On the other hand, the Czech claims were very dubious from the ethnic point of view. Seen on this ground the Polish case was very strong indeed.

It is not possible at this juncture to discuss in detail the Teschen problem, which in the context of this present introductory chapter is of interest only insofar as it bears generally on Czechoslovak-Polish relations. Suffice to say that on November 5, 1918, local representatives of the Czechs and the Poles, namely the Rada Narodowa dla Księstwa Cieszyńskiego and the Zemský Národní Výbor pro Slezsko, agreed on a line of division of the district in accord with the principle of nationality. This line of demarcation was provisional pending final delimitation. The decision of local representatives to act prior to the central Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia seems to have been justified on the ground that it was impossible to leave matters unsettled lest local riots should occur. It is important to remember that at this stage both countries were just re-emerging as independent states; Masaryk himself was not yet in Prague, and the Polish Government was not fully consolidated.

The opposition of the Czechoslovak Government to the demarcation line was instantaneous, which was natural in view of the fact that Beneš had just signed the treaty with France on September 28, 1918, which brought French recognition for the historic boundaries of Czechoslovakia, including the district of Teschen. The Poles on the other hand viewed the solution as final, awaiting only official confirmation. Volunteers from the district in question were allowed to join Polish forces fighting at that time near Lwów, and preparations were made for election of members of the Polish parliament from the Teschen area. This last move was interpreted by the Czechoslovak Government as an attempt to prejudice the

final settlement.

On the Czechoslovak side, feelings ran high, and the Polish Government finally became alarmed. In order to avoid any possible clashes a special mission composed of Stanisław Gutowski, Jan Ptaśnik, and Damian S. Wandycz was sent to Prague in December carrying a letter from the head of the Polish state, Marshal Piłsudski, to Masaryk. The letter proposed establishment of a mixed commission which would deal with all matters of controversy between the two countries. The mission proved a failure because the Czechoslovak Government, especially prime minister Karel Kramář, did everything to gain time and avoid a definite answer. It was clear that Czechoslovakia had no intention of going through with the intricate procedure of mixed commissions, and had decided to solve the question by force.¹⁸ This seemed to the Czechoslovak Government the only way to wipe out the joint decision of the local authorities; and, counting on French support, Prague felt itself strong enough to impose its own will by use of arms.

Czechoslovak troops on January 23, 1919 attacked the Polish part of the Teschen district. Since Polish troops were mostly engaged in the East, the Czechoslovaks easily occupied the area after a series of skirmishes, in one of which the brother of General Józef Haller, the commander in chief of the Polish army in France, was killed. The Czechoslovak troops were stopped only on the line of the Vistula. Hostilities ended shortly afterwards, but the Czechoslovak attack came as a shock to Polish public opinion. And at the Peace Conference in Paris where the question came up for a decision, "the Czech advance produced a very unfavorable impression."¹⁹

Beneš himself later admitted that the "occupation was accomplished through improper methods" (okupace byla provedena způsobem nesprávným), and that he was obliged to listen to very unpleasant accusations and reproaches on the part of the great Allied powers. He said that the Allies were very much against Czechoslovakia, and that "our question of Tešín was never viewed

with sympathy by anyone in Paris."²⁰ At one stage of the long negotiations which ensued, Beneš was alarmed by a report sent from Teschen by Allied experts who advocated a boundary line that would have in fact nullified the Czechoslovak occupation.²¹ Yet in the long run Beneš was able to overcome all opposition to the Czechoslovak standpoint. Acting in agreement with prime minister Kramař, the Czechoslovak delegation in Paris adopted a conciliatory attitude and was satisfied with the status quo, while Kramař clamored for the entire duchy of Teschen. As Beneš himself put it, "Dr. Kramař agreed, in view of the fact that some concessions in the matter of Těšín would have to be made, to divide parts; he was to demand . . . the whole of Těšín, I was to be more compromising." Beneš added that "there was no disagreement between us."²² This policy had a curious repercussion when the final decision of the Conference of Spa of 1920 confirmed the Czechoslovak rights to the occupied territory Czech public opinion on this occasion saw a compromise in what was in fact the complete victory of Beneš' diplomacy. But this success was a Pyrrhic victory. The Poles

nursed a grievance, and twenty years later took an opportunity of reversing the decision by unilateral action, to their own subsequent undoing. This grievance, it is but fair to say, was augmented by the feeling that the Czechs had taken advantage of their weakness during the Russo-Polish war of 1920, to extract concessions and decisions which could not have been obtained in times of peace.²³

Polish indignation was general and great. Ignacy Paderewski, who signed the final document engaging Poland to abide by the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors on July 28, 1920, declared that "the Polish nation can never be convinced that justice has been done." The peasant leader Witos stated in the Polish Parliament that the decision had dug an abyss between the two nations; and the prominent socialist Wojciech Moraczewski said that "the entire Polish nation will never be reconciled with the permanent loss of generic Polish territory."²⁴ The Polish reaction to the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors awarding Teschen to Czechoslovakia was an important factor in shaping future relations between

the two states. As Professor Felix Vondracek has put it, "The Czechoslovaks apparently failed to appreciate that the friendship of Poland was more valuable than the small area in dispute."²⁵

Meanwhile Polish resentment of Czechoslovakia increased because of the Czechoslovak attitude during the Russo-Polish war of 1920-21. Czechoslovak workers stopped trains carrying ammunition for Poland, and this provoked Polish outcries and protests even if, as the Czechoslovak statesman Milan Hodža said, the Government in Prague could not properly have been blamed for it. Hodža realized, however, that one such incident at Moravská Ostrava "was enough to poison the feeling of a neighboring nation toward Czechoslovakia for a very long time."²⁶ The Poles on the whole shared the opinion expressed by the British ambassador in Berlin, Lord d'Abernon, that "the Czechs were violently hostile to Poland, and had only one hope, namely that the Soviet would blot them out."²⁷ However unjustifiable this opinion might have been, it sank deeply into the minds of the Poles, and articles in the Czechoslovak press which appeared at the time did not help dispel it.²⁸

The peace treaty between Poland and the Soviet Union signed in Riga on March 18, 1921 brought a gradual return to normalcy in East-Central Europe. In Czechoslovak-Polish relations mutual attempts were made to overcome the feelings of hostility caused by the Teschen drama, and to establish some sort of cooperation. This did not mean, of course, that all antagonisms were buried. Prague and Warsaw still differed in their general approaches to European politics, and the Teschen crisis left a bitter aftertaste, but the need for making relations normal between Czechoslovakia and Poland was clearly realized. This new phase in Czechoslovak-Polish relations corresponded to the era in European international politics of the Geneva Protocol, Locarno, the Briand-Kellog Pact, and the Four-Power Pact of 1933. Attempts at Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation were first made at a nongovernmental level, among political parties, especially the peasant parties of the two countries. Informal discussions and exchanges of opinion went sometimes

very far. Hodža even suggested creation of a customs union,²⁹ while the Polish peasant deputy Dąbski on at least one occasion spoke of the possibility of a federal bond between the two countries.³⁰ In 1921 the Polish foreign minister, Konstanty Skirmunt, went to Prague, and on November 6 signed a treaty with Beneš providing for benevolent neutrality of either country should the other engage in war. There was also a promise of mutual respect for the integrity of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and a disinterest in the internal affairs of Slovakia on the part of Poland, and of Czechoslovakia with respect to southeastern Poland. The Skirmunt-Beneš treaty was, however, never ratified by Warsaw. Another minor border dispute over the Javoržina district, which had dragged on since the Conference of Ambassadors in July 1920, flared up anew in December, 1921. Czechoslovak-Polish relations again deteriorated. Conditions improved in 1924 when the Jaworžina dispute was settled by the Warsaw Protocol of May 6, 1924, and the same year the new Polish foreign minister, Count Alexander Skrzyński, met Beneš in Geneva and discussed possibilities of a Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement. Beneš in April, 1925, came to Warsaw to sign three treaties. The first was a treaty of conciliation and arbitration, excluding, however, arbitration of territorial disputes; the second and third treaties were commercial and financial conventions. But the prospects of a comprehensive political alliance which would have crowned the Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement soon became dim. The main reason was the difference in approach which the two countries took to the Locarno Pact signed on October 15, 1925,

The Locarno Pact was an attempt to strengthen European security by direct agreements between interested parties, instead of attaining security through more general methods such as the Geneva Protocol, which had failed. The Locarno Pact insofar as it provided for mutual guarantees of the Franco-German and Belgo-German frontiers and only for arbitration treaties between Germany and Poland and Germany and Czechoslovakia, discriminated against East-Central European states. The British saw that

clearly. "We can, as is proposed," wrote Sir James Headlam-Morley, the historical adviser of the Foreign Office, "give a guarantee against German aggression on the Rhine or through Belgium. But in the future the real danger may lie, not here, but rather on the eastern frontiers of Germany—Danzig, Poland, Czechoslovakia—for it is in these districts that the settlement of Paris would be, when the time came, most easily overthrown. But in these districts no military help would be available from this country" ³¹ Before the Pact was signed, both Beneš and Skrzyński criticized its basic ideas, but Skrzyński went farther than the Czechoslovak foreign minister and insisted on a guarantee of the German-Polish border. This did not fail to impress Beneš to the extent that he tried to avoid any commitments to Poland which might have placed Czechoslovakia in a difficult position vis-à-vis Germany. Thus, when in April, 1926, —six months before the final signing of the Locarno Pact—Skrzyński went to Prague to propose a full-fledged Czechoslovak-Polish alliance, the offer was declined. The Polish reaction to the Czechoslovak refusal took the form of an attitude that Czechoslovakia was unreliable, and that Poland could not count on her in case of a German attack. In later years this same argument was often put forward by the opponents of a policy of Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement. ³²

On May 12, 1926, a most important event took place in Poland. Marshal Józef Piłsudski overthrew the weak Government in Warsaw and became the leading figure in the country. Piłsudski's coup did not increase the chances of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. The Marshal was skeptical of Czechoslovak statecraft, and doubted the durability of the Czechoslovak Republic. ³³ On the other hand his coming to power did not bring an immediate change in Polish policy toward Czechoslovakia. On the contrary, from 1927 to 1933 Piłsudski pursued a friendly policy toward Prague. First of all he made attempts at cooperation with the Little Entente. Poland approached the Little Entente and during the meeting in Bled informed it of the Rumanian-Polish defensive alliance. Beneš'

reaction, however, was unfavorable, mainly because of the possibility of antagonizing Russia. The Little Entente states were approached again in 1927, and this time they refused "to commit themselves on Poland's question whether German economic pressure on Poland would not be a danger to all Europe."³⁴ Their unwillingness was obviously caused by the fear of taking a firm stand against Germany. "During the summer and early fall of 1932 Poland sought to cultivate . . . warmer friendship with Czechoslovakia, a campaign which perhaps reached its climax early in October when Czechoslovak public opinion reacted favorably to a much publicized statement attributed to the Polish minister of foreign affairs, [August] Zaleski, that the preservation of peace and the maintenance of a balance of power in Central Europe were dependent upon the cooperation of Poland and Czechoslovakia."³⁵ The value of such a statement made by a minister of foreign affairs is often mainly propagandist and should not be overestimated,³⁶ but it indicated at least a desire for good relations. Zaleski in May, 1932, was present as an observer at the meeting of the Little Entente in Belgrade. The next year saw the main attempt on the part of Poland to align Czechoslovakia on her side in view of the growing German danger.

Mussolini on March 22, 1933, put forward his famous proposal for a Four-Power Pact in which Britain, France, Germany and Italy were to participate. The pact had a dual purpose: first, to establish a clear distinction between the great and the secondary powers and to entrust the former with real responsibility for European settlements; second, to confront pro-status quo France with revisionist Italy and Germany, who hoped eventually to win Britain over to their side.

- The Four-Power Pact was a challenge to the smaller states of Europe. It provided the ideal opportunity for joint action of Poland and the Little Entente, and above all the Czechoslovaks and the Poles. Warsaw voiced its opposition to the proposed pact in the strongest terms. Beck said that Piłsudski saw in the Four-Power Pact a cartel of the Great Powers arranging at their will the

affairs of the smaller states. Piłsudski in this case foresaw the development which ultimately led to Munich.³⁷ In Prague, Beneš made a speech on April 26 in which he spoke against the proposed pact and emphasized the principle of the equality of all states. In the same speech he mentioned his intention of proposing an alliance to Warsaw. Piłsudski instructed Beck to proceed forthwith to Prague; and, since the Marshal distrusted Beneš, he told Beck "to establish personal contacts with Masaryk whom he [Piłsudski] considered a personage of the highest caliber."³⁸ Beck's mission, however, never came off. On May 26 France assured Czechoslovakia and the other members of the Little Entente that a modified text of the Four-Power Pact would in no way jeopardize their interests. Beneš accepted the new text, and on May 30 the Little Entente expressed official approval of the new wording of the Pact. But Poland did not change her attitude. She opposed the pact on principle, though reasons of prestige played also a certain part. Czechoslovak-Polish relations cooled considerably, and old animosities were fanned anew. In evaluating the attitude of the Czechoslovak Republic during this period it is but fair to say that she must have viewed Polish attempts at closer cooperation with mixed feelings. She was willing to cooperate but on a limited basis; she dreaded the prospect of becoming entangled in possible Polish-German or Polish-Russian conflicts. Besides, Beneš was always willing to agree to a compromise formula proposed by the Western Powers, while Poland believed in achieving results by stubborn resistance to proposals with which she fundamentally disagreed. Czechoslovakia was unwilling to compromise her relatively secure position by a close Polish alliance which might have antagonized Germany or the Soviet Union; Poland in spite of a definite lack of cordial feeling for the Government in Prague was willing to cooperate with Czechoslovakia on a wide basis, but she was less enthusiastic for the limited objectives of the Little Entente. On both sides a certain amount of ill feeling prevailed, which went back to the old Teschen dispute but was not limited to it.

III

The second period of the Czechoslovak-Polish relations from 1933 to 1935 may be called a period of transition. Warsaw gave up all attempts at cooperation with Czechoslovakia, and made all Czechoslovak attempts at betterment of relations dependent on the treatment of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia. As Beck said in defining Polish approaches at that time, that "In regard to the Government in Prague it was necessary to emphasize that there could be no question of a détente as long as the fate of the Trans-Olza Poles did not improve. [Trans-Olza was the Polish term used to describe the strip of Teschen which Poland lost in 1920.] Nevertheless it was not envisaged to refer the matter to the Geneva organization nor ask a third power to intervene."³⁹ A number of minor incidents in 1934 helped to irritate public opinion in both countries. There were anti-Czech riots in Teschen (the town itself had been divided in 1920 into a Polish Cieszyn and Czech Těšín) followed by arrests of a number of Poles by the Czechoslovak police. Poland replied by expelling twenty-one Czechs and prohibiting sale of three Czechoslovak newspapers. The Polish consul from Moravská Ostrava was asked to leave, and two Czechoslovak consuls were expelled by the Poles. The press of both countries began to be full of aggressive articles.⁴⁰ Meanwhile two important developments took place which affected considerably Czechoslovak-Polish relations. The first was the signing of the German-Polish Nonaggression Pact of January 26, 1934. The second was the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of May 16, 1935.

The German-Polish treaty, an event generally unexpected and almost revolutionary in its diplomatic consequences, resulted largely from the attitude of the Western Powers, especially France, toward Germany.⁴¹ Poland, as well as other French allies in East-Central Europe, was vitally interested in maintaining French preponderance over Germany, failing which her position was bound to become extremely vulnerable. As Professor Arnold Wolfers has written:

It is reliably reported that she [Poland] was ready on several occasions to take action to stop German rearmament and to prevent the loss of French military superiority. When she found France unwilling she tried to save herself by reverting to neutrality. In 1934, she signed an agreement with Germany which seemed to link the two countries so closely that some even suspected Poland of having become a German ally; she remained, however, an ally of France and also tried to improve her relations with the Soviet Russia.⁴²

As seen in the 1934 context, Piłsudski's policy was based on a realistic appraisal of the international situation, although the way in which the treaty was negotiated, causing a surprise to everybody, was not very fortunate. The West viewed the German-Polish treaty with mixed feelings in which suspicion of the Polish "lone game" was strongly entrenched. Prague received the news with great misgivings and a year later signed an alliance with Russia, thus reinforcing its defensive system. So Poland and Czechoslovakia drew even more apart, and Czechoslovak criticism of Warsaw for entering the Hitler camp mingled with Polish accusations that Czechoslovakia had become a Soviet outpost.

After signature of the Polish-German treaty. Warsaw had to follow a course which required the utmost subtlety and clear thinking. In order to make the most of the treaty with Germany, Poland had to avoid giving Berlin any excuse for resuming an unfriendly policy; she had to realize clearly that the German treaty should not be used to help Nazi policy against the West, and that the French alliance remained a pivot of Polish foreign policy; that all efforts should be made to avoid friction with Poland's smaller neighbors who might be useful as allies; and finally, that collective security, however feeble, should not be damaged beyond repair. Whether it was possible to reconcile all these requirements and derive only benefits is hard to say. There was only one example in European diplomacy of a similar jugglery—Bismarck's policy of German-Austro-Hungarian alliances combined with simultaneous reinsurance treaties with Russia. But Bismarck obviously negotiated from a position of great strength. There can be no doubt that Polish diplomacy had an exceedingly difficult part to play, and

there is much truth in the assertion that "this game succeeded so long as his [Piłsudski's] ruthless but brilliantly constructive mind was there to direct it, but under Colonel Beck it soon degenerated into complete cynicism One result was a considerable deterioration in the relations between Warsaw and Prague."⁴³

The illness of Marshal Piłsudski resulting in his death in 1935 marked the end of this second period of the Czechoslovak-Polish relations.

IV

The third and last period of the relations between Warsaw and Prague, from 1935 to 1939, was dominated entirely on the Polish side by the personality of Colonel Józef Beck. This highly controversial person was represented sometimes as an unscrupulous Machiavellian, the bête noire of European diplomacy, or else as the most realistic diplomat which Poland had in the twentieth century. Whatever history's final judgment will be, there can be no doubt that Beck in 1935 intended to continue Piłsudski's policy. He did, however, give it a much narrower interpretation. Beck seems to have directed the efforts of Polish foreign policy to matters of lesser importance—the question of Trans-Olza, as far as Czechoslovak-Polish relations were concerned—to the detriment of wider European issues. Beck saw in 1936, while analyzing the possibilities then open to Polish foreign policy, five alternative courses in East-Central Europe: Alliance with Czechoslovakia, which he dismissed outright; a passive attitude, which he likewise rejected; occupation of Trans-Olza; occupation of Danzig; and putting pressure on Lithuania to resume relations with Poland. It may be argued that Poland in 1935 could not have afforded to antagonize Germany by an alliance with Czechoslovakia. Surely, however, the occupation of Danzig would have been a direct challenge to the Third Reich. Thus it would appear that there are certain inconsistencies in Beck's foreign policy.

Beck based his attitude toward Czechoslovakia on several assumptions. First, there was an impossibility of cooperating more

closely with that country, because of the experience of the past and above all because of the Trans-Olza question; secondly, Czechoslovakia was involved with the Little Entente, which Beck disliked as an anti-Hungarian as well as an ineffective organization; thirdly, Czechoslovakia supported hostile anti-Polish propaganda and sheltered Polish Communists, nationalist Ukrainians, and other subversive elements; in the fourth place, Czechoslovakia was an artificial entity composed of too many nationalities, and sooner or later was likely to disappear from the map of Europe; finally, it was dangerous for Poland to enter any new combinations such as an alliance with Prague, because they would upset the delicate balance between Polish commitments to France and the Polish pact with Germany.⁴⁴ While the first three of these assumptions were colored to a certain extent at least by Beck's emotional attitude, and the fourth contained some wishful thinking, the fifth assumption was the most important for the understanding of Polish foreign policy. To make the idea of balancing between France and Germany a basis of Polish policy indicated the gradual adoption of a neutralist stand in the division of Europe during the latter 1930's between the Axis and the democratic West. This policy, together with the continuing mistrust of Czechoslovakia, led Poland at this time to assume a peculiarly negative attitude toward Prague. The community of Czechoslovak-Polish interests which in the early stages after the first World War was underestimated by Czechoslovakia, was now denied by the Polish ministry of foreign affairs. While in the preceding periods many proposals for cooperation had come from the more exposed Poland, and Czechoslovakia treated them rather elusively, the situation changed after 1934-35, with Czechoslovakia doing most of the wooing and the Poles in turn becoming rather haughty.

The French tried to mediate. Two French ministers of foreign affairs, Louis Barthou and Pierre Laval, visited Warsaw in an attempt to build an Eastern pact. Laval in May, 1935, tried to act as mediator between the Poles and the Czechs, "at the express wish of Beneš." He asked Beck, on Beneš' behalf, for assurances

that Poland would not attack Czechoslovakia in case of a German-Czechoslovak conflict. Beck's reaction was very emotional and largely inspired by reasons of prestige. He considered Beneš' inquiry amazing and refused to answer it. He pronounced himself against the participation of Czechoslovakia in a proposed grouping in East-Central Europe, and in explaining to Laval the reasons for the bad relations between the two countries he declared that "It is impossible for us to feel any affection for that country."⁴⁵ It is undoubtedly true that Beneš, knowing Beck's susceptibilities, was not very adroit in approaching Poland through France, but Laval's talks in Warsaw illustrated well Beck's constantly negative attitude towards the Czechoslovak Republic. Even the Polish undersecretary of state, Count Jan Szembek, had serious doubts as to the wisdom of this policy. As he wrote in October, 1935, "I realized that the scope of our conflict with the Czechs worried me greatly and I could not very well understand where all this was going to lead us."⁴⁶ The reaction of public opinion in both countries to the increasing Czechoslovak-Polish tension was one of anxiety. The Polish press attaché in Prague, Kazimierz Wierzbiański, reported that Czechoslovak opposition parties on several occasions stressed the necessity for a real cooperation between the two countries.⁴⁷ On the Polish side the critical attitude of the opposition parties—the Socialists, the National Democrats, and the Peasants—toward Beck's foreign policy led in 1935 to a definite move for the improvement of Czechoslovak-Polish relations. The movement was joined even by such politicians as Bolesław Miedziński, who was very close to the regime.⁴⁸ Beck, however, refused to change his policy toward Czechoslovakia. He made a speech on foreign policy in the *Sejm* on January 1, 1936, and as he wrote himself, "I put an end in a few sentences to all this fuss about the Czech question, and so the first attempt to modify the principles and the methods of our foreign policy failed."⁴⁹

Throughout 1936 France put pressure on Poland to come to some agreement with Czechoslovakia. The French ambassador in Warsaw, Léon Noël, assured Count Szembek in June that "If

Poland returned to her old policy of collaboration with Czechoslovakia especially in the military sphere the situation would become brighter. Czechoslovakia wants an improvement in her relations with Poland and Krofta [Kamil Krofta, the new foreign minister] is clearly pro-Polish."⁵⁰ The French put similar pressure on the commander in chief of the Polish army, Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz, during the latter's visit to Paris in September, 1936. They hoped to exploit the differences which existed between him and Beck. General Gamelin gave the marshal a French projet of a Czechoslovak-Polish treaty which provided for consultation, mutual nonintervention in internal affairs, neutralization of the Czechoslovak-Polish border, and forbade agreements with third parties directed against either state.⁵¹ But Warsaw considered the proposal unsatisfactory, more advantageous to Czechoslovakia than to Poland. Besides, Beck viewed it as too vague. This attitude did not fail to produce a bad impression in the West. "Our policy toward Czechoslovakia is universally condemned," reported the Polish counselor of the embassy in Paris, Anatol Muhlstein.⁵²

In 1937 Milan Hodža became prime minister of Czechoslovakia, and Beck viewed his nomination as indicating an attempt to "revise profoundly" Czechoslovak foreign policy.⁵³ In January, 1938, the Poles made an unofficial approach to Prague, to find out whether Czechoslovakia would be ready to suggest a more definite and concrete form of cooperation. The approach was unsuccessful, the Czechoslovak reply negative. It seems that Moscow played a part in dissuading Prague from accepting the Polish proposal.⁵⁴ In any event general relations between Prague and Warsaw had not improved. The Czechoslovak minister in Bucharest, Dr. Jan Šeba, published a book in 1937 entitled L'U.S.S.R. et la Petite Entente in which he advocated among other things a common Czechoslovak-Russian border. On the Polish side, one of the Government ministers made irresponsible remarks about partitioning Czechoslovakia.⁵⁵ Such incidents were not likely to contribute to the creation of mutual confidence necessary for any serious negotiation.

The Anschluss of Easter 1938 produced a great impression in Europe. The French ambassador in Warsaw has aptly described it as "a calamity for the policy of the balance of power." It was very unfortunate that Poland chose this particular moment to settle her relations with Lithuania by means of an ultimatum, creating thus a sinister impression of coordinating her actions with those of Nazi Germany and weakening the European system, which at any rate was weak enough. Hitler now fixed his attention on Czechoslovakia, and raised the question of the Sudeten Germans. The international developments in the spring of 1938 are too well known for me to dwell upon here at any length. It may be useful, however, in passing to recall certain special aspects of the Munich crisis.

Czechoslovakia was the most faithful adherent to the French post-Versailles policy, and one of the staunchest supporters of the League of Nations. Furthermore, by cultivating the friendship of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia seemed to have powerful backing against Germany. As events proved, her position was not at all strong. France in 1938 displayed for some time an attitude of determination and attempted to persuade Britain to join her in opposing Hitler's demands on Czechoslovakia. She also put pressure on Poland. But Britain was in no way prepared to embark upon a general war, and used her influence to restrain France.

Was France herself ready to go to war in the defense of the Czechoslovak Republic with whom she had a formal alliance? The subsequent developments and the part played by France in the Munich "Diktat" seem to disprove it. And what, then, was the position of Poland? Was Poland ready to join France and fight against Germany in the defense of Czechoslovakia if France decided to take up the struggle? There has been a great divergence of views on the question of the Polish attitude toward the Czechoslovak crisis.

According to a note in Szembek's diary, the Polish ministry of foreign affairs took a stand that the Franco-Polish alliance had a defensive character and was binding on Poland only if France was attacked. Beck apparently instructed the Polish ambassador in

Paris to emphasize that the alliance had a "defensive character."⁵⁶ On the other hand the Polish ambassador himself, Juliusz Łukasiewicz, asserted that the French were clearly given to understand that Poland would support them unreservedly if war broke out.⁵⁷ The French ambassador in Warsaw, Noël, confirmed this when he said that "The French Government knows perfectly well that in the moment of danger this Franco-Polish alliance will be put into operation ["jouera"] from the French side just as well as from the Polish side. The question, however, is to act in such a way that it would not be necessary to put it in operation."⁵⁸ It seems therefore that the French in 1938 felt that they could count on Poland in case of war, but they were primarily interested in using the alliance to deter Germany from drastic action.

The Poles felt that French policy was essentially a bluff, and that France wanted to frighten Germany by a united French-Polish front but was unprepared to back up Czechoslovakia militarily. Was there any chance of so bluffing Germany had Poland supported French policy wholeheartedly? This question cannot definitely be answered even today, but it is clear that Poland was very reluctant to support such a policy. There were two reasons: first, Poland feared to antagonize Germany and then be left alone to face her, should Germany resort to war; secondly, she disliked taking a kind of gamble on behalf of Czechoslovakia with whom her relations were, as we have seen on so many occasions, definitely strained. As the German ambassador in Warsaw, Hans von Moltke, wrote after a conversation with Beck in June, "His unfriendly attitude to Czechoslovakia is unchanged";⁵⁹ and this factor had to be taken into consideration. It is of course extremely difficult to ascertain how far Beck's unfriendliness toward Czechoslovakia influenced his judgment of the situation, but it is possible that had Poland and Czechoslovakia been on good terms and had Beck been certain that Czechoslovakia would fight, he might have supported her all the way without giving too much thought to possible consequences. This is only a speculation, which cannot be proved or disproved. As things stood, however, Beck's attitude toward the

Czechoslovak question was vitiated, to a certain extent at least, by his low opinion of Czechoslovakia and also of Beneš, and by general Polish unfriendliness, the origins of which went back to the Teschen drama of 1919-20. On the other hand, there is much truth in the assertion that "If the Western Powers had stood together and maintained a firm attitude, there is little reason to doubt that all the Central European states, including Poland and Hungary would have stood by them." ⁶⁰

In the situation existing in 1938 the Polish Government decided to adopt a purely egoist policy, and concentrate attention on the question of the Trans-Olza district. The slogan would be "the same concessions to the Poles as to the other minorities in Czechoslovakia." This policy showed itself in continuous Polish pressure on Prague, alongside the main German pressure. The Western allies of Czechoslovakia meanwhile adopted a position of "good counselors" who advised concessions to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Were there any definite attempts on the part of Prague to approach Poland directly, and by settling existing controversies bring her over to the Czechoslovak side? According to a German source⁶¹ the Czechoslovak minister in Warsaw, Juraj Slávik, in June, 1938, handed to the Polish foreign minister a proposal to open negotiations between the two Governments on the following basis: Czechoslovakia would deliver to Poland armaments and raw materials up to five milliard zlotys (nearly one milliard dollars), the loan to be guaranteed by the Polish Government and the Bank of Poland, payment for deliveries beginning after five years and to be completed within ten years. As a second step the Czechoslovak Government intimated the conclusion of a political treaty of friendship and assistance leading toward establishment of a general political understanding in East-Central Europe. Furthermore, Prague suggested a series of economic measures to increase trade between the two countries on a basis of the most-favored-nation clause. Czechoslovakia engaged to grant full opportunity for the independent political, economic, and cultural development

of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia. In exchange Prague asked Warsaw to give up its demands for autonomy or complete independence of the Polish minority in the Czechoslovak Republic.

The German report contains certain inaccuracies. It seems that minister Slávik approached the Polish deputy prime minister, Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, and not Beck. Therefore the Czechoslovak move could be more accurately described as sounding the Polish side, rather than a formal proposal which would have gone through the usual diplomatic channels. Secondly, although no details are available to us apart from Slávik's personal recollections, it is doubtful whether Prague envisaged a definite political treaty of friendship and assistance, since such a treaty would hardly have been in accord with the general line of Czechoslovak foreign policy. As Hubert Ripka has written in explaining the general lines of his country's foreign policy, "If Czechoslovakia did not seek a military alliance with Poland, this was because she did not want to undertake any commitments towards a state which had so many unsettled disputes to resolve, both with Germany and with Russia."⁶² Yet whatever its real scope and character, the Czechoslovak offer deserves to be mentioned. Warsaw turned it down, and one does not know exactly what was the Polish reaction.

The second Czechoslovak attempt is fairly well known, but its importance seems to have been somewhat overemphasized. In a letter from Beneš to the president of Poland, Ignacy Mościcki, dated September 22, 1938, the Czechoslovak president suggested removal of friction between the two countries by settling the Teschen question "on the basis of frontier adjustment." The letter did not propose concretely any alliance or cooperation. Mościcki's answer was vague and noncommittal,⁶³ and there were several reasons for the negative Polish attitude. Warsaw viewed the Beneš letter as an attempt to delay negotiations; it came following a Czechoslovak reply to the Polish note of September 21 demanding cession of the Trans-Olza district. Secondly, the letter which bore the date of September 22 was handed in on September 26, three days after a strong Soviet démarche to Poland threatening repudiation of the

Polish-Russian nonaggression treaty in case Polish troops crossed the Czechoslovak border. The Poles thus suspected that the letter was purposely delayed to enable Moscow to put pressure on Warsaw. If that were really the case, it was undoubtedly a bad miscalculation on the part of Prague, given Polish susceptibilities about Russia, to offer the impression that Czechoslovakia acted in concert with the Soviet Union.

But if the importance of Beneš' letter may have been later exaggerated, the subsequent Czechoslovak note of September 30 deserves far more attention than is usually given it. Czechoslovakia sent the note after she had been sacrificed by the Great Powers at Munich on September 29, 1938. It contained a concrete proposal, following and elaborating Beneš' general remark about "frontier adjustment," to cede the Trans-Olza district by means of a mixed commission and in a manner calculated to produce the least possible friction and hardship. The note emphasized that the cession should be carried out so as to demonstrate Czechoslovak good will, and should Poland suspect her of stalling, then there could be added a joint Franco-British guarantee that the cession would take place. Beck was annoyed that the Munich conference had ignored Polish claims and he was determined to demonstrate Polish force. He probably also wanted to humiliate Beneš. Hence he replied to the Czechoslovak proposal with an ultimatum demanding instant cession of the Trans-Olza. Czechoslovakia could do little but accept the ultimatum on October 1, and the same day Polish troops marched into the Trans-Olza district.

There is an analogy between the fate of the last Czechoslovak proposal to transfer the Trans-Olza to Poland peacefully, and that of Piłsudski's letter of almost exactly twenty years earlier proposing the creation of a mixed commission to settle Czechoslovak Polish border controversies. First the Czechoslovaks and then the Poles preferred to discard negotiation in favor of an armed demonstration and use of force, and this method did great harm to Czechoslovak-Polish relations. The actual transfer of a strip of land was never worth such a high price.

The highhanded method adopted by Beck in 1938 was bound to create widespread indignation in Czechoslovakia, which increased with news of the far from gentle treatment of Czechs in the district taken over by Poland. The Polish military occupation filled the Czechs with bitterness and came as a shock to Czechoslovak public opinion. That a Slav neighbor could act in concert with Germany against the Czechoslovak Republic was more than the Czechoslovaks could forgive or forget. The West, however, which had sacrificed Czechoslovakia at Munich, had little moral right to feel indignant about the Polish action. Crowds which acclaimed Chamberlain bringing "peace with honor" to London, or cheered Daladier on his return from Munich to Paris, were hardly qualified to sit in judgment over the Poles. Yet the fact that the British and French ambassadors had previously recognized Polish claims⁶⁴ was now conveniently forgotten and public opinion in the West condemned Poland almost unanimously. Even in Poland the joy at the revenge for 1919-20 mingled with a feeling of depression; many people felt that the action was unchivalrous and contrary to Polish tradition.

The Polish Government apparently did not properly appraise the significance of Munich. After the subsequent disappearance of the Czecho-Slovak state on March 15, 1939, following the brief existence of the Second Republic, Beck attempted to organize a defensive bloc composed of Poland, Hungary (which after receiving Subcarpathian Ruthenia had a common border with Poland), the new state of Slovakia, and others. These attempts were not successful. A defensive system in East-Central Europe without Czechoslovakia was bound to be of doubtful value, and the common Polish-Hungarian frontier was hardly compensation for the breakdown of the Czecho-slovak Republic.

After the Polish stand during the Munich crisis, few people in the West could believe that Poland still pursued her own foreign policy independent of Germany. Yet even during the entry of German and Polish troops into Czechoslovakia a military incident over the town of Bohumin (Bogumin) which Germany claimed and which Poland wrenched from her indicated that the Poles by no means

followed the German line. The Polish-Hungarian border was established also largely against German wishes. That Poland was not in the Hitler camp became quite apparent in 1939 when she opposed with determination German demands for concessions, and when Beck went to London to sign his alliance with Great Britain on August 25, 1939.

It is one of the many ironies of history that Czechoslovakia, which during her twenty years of independence had been a staunch supporter of the European collective system and of France, found herself deserted by her allies in the hour of her direst need, and that it was a Four-Power cartel, including France, which declared her doom; while Poland, who had played the "lone game," entered the war in the company of the Western Powers. It is even more significant that neither the faith of Beneš in diplomatic formulae, a faith which led to the acceptance of the final solution of Munich, nor Beck's belief in Polish armed forces, which led Poland to enter the ring in 1939, prevented either country from being engulfed separately by the rising German tide.

The history of Czechoslovak-Polish relations between the two world wars reveals many reasons for the estrangement which prevailed between the two countries. These reasons were more complex and went much deeper than this brief survey can possibly indicate. One may explain interwar Polish-Czechoslovak relations by the respective national characteristics which in both countries produced statesmen of widely differing mentalities. There was a different approach to foreign policy. The ways of handling the border dispute in Teschen aggravated existing animosity. But, all things considered, were not the causes of estrangement between Poland and Czechoslovakia in grave disproportion to the effects finally produced? Exposed as the two countries were to external dangers, were the statesmen of Prague and Warsaw in a position to play the usual diplomatic game of profiting by each other's misfortunes? Could they afford in the long run to indulge in mutual bickerings, which were a usual feature of international politics? Were not the risks Czechoslovakia and Poland might have incurred

by becoming closely linked to each other relatively small in comparison with the paramount risk of falling separately before the common German enemy?

When Poland went down in 1939 and numerous Poles joined Czechoslovak political leaders in exile, all such questions became very much alive. Representatives of both countries, pondering over the past policies and the ultimate disaster which overtook their countries, attempted to put their future relations on a firmer basis. There soon appeared the idea of a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation.

Notes

1. Damian S. Wandycz, Zapomniany List Piłsudskiego do Masaryka (New York, 1953), pp. 4-7.

2. Eduard Beneš, Où vont les Slaves (Paris, 1948), pp. 191-192.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 190; Kazimierz Wierzbiański, "Czechy a Polska," Niepodległość, IV (1952), 93-95.

4. E. Beneš, Problemy Nové Evropy a Zahraniční Politika Československá (Prague, 1924), p. 62.

5. F. J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia: 1918-1935 (New York, 1937), p. 43.

6. "Poland obtained a world-wide reputation for unbridled imperialism" R. L. Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (New York, 1937), p. 80. See also R. Machray, The Poland of Pilsudski (London, 1936).

7. Compare W. J. Rose, "Czechs and Poles as Neighbors," Journal of Central European Affairs, XI (1951), 153-171.

8. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport; Politique polonaise, 1926-39 (Neuchatel, 1951), p. 52.

9. E. Beneš, Où vont les Slaves, *passim*.

10. E. Beneš, "Postwar Czechoslovakia," Foreign Affairs, XXIV (1946), 402.

11. For an interesting appreciation of the two statesmen, see P. E. Zinner, "Czechoslovakia: The Diplomacy of Eduard Benes,"

and H. L. Roberts, "The Diplomacy of Colonel Beck," in G. A. Craig and F. Gilbert, ed., The Diplomats: 1919-1939 (Princeton, 1953), pp. 100-123; 579-615.

12. See M. K. Dziewanowski, "Piłsudski's Federal Policy: 1919-1921," Journal of Central European Affairs, X (1950).

13. G. W. Keeton and G. Schwarzenberger, Czechoslovakia between East and West (London, 1947), p. 206.

14. M. Beloff, The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia (2 vols., New York, 1947), I, 131.

15. E. Táborský, "Beneš and the Soviets," Foreign Affairs, XXVII (1949), 403.

16. Many Czechs considered these figures inaccurate.

17. H. W. V. Temperley, A History of the Peace Conference in Paris (6 vols., London, 1921), IV, 351ff.

18. D. S. Wandycz, Zapomniany List Piłsudskiego do Masaryka, *passim*.

19. H. W. V. Temperley, History of the Peace Conference, IV, 357.

20. E. Beneš, Problemy Nové Evropy, pp. 67-69.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 66; see also F. J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia, pp. 152, 157ff.

23. R. W. Seton-Watson, Twenty-Five Years of Czechoslovakia (London, 1943), p. 59.

24. K. Wierzbiański, "Czechy a Polska," 94.

25. F. J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia, p. 152.

26. M. Hodža, Federation in Central Europe; Reflections and Reminiscences (London, 1942), p. 80.

27. Lord d'Abernon, An Ambassador of Peace; Pages from the Diary of Viscount d'Abernon (3 vols., London, 1929-30), I, 217.

28. Národní Listy wrote on April 20, 1920: "We are vitally interested in having a joint frontier with the territory of the former Russian State enlarged by Eastern Galicia."

29. M. Hodža, Federation in Central Europe, p. 82.

30. See the comments of the Central European Observer, IV (1926), lff.

31. J. W. Headlam-Morley, Studies in Diplomatic History (London, 1930), p. 156.

32. See J. Beck, Dernier Rapport; H. Ripka, Munich: Before and After (London, 1939); J. Szembek, Journal, 1933-1939 (Paris, 1952); F. J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia; K. Wierzbiański, "Czechy a Polska,"

33. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport, p. 9.

34. F. J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia, p. 291.

35. Ibid., p. 336.

36. Beneš made a similar statement in 1928 in which he spoke of "our friendship for Poland which is not marred to-day by the smallest shadow or the slightest misunderstanding," Sources et Documents Tchécoslovaques, no. 23 (Prague, 1928)

37. R. Albrecht-Carrié, "Four Power Pacts: 1933-45," Journal of Central European Affairs, V (1945), 17-35.

38. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport, p. 4.

39. Ibid., p. 9.

40. The Illustrowany Kurjer Codzienny of Cracow for example, excelled in this game.

41. "Daladier's refusal of Poland's offer in 1933 and his failure to inform the Poles of the Four-Power Pact negotiations had resulted in the Hitler-Wysocki interview and German-Polish Treaty." J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (New York, 1948), p. 285.

42. A. Wolfers, Britain and France between Two Wars (New York, 1940), p. 126; compare with G. M. Gathorne Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs 1920-1939 (Oxford, 1950), p. 369; H. Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe between the Wars (Cambridge, 1945), p. 387; Sir Lewis Namier, Diplomatic Prelude: 1938-1939 (London, 1948), pp. 15, 97, n3, 282, n1; Zygmunt J. Gasiorowski, "The German-Polish Nonaggression Pact of 1934," Journal of Central European Affairs, XV (1955) 2-29.

43. R. W. Seton-Watson, Twenty-Five Years of Czechoslovakia, p. 75.

44. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport, pp. 110, 189; J. Szembek, Journal, pp. 70-77, 95.
45. J. Szembek, Journal, p. 77.
46. Ibid., p. 119.
47. K. Wierzbiański, "Czechy a Polska," passim.
48. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport, p. 109.
49. Ibid., p. 110.
50. J. Szembek, Journal, p. 184.
51. K. Wierzbiański, "Czechy a Polska," pp. 98-99.
52. J. Szembek, Journal, p. 128.
53. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport, pp. 141-142.
54. The proposal is mentioned in K. Wierzbiański, "Czechy a Polska," p. 99.
55. H. Ripka, Munich: Before and After, p. 428.
56. J. Szembek, Journal, p. 311.
57. J. Łukasiewicz, "Sprawa Czechosłowacji 1938 na tle stosunków Międzynarodowych," Sprawy Międzynarodowe, no. 36 (1948).
58. J. Szembek, Journal, p. 283.
59. Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy: 1918-45, Series D, (Washington, 1949), II, 450.
60. H. Ripka, Munich: Before and After, p. 112.
61. Documents on German Foreign Policy, Series D, II, 447-448.
62. H. Ripka, Munich: Before and After, p. 427.
63. Full text of both letters can be found in Sir Lewis Namier, Europe in Decay (London, 1950), and in J. Beck, Dernier Rapport.
64. J. Beck, Dernier Rapport, pp. 163-169; J. Szembek, Journal, p. 341.

Chapter Two

THE LONDON RAPPROCHEMENT

Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, and the second World War began. The Soviet Union on September 17, acting in concert with Germany, invaded Poland from the East. The Polish Government crossed the Rumanian frontier, and the president of the Republic, Ignacy Mościcki, resigned and nominated as his successor the ex-speaker of the Senate, Władysław Raczkiewicz. A new Polish Government was set up in France under the premiership of General Władysław Sikorski, and an army in exile continued the struggle against Nazi Germany.

At that moment in 1939 several Czechoslovak political leaders were already in exile in France and England, and they represented the cause of free Czechoslovakia in the Allied camp. What, then, were the respective positions of the Poles and Czechoslovaks in exile, and their relation to each other? The Polish Government in France was the legal successor to the Government in Poland, recognized as a full-fledged Ally by France and Britain. The political character of this Government in exile, however, differed considerably from its predecessor. The main prewar opposition parties composed the Sikorski Cabinet, and the prime minister himself, the most influential Polish leader in exile, strongly opposed the pre-1939 regime. The Polish Government in France ideologically marked a break with the past, and could dissociate itself from the mistakes of the previous regime, especially in the field of foreign relations. Sikorski made no secret of his critical attitude toward the diplomacy of Beck. In a talk with Beneš in Paris in October, 1939, he bitterly blamed Piłsudski and Beck for their policy toward Czechoslovakia.¹ Sikorski never deviated from this attitude. In a broadcast to Poland in November, 1942, he declared that "the foreign

policy of the last years is quite alien to us, and was contrary to the fundamental interest of the Polish state."² Hence, in his relations with the Czechoslovak people Sikorski could start with an almost clean slate, his personal sympathies being rather pro-Czechoslovak. But the Government of Sikorski as the legal successor of the last government in Poland was still bound by the international treaties and engagements of the prewar period. Just as the British and French alliances were binding upon Sikorski's Government which was at war with Germany, and in a state of war with Russia after the latter's invasion of Poland on September 17, so the Government stood on the principle of the integrity of Poland as her boundaries existed on September 1, 1939. This meant, as far as Czechoslovakia was concerned, inclusion of the Trans-Olza strip within Poland.

The Polish Government in France announced its program of foreign policy in an official statement issued in Angers on December 20, 1939. Its primary aim was "the liberation of Polish territory from enemy occupation and the delimitation of frontiers capable of guaranteeing a lasting security not only to Poland but to all Europe." A second guarantee for such security was "creation of a politically solid bloc of Slav states extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Adriatic."³ Thus the Government of Sikorski very early took a decided stand on the question of postwar organization of East-Central Europe and offered a positive program. A rapprochement with Czechoslovakia was obviously the first step in this direction.

I

In the autumn and winter of 1939 the position of the Czechoslovaks in exile differed greatly from that of the Poles. The Czechoslovak emigration was neither fully united—it had a Council and a Committee that were at odds—nor did the Allies officially recognize it. Furthermore Czechoslovakia's international position was complicated by the fact that neither France or Britain had as yet officially repudiated the Munich decisions of 1938.

But the British and French considered the Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris qualified to represent Czechoslovakia

at least insofar as concerned creation of a free Czechoslovak Army in exile. The last Czechoslovak minister to France, Stefan Osuský, played an important part in this Committee, but it seemed that Beneš who lived in London would eventually have the greatest say. Yet in addition to the Czechoslovak National Committee in Paris there was the Czecho-Slovak National Council, also in Paris, presided over by ex-prime minister Milan Hodža. Hodža's Council laid great stress on the dual character of Czechoslovakia (hence the hyphen in Czecho-Slovak National Council) while the Czechoslovak National Committee represented the prewar centralist approach. The two differed also in their views on foreign policy. Moreover, there was much personal antagonism between the leading Czechoslovak statesmen. The Poles considered Hodža more friendly to them than Beneš, and Hodža's views on regional cooperation in East-Central Europe were apparently quite close to those of Sikorski's Polish Government. Hodža on November 28 submitted to a number of leading Allied statesmen a memorandum in which he recommended creation after the war of a closely integrated system in East-Central Europe.⁴ The text of the memorandum having never been published,⁵ it is only possible to speculate on its content on the basis of a book published three years later by Hodža in which he suggested creation of a Central European commonwealth bound by a federal pact, with a common president, chancellor, and federal government exercising wide powers over foreign affairs, treasury, defense, foreign trade, post and transport.⁶ It appears that Hodža's Czecho-Slovak National Council in Paris in 1939-40, or at least some of its members, envisaged a tripartite Czecho-Slovak-Polish federation.

The views of the Czechoslovak National Committee can best be explained by analysis of Beneš' ideas at this time. Though not yet in control of the Committee, the exiled statesman was shortly to emerge as the head of all Czechoslovaks in exile. Beneš favored a Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement, but he conceived it in terms of a bipartite, not a tripartite, Czecho-Slovak-Polish arrangement. He was more cautious than Hodža in laying plans for the future, but

more adroit in seeking contacts with Sikorski. Beneš expressed some of his ideas in a memorandum prepared for the American undersecretary of state, Sumner Welles, during the latter's visit to London in March, 1940. Beneš stated that "A possible federal organization in Central Europe is being spoken of"; he had attempted for seventeen years "to prepare the progressive building up of a federal Central Europe" (here referring probably to the Little Entente); Czechoslovakia, he believed, still accepted the principle, but wished, however, "to know exactly how these matters are looked upon in England and in France, and with whom it would be possible to form a federation." In the circumstances of March, 1940, he concluded,

it is our intention to solve these matters in collaboration first of all with Poland, as of course with the other small European states. As far as we are concerned, there will definitely be no difficulties of principle in these questions. We have, however, our own opinion about, for instance, to what extent this new union of the smaller states is to be realized, in what direction and to what extent their sovereignty is to be limited, in other words, how far this so-called federation would go. In any case we consider, that it would have to be based on economic foundation, on the idea of a customs union and of a common trade and financial policy, and that further questions, especially political ones, would be resolved in progressive evolution.

While the differences between Beneš and the Council of Hodža in approaching the problem of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation may not have been very striking, the fact that it was Beneš and not some other Czechoslovak statesman who ultimately assumed full control over Czechoslovakia's foreign policy is of utmost importance. Whereas on the Polish side there was a complete change of personnel in the Government as compared with prewar times, on the Czechoslovak side continuity was assured. Sikorski could disclaim all responsibility for Beck's diplomacy; but Beneš found it difficult to admit any faults in the prewar foreign policy of Czechoslovakia for which he had been mainly responsible.

Sikorski, however, was impressed by the warm attitude of Beneš and the apparent identity of views; he did his best to support

the idea of an early recognition by the Allies of a Czechoslovak Government headed by Beneš. Talks between the two statesmen had already taken place in October, 1939, and Beneš very adroitly profited from them to strengthen his international position at the expense of Milan Hodža and his Council. The Polish Government seems to have assisted Beneš and even later in London viewed with disfavor, as prejudicial to Beneš' position, the contacts of some Poles—for example, the diplomat Tytus Filipowicz—with Hodža and his group.⁸

The first known meeting of Sikorski and Beneš took place in Paris in October, 1939. General Sikorski saw Beneš again in November. Considering that no real Czechoslovak Government in exile had yet been formed, and that Beneš thus had no mandate to conduct official negotiations, the talks did not go beyond a general exchange of views.

Nevertheless the talks provoked an instantaneous British reaction which was very favorable. Hugh Dalton declared in the House of Commons on November 30: "It was indeed a happy thing that General Sikorski . . . should have met Dr. Beneš and that these two proved democrats should have concerted together plans for the resurrection of their countries and the restoration of liberty and democracy in Poland and Czechoslovakia."⁹ And another M.P., recalling the press statement which had been issued to the effect that conversations had already started between the Polish Government and a Czech representative with a view to closer co-operation between these two victims of German oppression, said that "We realize as do hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, the importance of these conversations of these two peoples to whose future we attach so much importance."¹⁰ In similar terms yet another member of the House, Mr. Geoffrey Mander, rejoiced that Poles and Czechoslovaks had decided to get together and that their "past is buried."¹¹

Then in the summer of 1940 France collapsed. The Polish Government and the Polish Army, as well as the Czechoslovak political center and its military units, were evacuated to Britain.

This had important repercussions on Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations.

The position of Czechoslovaks in exile became notably stronger, both internally and internationally. Transfer to London meant that Beneš would assume supreme control over Czechoslovak politics; Osuský's position in Paris and the existence of the two bodies, the Council and the Committee, had hampered matters thus far. It also meant that the loss of France as an Ally would enhance the position of the smaller Allies in exile.

Britain recognized a united Czechoslovak body on July 21, as the Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia, and on July 29 the Polish Government followed suite. A Polish diplomatic representative was accredited to the Czechoslovakia—first, Kajetan Morawski, and later Adam Tarnowski. With recognition of the Czechoslovak Government the Polish-Czechoslovak negotiations initiated with Beneš could now resume on an official level. A number of meetings took place, in which Beneš, Sikorski, and the Polish ambassador in London, Count Edward Raczyński, played the main parts. The exiled Poles and Czechoslovaks in England took much interest in these conversations, and they pressed for the closest possible cooperation between the two countries. Already some Czech and Slovak representatives had set up what may have been the "first definite federative political programme of this war. This programme formulated the Central European Federation. It wished to prepare its formation by constructing a Real Union of future Poland and Czecho-Slovakia."¹² Milan Hodža, Tytus Filipowicz and other Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks played a prominent part in this spontaneous movement. Their action spurred the two Governments to greater activity.

The first big Czechoslovak-Polish public meeting sponsored by the two Governments occurred in London in the Dom Polski the Polish House, on October 11. The Czechoslovak and Polish Governments fully participated. On the British side Hugh Dalton, Major Cazalet, Sir Howard Kennard, and several other prominent political personalities took part. A member of the Polish Cabinet, Professor

Stanisław Stronński, made a speech in which he stressed the common Czechoslovak-Polish heritage, dwelt on past history emphasizing the greatness of both nations, and prophesied a great future for the two countries when united. The Czechoslovak minister, Hubert Ripka, made a more sober reply. He stressed international changes which necessitated Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation, presented a realistic picture of the postwar structure of Europe, and concluded that in this new Europe Poland and Czechoslovakia would have an important part.¹³

Meanwhile the continuing exchanges of views between the two Governments resulted in a letter from Beneš to Sikorski, dated November 1, 1949, which can be taken as the real (wartime) starting point of concrete attempts at a confederation of Czechoslovakia and Poland.

II

Beneš emphasized in this letter that his proposals, as well as the discussions hitherto held, did not commit either party to a definite arrangement. In the letter he was very cautious. He spoke of a federation sui generis, a flexible term which later, on Czechoslovak initiative, became a confederation.¹⁴ "I am of the opinion," Beneš wrote,

that neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia will be able to continue living separately from one another as was the case after the war of 1914. Even after the defeat of Germany, Europe will still be divided between big political and economic blocs. The Poles and the Czechoslovaks will come out of this war rather weakened and, situated as they are between Germany and Russia, it will be their imperative task, imposed by reasons both political and economic, at least to try to create in Central Europe a bloc composed at first of their two countries and sufficiently strong to give their two peoples a minimum of security.¹⁵

Beneš stated clearly that he would like to avoid entry of Soviet troops in East-Central Europe, because of the danger of a possible cooperation between them and a Communist Germany. He thus foresaw Soviet participation in the war. He expressed hope, however, that some modus vivendi with Russia could be achieved.¹⁶ Beneš said

explicitly that "We must not have the Russians against us."¹⁷

The "basic principles" of the confederation as described (by Beneš) were as follows:

1. The sovereignty of Poland and Czechoslovakia will not be disturbed by the bond of confederation, each country keeping its own head of state, parliament, government, army, etc.
2. Restriction of sovereignty will be chiefly directed to economic measures. There will be a common commercial policy, and a transport, customs and currency union.
3. There will be a common foreign policy, but the separate diplomatic representatives will remain.
4. Armaments and army equipment will be identical and war production will accordingly be standardized.
5. The common organs of the Confederation will be: a. Council, composed of delegates of both states, including specially their Prime Ministers, ministers for foreign affairs, foreign trade, finance and transport. Its resolutions will be approved and carried out by both governments. b. A common General Staff, but the General Staff of each respective country will remain. c. A joint Committee of both parliaments, whose decisions will be submitted for approval to each parliament. d. An Economic and Trade Council.¹⁸

Beneš also set down what he called "some conditions for achieving the general purpose," and included need for good Polish-Russian relations and the adjustment of social structures of Poland and Czechoslovakia. But he added that the Czechoslovaks, "although socially advanced, will keep their sang froid, their national sentiment, and their national egoism."¹⁹ The Poles understood this passage to mean that the Czechoslovaks would not identify themselves with Soviet policies. The problem of Teschen was only slightly touched upon. Beneš considered that cession of the Trans-Olza district in 1938 had taken place under duress, but he suggested postponing discussion of it until an atmosphere of cooperation and friendship between the two countries had been established.

The Polish Government's reaction to Beneš' memorandum was that it was too limited in scope and that several passages required clarification. The section containing the expression, "at least to try" for a bloc in East-Central Europe, was taken to mean that Beneš was not determined to strive for the union at all costs. The Poles believed that "federation sui generis" was no federation

but a loose organization providing for coordination of policies but not for real supra-national organs. They viewed critically Beneš' idea of an economic rather than political union. Only political links, the Poles thought, could assure a close association. Economic union would be more advantageous for Czechoslovakia than Poland. The Poles were ready to accept economic union but only when a real political federation existed to compensate for the economic disadvantages.

The Czechoslovak attitude toward Russia appeared dangerous to the Polish Government. The Poles understood Beneš' expression, "some modus vivendi" to mean willingness to agree to Soviet territorial demands in exchange for Russian friendship toward the two countries. In the discussions preceding his letter Beneš had assured the Poles that the Czechoslovak attitude toward Russian-Polish problems would be one of neutrality, and that he would do nothing to prejudice the Polish demands. The Polish Government considered that this letter by Beneš indicated unwillingness to give a broader interpretation than benevolent neutrality, and would avoid any Czechoslovak future commitments to Poland with respect to her eastern border. Beneš for a long time had held the opinion that an "ethnographic" Poland was a preferable solution of all Polish problems, and his inflexible stand alarmed the Poles. The Polish Government thought that Beneš should have offered support for the eastern frontier of Poland, after the Poles had offered to support the prewar Czechoslovak-Hungarian border notwithstanding friendly Polish feeling toward Hungary.

The Poles presented their point of view in a letter from General Sikorski to Beneš, dated December 3, 1940. Sikorski stressed the need of giving clearly the bases of Czechoslovak-Polish union. Union, Sikorski said, must begin with "total solidarity in war and peace," and that required common decisions on all essential matters of policy. He emphasized the political character and high degree of integration of the proposed union. While he agreed to a peaceful and friendly attitude toward Russia, Sikorski said, he had to take into account the possibility that the Soviet Union might not reciprocate

these sentiments. Therefore, Sikorski went on, a united Czechoslovak-Polish front towards Russia was the only way to stop possible Russian attempts to impose Communism on the two countries. Sikorski insisted on complete and absolute independence of the union vis-à-vis Russia.²⁰ The Polish National Council in London, which played the part of a sort of parliament in exile, approved the Government's position in a resolution of December 22, 1940.

The National Council declares that the Republic of Poland conducts its foreign policy on the unchangeable basis of respect for the rights of all nations, great and small, to an independent existence. Viewing the above principle as constituting the foundation of a lasting organization of Europe, Poland cannot recognize any political facts that are based on violence and the use of power, irrespective of whether this violence was perpetrated toward the lands and the population of the Republic, or toward other lands and their peoples. Furthermore, Poland cannot recognize faits accomplis, the aggressive content of which was masked by dictated treaties or by such appearances as plebiscites conducted under military occupation.²¹ To secure lasting peace and create vital economic and political organisms, a close association of states, linked together by history, culture, common aims, and economic interests should be created. Such association sincerely and willingly entered into, based on a strict division of tasks, general and particular, is not only in accord with developments of modern democracies, but corresponds also to the spirit of Polish history, which found its highest expression in the principle, 'free with free, and equal with equal.'²²

III

Meanwhile, during the period following the original proposal of Beneš of November 1, and preceding Sikorski's reply on December 3, there had come an agreement between the two Governments to announce publicly a general program of cooperation, disregarding the existing differences. The program was based on the less far-reaching proposals of Beneš. The Nazi declaration of a New Order in Europe furnished the occasion. A Joint Declaration of the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments Favoring Closer Political and Economic Association appeared on November 11, 1940.²³ As the first official statement on proposed association of the two countries, it created a good deal of interest among the Czechoslovaks, Poles, and

also in British political circles. The declaration was general in character, and did not touch any specific problem connected with future Czechoslovak-Polish association. It emphasized the end of "past recriminations and disputes," insisted on "the community . . . of fundamental interests," and intimated that the "Association,"²⁴ open to other states in East-Central Europe, would become a factor of strength in that region. The declaration contrasted the free democratic ways of cooperation with the German methods of oppression, and called for liberation of the homelands from the Nazis. Two official comments accompanied the declaration. The Polish representative, Professor Stroński, dealt mainly with applying the principle of Czechoslovak-Polish association to the whole area between the Baltic, Adriatic, and Black seas. He said that the prewar Little Entente, the Balkan Union, and the Baltic Union had all been inadequate to cope with the existing conditions, and that after the war the region would have to be organized on a new pattern. "What we are doing today," he said, "is the first phase of this organization." Dr. Ripka declared that the closely knit Polish-Czechoslovak association must be the nucleus of a future East-Central European organization. He emphasized that all the countries in this region bordered either Italy, Germany, or Russia, and this by itself was good reason for getting together for common defense.²⁵

The reactions of the Polish, Czechoslovak, and British press were in many instances enthusiastic. The Dziennik Polski of November 12 heralded "a turning point in the life of the two nations," and went so far as to say that the prewar Polish and Czechoslovak polities, independent and often hostile, had been one of the causes of the general European catastrophe. Had this rapprochement come twenty-two years earlier it might have saved the freedom of both nations. The Čechoslovak emphasized that Czechoslovakia and Poland since the dawn of their history had a common enemy, Germany, and that whenever their forces were united the two countries lived in peace and security. Referring to the plans for a European federation which it described as an optimum solution, the Čechoslovak said that should such plans ever materialize

the need for a very close Czechoslovak-Polish association within this wider frame would be great indeed. The paper intimated that as a result of the war many factors, economic and social, which had made cooperation difficult in the past, would disappear.²⁶

The British Government welcomed the declaration in a statement by Churchill in the House of Commons on November 26, 1940,²⁷ and the British press praised it in warm terms. The Manchester Guardian said that the stability of Central Europe depended to a large degree on Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation, especially in the sphere of politics, economics, and defense. The Spectator suggested that Belgium and Holland should imitate the good example of Poland and Czechoslovakia.²⁸ The Economist wrote that "for the Allies this has been a week of good news, not least of which is the decision of the Czech and Polish Governments to bury Teschen once and for all."²⁹ The Times, however, struck a discordant note. The Times wrote that the East-Central European interests "can no more be detached from those of the Western world than from those of Soviet Russia in the East. No attempt to rebuild Europe on sounder foundations after the overthrow of the Nazi and Fascist terror is likely to succeed without the active cooperation and assistance both of Great Britain and of the English-speaking world overseas. It would be equally shortsighted and would repeat another cardinal blunder of 1914, to ignore the predominant interest which Soviet Russia can naturally claim in the settlement of the affairs of Eastern Europe. The present declaration of the Polish and Czechoslovak representatives in London takes its place in this wider framework of future cooperation, to which it makes a notable and timely contribution."³⁰

The comments of the Times were really rather startling. Soviet Russia, still nominally at least an ally of Hitler, had not yet entered the war. Her unprovoked aggression against Poland and the Baltic states, and her war against Finland had taken place very recently and were fresh in everyone's mind. To stress the dominant interest of Russia in Eastern Europe displayed a strange solicitude about her position in that part of Europe, and was one of

the first indications of the "sphere of influence" approach by the Times to European politics. Would the future political organization of East-Central Europe entirely depend on Russian good will? Subsequent developments proved that this was unfortunately the case.

The Czechoslovak-Polish declaration of November 11, as mentioned earlier, did not solve the existing differences between Beneš and Sikorski. Its primary importance lay in committing the two Governments to close cooperation, and making their planned association known to the outside world. It also led to creation of special organs entrusted with plans of a future association. On the Polish side there was set up a Political Committee of the Council of Ministers, which was to prepare the draft Constitutional Act of the Czechoslovak-Polish Union (Związek). General Kazimierz Sosnkowski acted as chairman of this political committee, and the committee prepared the program for the mixed Czechoslovak-Polish commissions which, according to Beneš' proposal of November 1, were to be established. The Czechoslovaks, on their side, informed the Poles by a new letter from Beneš to Sikorski on December 23 that a special commission for the negotiations, composed of minister of foreign affairs Jan Masaryk, minister of interior Juraj Slávik, and ministers Hubert Ripka and Ladislav Feierabend, was created.³¹

IV

Beneš' letter of December 23 did not straighten out the differences between him and Sikorski. Both statesmen met on January 26-27 to discuss problems on which they still disagreed. Beneš later related this talk, which took place in Aston Abbots, in his memoirs.³²

The Czechoslovak President said that he had tried to convince Sikorski that the war between Germany and Russia was imminent, and that it would be necessary for Czechoslovakia and Poland to adapt to this situation and conduct military operations in common with the Soviet Union. Sikorski, Beneš wrote, became very

agitated, and replied that such a modeling of Czechoslovak and Polish policies upon that of Russia would be a disaster for both small nations. The Aston Abbots discussion ended in a new exchange of letters. The Polish prime minister wrote on February 10 stating that the Polish frontiers of 1939 could not be changed to the detriment of Poland. The latter, he declared, could make no concessions in the East.³³ Should Germany collapse, Sikorski went on, the Polish Government would demand that the Soviet Union not be allowed to move westward beyond the 1939 Polish-Russian frontier. Sikorski emphasized that it was in the interest of Czechoslovakia, as well as Poland, to halt the westward advance of the Soviet Union. He added that Poland would do her utmost to support Czechoslovak rights in the Sudetenland.³⁴

Beneš answered Sikorski on February 25, and made quite clear that the Czechoslovak Government insisted on recovery of the pre-1938 borders. To avoid further discussions on that topic Beneš proposed the following formula: "We agree to create in Central Europe a new international political organism, whose structure we shall discuss now, irrespective of what the final boundaries of our countries will be."³⁵ The proposal was accepted, but did not alter the respective position of the two Governments on the frontier question. Poland was still willing to support Czechoslovakia on the Sudeten boundary; Czechoslovakia remained unwilling to commit herself on Poland's eastern frontier; both states insisted on possession of the Trans-Olza district.

At this stage the negotiations between the two Governments were transferred to the Czechoslovak-Polish Coordinating Committee established to direct and coordinate the mixed commissions which were to be created. The Coordinating Committee met for the first time on January 31, 1941, and for a second time on February 12. It included, on the Czechoslovak side, Masaryk, Slávik, Ripka, and Feierabend, and on the Polish side General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, foreign minister August Zaleski, minister of justice Marian Seyda, and ambassador Raczynski. The permanent Czechoslovak secretary of the Committee was Josef Hejret. On the initiative of the

Coordinating Committee a joint Czechoslovak-Polish communiqué appeared on March 22 announcing creation of the mixed commissions and the names of their members.

The Communiqué declared that "the mixed Czechoslovak-Polish commissions have now started their work, thus proving the determination of the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments to put into execution their project of linking the two states in a Federal Union." The commentary of the Dziennik Polski hailed the creation of the commissions as an important step, based on regional understandings, toward organization of the future Europe. According to the communiqué, two kinds of commissions were to be established: commissions to study problems connected with a future Czechoslovak-Polish federation; and commissions to deal with current problems of cooperation. The politico-judicial, economic-financial, military, and social policy commissions belonged to the first category; the foreign affairs, military, and propaganda commissions were listed in the second group.³⁶

It is fairly clear that the commissions were originally meant to play an important part in the negotiations. The Polish idea of their purpose and scope was contained in a memorandum of January, 1941, sent by a member of the Polish Government, Adam Pragier, to the Czechoslovaks. The memorandum, entitled "Pologne-Tchécoslovaquie, Proposition Polonaise," elaborated the activities of the commissions. It proposed that the foreign affairs commission should hold meetings every two weeks, and have its own permanent secretariat. Common instructions for diplomatic representatives abroad and higher officials of the two ministries of foreign affairs, as well as exchanges of views before international conferences, were also envisaged. The propaganda commission, referred to in the memorandum as the committee of information and documentation, was expected to foster cooperation in propagating political ideas of the two Governments. The memorandum also suggested organization of common radio broadcasts and exchanges of articles, as well as publication of books dealing with the two countries and the problem of their federation. The memorandum saw the main role of the

military commission as facilitating cooperation between the two general staffs and intelligence organizations, and also suggested possibility of setting up a common operations command for Czechoslovak and Polish military units. Finally, according to the memorandum, the cultural commission should publish among other things a Czechoslovak-Polish linguistic textbook showing similarities and differences between Polish and Czech, and a bilingual history text which would treat the history of Poland and Czechoslovakia from the point of view of the two nations' interdependence.³⁷ Yet the part actually played by the mixed commissions was rather insignificant. The military commission met only once (March 26, 1941), the propaganda commission twice (February 24, and March 12), the foreign affairs commission three times (March 5 and 14, and July 27), and the cultural commission, created later, was called twice (May 12 and 23).³⁸ The commissions could not properly function without closer understanding between Sikorski and Beneš. Since the two statesmen in the late winter and spring of 1941 did not come to complete agreement in regard to the basic problems, the discussions of the commissions were bound to be inconclusive.

Much evidence of Czechoslovak-Polish friendship was, however, apparent in early 1941. A public meeting, this time held in the Czechoslovak Institute in London on March 27, brought both presidents and both Governments together. In a speech on that occasion Ripka stressed the need for cooperation between the millions of Americans of Polish, Czech, or Slovak descent, who could become a valuable source of support of the Governments in London, and also counteract pro-German elements in the United States. Ripka said that growing friendship between Czechoslovaks and Poles strengthened the hope of eventual agreement on all questions. He also emphasized that association of the two countries could be an important foundation of future federation of all nations living in the Vistula-Danubian basin. Speaking on behalf of the Poles, Stróński stressed growing amity between the two nations, and added that Polish-Czechoslovak cooperation was making a favorable impression on the British and Americans—a point which Ripka mentioned

earlier in his speech.³⁹

The reference of both speakers to America had undoubted significance because of Sikorski's visit to the United States in the last days of March, 1941. Sikorski went to America "not only as a Pole. He came as a spokesman of the smaller European powers, anxious to ascertain to what degree the future of a civilized and democratically organized Europe could count on the backing of America."⁴⁰ The Polish prime minister discussed regional organization of East-Central Europe with president Roosevelt, and the president called it "a fine idea." Roosevelt also congratulated Sikorski on "laying the foundation with Beneš for a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation."⁴¹ During his stay in the United States, Sikorski also advocated on all possible occasions the creation of a European federation. In a speech at Carnegie Hall he declared that the future of Europe "must be solved on the basis of federation." He added that in "pursuing the aim of founding a new order based on the sound principle of security . . . we are attempting to build a nucleus of understanding among free nations. . . . This nucleus now is in a state of formation between Poland and Czechoslovakia and has met with the enthusiastic reception of our two nations."⁴² Sikorski returned from the United States to London confident of American support for the general cause of European federation, and especially federation in East-Central Europe.⁴³ He voiced his confidence in a speech made in the Polish National Council, which he concluded by saying that the emigrants of the smaller countries living in the United States should now act with complete solidarity in regard to problems of world politics.⁴⁴

Sikorski's return from America instilled new life into Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations. The Polish National Council had discussed the matter before Sikorski's return and several members of the Council stressed the fact that they attached utmost importance to continuation of talks with the Czechoslovaks.⁴⁵ On June 5, 1941, Sikorski had a long discussion with Beneš, wherein the latter declared that "after the last war he had considered the Little Entente as the basis of Czechoslovak policy in Central

Europe, while desiring cooperation with Poland. Now, after the events in Rumania and Yugoslavia [here he referred to the German occupation of 1941] he did not hope to be able to revive the Little Entente, and he viewed the Polish-Czechoslovak federation as the necessary nucleus of any large construction, excluding no state à priori As regards the conflict between Poland and Russia, Czechoslovakia could not interfere . . . and she was decided not to act in any way which could injure Polish actions or intentions anywhere ["de ne prendre part en aucune facon à contrecarrer nulle part les intentions et les actions de la Pologne"], either in regard to Russia or any other party. She views this positive attitude toward the interests of Poland as conforming to her duty of loyalty to her [Poland]."⁴⁶ Encouraged by this conversation Sikorski on June 15 proposed the following formula to straighten out all differences. In regard to the border dispute, he asked a just solution which would eliminate psychological tensions on both sides arising from mistakes committed during the 1918-39 period; as for the Czechoslovak and Polish borders with other powers, he desired an attitude of mutual disinterestedness. This was the most flexible formula which the Polish Government could have suggested at that time without being accused of making concessions, and Sikorski viewed it as constituting the minimalist agreement necessary for common political action.⁴⁷

Thus by early June, 1941, the Poles and the Czechoslovaks had achieved a certain amount of agreement. Border questions were not entirely solved, but it seemed possible to work out such problems gradually as the atmosphere of cooperation between the two nations became more favorable; differing views on the position of Russia to East-Central Europe remained, but seemed likely to diminish as time went by.

The first contacts in the winter of 1939-40 had been confined to exchanges of views between Sikorski and Beneš. More concrete Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation was made impossible by the disunity prevailing in Czechoslovak political circles as well as by the nonexistence of a real Czechoslovak Government. This situation

changed after the collapse of France in 1940 and the subsequent recognition of a Czechoslovak Government, headed by Beneš, by the Allies. For the first time conversations could go beyond personal contacts and become actual intergovernmental negotiations. We have seen how these negotiations led to the first public demonstration of Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement in London in October 1940.

A new stage began with Beneš' memorandum of November which contained concrete proposals of cooperation. The Poles, however, viewed these proposals as too cautious, and they worried about Beneš' attitude toward Russia. But his memorandum furnished the basis for a first joint statement of cooperation on November 11. This declaration was followed by the creation of a Coordinating Committee.

Yet the joint declaration was rather vague, and both Sikorski and Beneš tried to thresh out in common their differences of approach to the Russian problem at the meeting at Aston Abbots and in the letters which followed it. They failed to reach complete agreement, but decided to leave aside the discussion of controversial problems and concentrate instead on elaborating concrete plans for a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation. Mixed commissions were set up to deal with this question, but their work was hampered by lack of a concerted policy on the highest level. Sikorski's visit to the United States in the spring of 1941 found much support for Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, and the visit strengthened his hand. A new discussion of basic problems of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation took place between him and Beneš. This time it seemed that Beneš stressed more than on previous occasions his willingness to make the future confederation a closely united body. He also promised not to do anything which might prejudice the Polish position vis-à-vis Russia. A minimalist basis for further rapprochement was thus created.

Such was the general state of Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations when a dramatic event occurred on June 22, 1941. Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union and Russia entered the war. A new phase of European and world history began.

Notes

1. E. Táborský, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation. A story of the first Soviet Veto," Journal of Central European Affairs, IX (1950), 382.
2. Dziennik Polski, Nov. 13, 1942.
3. Geneva Research Center, Official Statements of War and Peace Aims: European Belligerents, September 1, 1939—August 31, 1940 (Geneva, 1940).
4. T. Komarnicki, "Próby Stworzenia Związku Polsko-Czeskiego w okresie Drugiej Wojny Światowej," Sprawy Międzynarodowe, no. 2/3 (1947), 65. Thereafter quoted as Próby.
5. My attempts to secure it through Mr. Fedor Hodža, the son of the late Czechoslovak statesman, proved unsuccessful.
6. M. Hodža, Federation in Central Europe, pp. 171-178.
7. E. Táborský, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation," pp. 382-383.
8. Filipowicz complained of it to President Raczkiewicz on November 13, and December 6, 1940.
9. 335 H. C. Deb., 5th series, column 292.
10. 353 H. C. Deb., 5 s., c. 307.
11. Ibid., c. 312.
12. M. Hodža, Federation in Central Europe, p. 179.
13. Dziennik Polski, Oct. 12, 1940.
14. The term used was "une sorte d'union fédérative." T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 68.
15. E. Táborský, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation," pp. 383-384. Italics in original.
16. E. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 68.
17. Ibid., p. 73; E. Táborský, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation," p. 384.
18. Ibid., p. 383.
19. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 68.
20. Ibid., p. 73.

21. This referred to Soviet-engineered plebiscites in Eastern Poland in 1939.

22. Dziennik Polski, Dec. 23, 1940.

23. For full text, see Appendix 1.

24. No term more precise could have been used because of the diverging ideas of Beneš and Sikorski.

25. Dziennik Polski, Nov. 12, 1940.

26. Čechoslovak, Nov. 12, 1940.

27. 367 H. C. Deb., 5 s., c. 73.

28. For a review of the British press on this question, see Dziennik Polski, Nov. 13, 1940.

29. Economist, Nov. 16, 1940.

30. London Times, Nov. 12, 1940. Italics mine.

31. S. Mackiewicz, "Korespondencja Benesza z Sikorskim," Wiadomości No. 315/316 (April 20, 1952).

32. E. Beneš, Paměti: Od Mnichova k Nové Válce a k Novému Vítězství (Prague, 1947), I, 226.

33. Professor Eduard Táborský believes that Beneš felt that this implied Polish determination to keep the Trans-Olza district and proved a general lack of flexibility on the side of the Polish Government. Assuming this to be the correct interpretation, it must be remembered that Beneš in a declaration in the Czechoslovak State Council on December 11 stressed that Britain was not bound by any recognitions of borders in East-Central Europe—a remark which the Poles found very irritating and which may have been partly responsible for the terms used in Sikorski's letter.

34. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 81.

35. Ibid., p. 61.

36. Dziennik Polski, Mar. 22, 1941. See also Appendix 2.

37. "Pologne-Tchécoslovaquie, Proposition Polonaise," London, January 1941. Private archives.

38. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 80.

39. Dziennik Polski, Mar. 28, 1941.

40. J. Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory (New York, 1947), p. 18.

41. Ibid., p. 19.

42. The New York Times, Apr. 17, 1941.

43. An interesting article entitled "A Federation for Eastern Europe," written by a group of American Military Experts, appeared at this time in the quarterly New Europe published in New York. "A proposed federation," said the article, "is to be found in that group of Eastern European powers who are today the actual or threatened victims of the ambitions of both Germany and Soviet Russia." After discussing various aspects of the proposed federation, including its borders, the authors said that "on strictly military grounds it would be desirable to push this [Poland's] boundary to the Oder River." Only this frontier, they believed, could do away with the dangerous Silesian salient between Poland and Czechoslovakia, the elimination of which was "of such economic and strategic importance as to outweigh any political problems thus created." A group of U. S. Military Experts, "A Federation for Eastern Europe," New Europe, I (1941), 117-121.

44. Dziennik Polski, June 6, 1941.

45. Ibid., Apr. 2, 1941.

46. "Pro-memoria de la conversation," June 5, 1941.
Private archives.

47. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 82.

Chapter Three

THE ENTRANCE OF SOVIET RUSSIA

I

The entry of Soviet Russia into the war against Germany was an event of the utmost importance for Czechoslovak-Polish relations. Its consequences, however, were not immediately apparent. When Russia joined the Allied camp, within which the Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations were taking place, the character or the anti-German alliance changed by bringing in a state with a sinister record in East-Central Europe during the years 1939-40. Russia's future intentions toward that region were not as yet fully known. Soviet entrance also altered the internal balance of the alliance by the accession of a great power which clearly overshadowed all Britain's other Allies. With the United States drawing closer and later, after Pearl Harbor, joining the anti-Nazi camp, the Grand Alliance was completed. In the Big Three partnership, the importance of the lesser Allies necessarily declined.

The Western Allies had to take a clear stand on the problems raised by Soviet membership in the alliance. Britain and the United States had properly to appraise Soviet ideas on postwar organization of East-Central Europe, and decide, in case these ideas were opposed to the planned Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, to subordinate the latter to Soviet wishes or to put pressure on Russia to accept it. The decision hinged largely on the proper appraisal of the new Ally.

On the eve of the German invasion of Russia, the United States, according to Cordell Hull, based its attitude toward the Soviets on the following assumptions: the United States should make no special approaches to Russia, and treat any approaches from her with reserve until America was satisfied that the Russians

were not maneuvering to obtain unilateral concessions; nor should the American Government sacrifice principles in order to better relations; finally, the Roosevelt Administration should let Russia understand that the United States considered improved relations as important, if not more so, to Russia than to the United States.¹ Russian entry into the war changed very considerably these sound principles. Harry Hopkins on July 26 went to Moscow to offer aid. He asked nothing in return.² As an outstanding American diplomat has written, "The vital interest of the United States in a free and independent Europe was not expressed, although the basis of all healthy dealings between great powers is give and take, and the position of the Soviet Union was so grave that Stalin could not have refused to give a written guarantee that at the end of the war he would respect the independence of all European states, and raise no objections to the formation of a European federation of democratic states."³ Similarly, Senator Vandenberg thought that Roosevelt missed the chance of settling things with Russia before going into partnership.⁴ The attitude of President Roosevelt gives at least a partial explanation of the position taken by the Administration. In a letter to Admiral Leahy, Roosevelt wrote on June 26 that "Now comes this Russian diversion. If it is more than just that it will mean the liberation of Europe from Nazi domination—and at the same time I do not think we need worry about any possibility of Russian domination."⁵

The British attitude toward Russia resulted chiefly from military considerations. Immediately after the German invasion, Churchill spoke over the BBC and pledged British aid to the Soviet Union. He also appealed to the other Allies to take the same course. Whatever Churchill's opinion of Russia and Communism, he clearly subordinated it to a sole aim, the military defeat of Germany. In regard to the smaller Allies, Churchill adopted the policy of making them adjust themselves to the Soviet Union rather than seeking clarification of the Russian stand on East-Central European problems. This policy manifested itself clearly in the case of Poland. As Churchill later wrote: "We had the invidious

responsibility of recommending General Sikorski to rely on Soviet good faith in the future settlement of Russian-Polish relations, and not to insist at this moment on any written guarantees for the future."⁶ With regard to Czechoslovakia, full British recognition of the Czechoslovak Government in London, as well as United States diplomatic contacts with it, coincided almost exactly with the signing of the Russian-Czechoslovak treaty of July 18, 1941. This looked like a reward for the attitude displayed by a smaller Ally to the new and greatly needed Ally in the East.

Establishment of direct contact between Czechoslovakia and Poland on the one hand, and Russia on the other, took place in this general atmosphere. The position of the two countries vis-à-vis Soviet Russia in 1941 was, however, very different.

Czechoslovakia's stand was unequivocal. The relations between the Czechoslovaks and the Russians were undisturbed by any bitter memories of the past. On the contrary, Beneš considered that Munich had been possible largely because of Russian absence, and he believed in the beneficial role which the Soviet Union could play in European affairs. He sincerely welcomed Russian entry into the war which he had foreseen for some time, and accordingly a Czechoslovak-Russian treaty of friendship was signed on July 18 without any difficulties. Certain Polish diplomats have asserted that the treaty took the Poles by surprise, and that they were not notified of it beforehand. Whether this assertion is true or not is certainly less important than the fact that the swift signature of the treaty contrasted greatly with the protracted Russian-Polish negotiations.

Not only had Poland been in a state of war with Russia since the latter's invasion of Eastern Poland in 1939, but she could hardly sign an alliance with a power which still occupied nearly half of her territory. Sikorski, pressed by the British, nevertheless attempted to demonstrate a maximum of good will toward the Soviet Union. The day after the invasion of Russia, he spoke over the BBC to Poland and expressed his willingness to extend his hand to Russia now that both countries were fighting a common enemy.

He said, however, that he assumed that the Soviet Union would now cancel the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939, which had partitioned Poland, and recognize the status quo ante, i.e., the frontier agreed upon at Riga in 1921 which Russia until 1939 had never questioned. The British foreign secretary, Anthony Eden, and the Soviet ambassador in London, Ivan Maisky, discussed Polish-Russian relations on July 4. Next day Sikorski had a conversation with the Soviet ambassador but negotiations dragged on. Finally the two Governments signed a treaty on July 30 which while declaring the Ribbentrop-Molotov partition null and void, failed to state explicit Soviet recognition of the pre-1939 boundary between Russia and Poland.

A large section of Polish public opinion bitterly criticized the treaty because the treaty offered an open door for later Soviet claims. Many Poles thought that it should have been possible to delay the treaty in order to obtain a genuine recognition of the eastern border, and several ministers including General Kazimierz Sosnkowski and the minister of foreign affairs, Zaleski, resigned from the Government. While Sikorski and the members of his Cabinet declared that the treaty meant reestablishment of the status quo ante 1939, the Soviet Government had a different interpretation of its clauses. The claims of Russia on Eastern Poland were in no way diminished. On the surface, however, Russian-Polish harmony prevailed.

Soviet entry into the war thus affected the respective international positions of Czechoslovakia and Poland by weakening the latter and strengthening the former. Yet it created no immediate obstacle to continuation of Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations. The Czechoslovaks considered that successful conclusion of the Polish-Soviet treaty eliminated all possible Soviet objections to cooperation with Poland. Judging from the tone of the Soviet press, Russian attitude toward Poland seemed friendly enough, and Izvestia, for example, emphasized the Soviet-Polish treaty as proof that there was always possibility of settling relations between the two countries.⁷

II

International developments in August, 1941, seemed further to confirm the existence of harmonious cooperation between all anti-Nazi powers. Churchill and Roosevelt on August 14 proclaimed the Atlantic Charter, and on September 24 the Soviet Union expressed approval of the Charter at the Inter-Allied Conference at St. James's Palace in London. The Conference provided an opportunity for a joint Czechoslovak-Polish declaration welcoming the Charter, presented on behalf of both Governments by Jan Masaryk.⁸ The all-Slav conference in Moscow of August 10-11 was another manifestation of Allied solidarity, and there Alexis Tolstoy made a speech insisting that "our unity shall be the unity of equals."

And yet during the same month certain disquieting signs appeared. The London Times published an editorial on August 1, soon followed by similar articles, advocating spheres of influence for the Great Powers.⁹ These tendencies, which caused a certain uneasiness in Polish and Czechoslovak political circles, were aptly described by the Economist:

Those who are most enamoured with the "inevitability" of Great Power domination see a solution in Russian leadership. But Russia has so far given little evidence that the fate of a state closely associated with her would be anything but absorption—absorption into an ideological framework quite incompatible with Europe's traditional conception of freedom. "Realism" must not be used to gloss over the fact that the fate of the Baltic States is exactly what Britain is trying to prevent. Belief in the "inevitability" of Russian hegemony is a species of inverted Munichism.

The Economist emphasized that "From the Baltic to the Balkans runs a separate bloc of Slav peoples." Can it be established, the paper asked, "as a common interest of Britain and Russia that this bloc shall be strong, independent and economically prosperous." This was definitely in accord with British interest, the article said, but what about Russia?¹⁰

The right answer to this question was obviously very important for president Beneš, since the whole future of Polish-Czechoslovak confederation depended on it. Czechoslovakia, before

going farther in negotiations with the Poles, wanted to make sure that Russia had no objection to them, in view of all this "sphere of influence" talk. The Czechoslovak minister in Moscow, Zdeněk Fierlinger, was instructed to explain to the Russians the reasons for Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. He informed Beneš of the Soviet position in a telegram on August 25. "According to your instructions," Fierlinger reported, "I explained to Vyshinsky for the first time in detail our view of the cooperation with Poland and of the establishment of a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation, completely independent, but at the same time being in friendly relations to the Soviet Union. He vividly expressed to me his personal approval adding that he would inform me of the exact official attitude. He assumed that no objection or difficulties would arise." Reassured on this point, Beneš wrote Sikorski on October 6 that the course of events after entry of Russia into the war in no way changed Czechoslovak foreign policy: its basis remained cooperation with Poland. Knowing, however, that the Czechoslovak position was considerably strengthened, Beneš returned to the question of the Czechoslovak-Polish border and categorically stated that Trans-Olza ought to be given back to Czechoslovakia.

Sikorski felt very bitter about Beneš' letter. He thought that the Czechoslovaks delayed negotiations of the crucial problems of future union while at the same time trying to get concessions which he, Sikorski, was not able to make. The Poles had had the draft Constitutional Act of future confederation ready for discussion since May 21, and they felt that the Czechoslovaks did not really want to go beyond the "generalities of the declaration of November 11," as Sikorski called it, and played for time. Sikorski thought that a revival of the frontier dispute at this stage was unfair, the more so as both parties had agreed to discuss the question at a later date. He tried therefore to evade the problem and in his letter to Beneš on October 21, proposed the adoption of the following formula, "The importance of the past frontier dispute between Poland and Czechoslovakia," he wrote, "seems to be in opposite proportion to the significance and the close integration of the Union

which will link both countries in the future."¹² Beneš remained insistent. He sent a memorandum to Sikorski on December 25, 1941, couched in aggressive language and pressing for the recognition of the 1938 boundary between Czechoslovakia and Poland. He emphatically rejected the Polish viewpoint that both sides had committed mistakes in the past, and put all the blame squarely on the Poles.¹³ He reminded Sikorski of Beck's policy toward Czechoslovakia at the time of the Munich crisis, recalled his (Beneš') letter to Mościcki on September 22, 1938, in which Czechoslovakia offered concessions to Poland, and took a determined if not unfriendly attitude toward Sikorski.¹⁴ The Polish Government left Beneš' memorandum unanswered until July 25, 1942. It felt that an exchange of arguments and counterarguments would only impede cooperation between the two countries.

III

While these angry notes between Beneš and Sikorski were being exchanged, the Czechoslovak-Polish Coordinating Committee met finally on November 4 to discuss the Polish draft of the Constitutional Act of the Polish-Czechoslovak Union.¹⁵ The document had been in preparation since early winter 1940 and it was undoubtedly a mistake on the Polish side to have taken such a long time over it. The international situation had greatly changed since the Political Committee of the Council of Ministers had begun its work, and the adoption of the draft was less likely in November, 1941, than in winter, 1940.

The main importance of the Constitutional Act lies in the fact that it was an interesting example of a concrete proposal of federation between two countries in East-Central Europe, made by one government to another. In this respect it is one of very few documents of this kind.

The Polish draft proposed the creation of a federal association (Związek) which for want of a more precise term I shall translate here simply by Union. In addition to Czechoslovakia and Poland this Union eventually might comprise Hungary, Lithuania,

and possibly Rumania. It was so constructed therefore as to allow for future extension. The main organs of the Union were the Supreme Council, the Council of State Secretaries, the Assembly, and the Constitutional Tribunal.

The Supreme Council was planned as the most important institution, on which the whole structure of the Union hinged. It consisted of the heads of states, together with delegated members of their respective legislative bodies. It was stipulated that, should the Union comprise more than two states, the number of these members of parliament should not exceed two per country. The presidency of the Council was to go to a different head of state each year. The president represented the Union vis-à-vis foreign states. The president acting on a proposal by the Council of State Secretaries, and in accord with the Supreme Council, had power to sign international treaties, declare war and make peace, call and adjourn the sessions of the Assembly, and dissolve the Assembly. New elections were to be held within thirty days after dissolution. The president nominated the prime minister of the Union and on the latter's recommendation the remaining state secretaries as well as other high-ranking officers. The Supreme Council took its resolutions by majority vote, and in case of an equal division the president was to cast the deciding vote.

The Council of State Secretaries was intended to be the Union's executive body. It consisted of the prime minister and at least four state secretaries—foreign affairs, defense, economy, finance. The Council of State Secretaries was responsible to the Supreme Council and not to the Assembly, the reason apparently being that the Assembly was based on proportional representation and would be dominated by the larger states. To ensure equality of representation in the Council of State Secretaries no state could have more than three members on the Council. Decisions were taken by majority vote, and the prime minister had a deciding vote in case of an equal division.

The third organ of the Union was the Assembly. It would be elected by popular vote with one deputy for every one-half million

inhabitants. The Assembly ratified treaties, adopted the Union's budget (which, however, could be proposed only by the Council of State Secretaries), and passed general Union legislation. As additional safeguard for the weaker states, the Assembly was forbidden to pass laws contrary to the Constitutional Act, and each participating Government was empowered to question the constitutional validity of such laws. If a doubtful case arose, it was to be referred to the fourth organ provided for in the Constitutional Act, namely the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union.

The Polish draft proposed integration of foreign policies, defense, economies and finances of the member countries.

In regard to foreign policy there would have been an almost complete merger. The state secretary for foreign affairs, assisted by undersecretaries nominated in agreement with national Governments, was responsible for the conduct of the foreign policy of the Union. While member states had the right to conclude certain treaties separately, they had to negotiate them through the office of the state secretary of the Union. In order to provide national checks on this system the Governments had to concur in certain basic treaties which introduced changes in state boundaries and provided for alliances or permanent political cooperation with other powers.

The proposed integration did not go quite so far with respect to defense. There was also a joint state secretary of defense and a chief of staff of the Union, who during the war was to assume supreme command over Union forces; but national ministers of defense retained direct contact with national armies although they had to act in accordance with the general directives of the state secretary of defense. Two additional bodies concerned with matters of defense were the Council of Union Defense, composed of all state secretaries, all national prime ministers, and ministers of defense in addition to the Union chief of staff; and, secondly, a politico-technical War Board.

The Polish draft made economic integration of the Union depend on the degree of political unification achieved. As the latter

progressed, economic integration was to increase, the final aim being complete economic unity. The state secretary for economy was to direct foreign economic policy, coordinate the economic and social lives of member states, and administer these economic affairs which were declared to be the common concern of the Union. He was also entrusted with preparation of transitional measures especially with regard to postwar reconstruction. The Economic and Social Council, consisting of national ministers of trade and economy and national representatives of economic life, assisted the state secretary in his task. The draft foresaw the retention, during the first stages of integration, of certain customs duties within the Union as well as separate currencies and banks of issue. In the long run, however, similar financial policies and free convertibility were envisaged, as well as coordination of social and economic legislation.

Questions relating to citizenship were left to the decision of the respective states. It was proposed that there should be complete freedom of movement within the Union. The Constitutional Act also contained general provisions guaranteeing the democratic character of the member states and an enumeration of fundamental human and civic rights. According to the Polish draft, amendments of the Constitutional Act of the Union would require a two-thirds majority in the Assembly of the Union plus a simple majority in the national parliaments.¹⁶

The Polish draft resulted from a very thorough examination of the problems involved in international federation. It was by no means an idealistic and naive conception of utopian federalists, but an attempt to establish a complex system of checks and balances between the Union and the various national authorities. Its value was perhaps diminished by the fact that it did not take sufficiently into account existing realities, e.g. the unpreparedness of the Czechoslovaks for genuinely federalist solutions. The economic and social arrangements which it proposed are also open to numerous criticisms. The scope of this study does not allow for an extensive analysis of the Polish Constitutional Act. Such an analysis,

however, would be of great interest, as well as a comparison of the draft with the existing federal institutions on the one hand, and the numerous international constitutions proposed in Western Europe after 1945, to mention only "Little Europe" on the other.

The Polish draft Constitutional Act was presented at the November 4, 1941, meeting of the Czechoslovak-Polish Coordinating Committee. The Czechoslovak side, after studying the draft, presented its own countertheses called The Fundamental Principles of the Czechoslovak-Polish Confederate Union.

The Czechoslovak proposals were considerably less revolutionary in character than the Polish project. They were based on the assumption that member states of the Confederation would retain full sovereignty except in certain clearly designed spheres in which they would agree to adopt joint policies. The special fields which according to the proposals required such limitations of national sovereignty were foreign affairs, defense, currency, trade, and transport. Even in the case of these, the proposals envisaged coordination of policies rather than a joint policy subordinated to supranational organs. The Czechoslovak proposals advocated creation of a number of coordinating councils to be consulted by the Governments. The councils would prepare resolutions which, to become valid, would have to be adopted and carried out by the Governments. The Czechoslovak document proposed the following councils: a Council of the Confederation, consisting of prime ministers, ministers of foreign affairs, defense ministers, and ministers of national economy; a Diplomatic Council; an Economic Council; a General Staff of the Confederation, and Military Council. The Czechoslovak proposals foresaw adoption by the member Governments of identical customs regulations toward outside states. The principle of free movement of persons within the Confederation was advocated, but not complete freedom of permanent residence.¹⁷ As compared with the Polish draft, which clearly followed the "supra-national" way, the Czechoslovak proposals advocated an "inter-governmental" solution of the problem of confederation. Since the latter was unquestionably less

far-reaching in implication, the Czechoslovak proposals were eventually accepted as the basis of a common declaration of the Czechoslovak and Polish Governments in January 1942.

IV

While the differing Polish and Czechoslovak proposals were being studied by the respective Governments, the idea of regional cooperation in East-Central Europe within the frame of a European federation was gaining supporters. The Czechoslovak foreign minister, Jan Masaryk, made this point in several speeches in America during this period. "I am asked daily," Masaryk said in early November, 1941, "what I think of a European Federation. I am heartily in favor of it. The Polish and the Czechoslovak Governments have resolved to start the ball rolling by coming together and forming an important nucleus for the building of a better Europe. We hope that other nations will join us in those endeavors." Hubert Ripka was even more specific when he said in London that agreements on cooperation similar to those envisaged between the Czechoslovaks and the Poles "were being prepared with the Yugoslav Government and other Allied Governments."¹⁹ During the International Labor Conference in New York the desire for closer cooperation between East-Central Europeans found its expression in the Joint Declaration by the Governments, Workers, and Employers delegations of Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, and Yugoslavia. Published on November 5, it advocated close postwar cooperation between these countries.²⁰ Certain organs for cooperation, such as the Central and Eastern European Planning Board in New York, were established almost immediately.²¹ Public opinion in the United States and Britain sincerely welcomed the November 5 declaration of the four states. The Economist declared that

If this declaration of policy proves to be the first step towards the creation of a strong and united bloc of powers in Eastern Europe, it may be that the date of its signing and the library of Columbia University, where the signing took place, will be marked as milestones in the long, hard road to European peace.

Speaking of future confederations in which these states would participate, the Economist added that "the form of the Confederation . . . must, if it is not to repeat the fiasco of the Little and Balkan Ententes, prepare for the centrifugal pressures to which such a bloc would be submitted."²² Thus it appeared that the ball had already started to roll, as Masaryk put it, and enthusiasm for regional cooperation was rapidly increasing. On the anniversary of the first Czechoslovak-Polish Declaration of November 11, 1940, a joint communiqué of the two Governments reminded other nations of the Czechoslovak-Polish initiative.²³

The Greek and the Yugoslav Governments on January 15 took an important step when they signed the agreement on the constitution of a Balkan Union. Closer in its form to the Czechoslovak idea of international cooperation than to the Polish supranational idea, the Greek-Yugoslav agreement provided for coordination of policies and agreed also to establish a number of bodies of intergovernmental character: a Political Organ, composed of the ministers of foreign affairs; an Economic and Financial Organ; a Permanent Military Organ; and a Permanent Bureau. The agreement proposed collaboration between prime ministers of the member states and between their parliaments. With respect to economic matters the Greeks and the Yugoslavs stated that their final aim was a customs and monetary union. The agreement was to create the "general foundations for the organization of a Balkan Union." It left the door open to the accession of other states of the region.²⁴

The Greek-Yugoslav agreement stimulated Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations. The Czechoslovak-Polish Coordinating Committee met on January 19, 1942 and accepted the text of a joint declaration based on the Czechoslovak proposals. The official declaration, called the Polish-Czechoslovak Agreement, was made public on January 23.²⁵ General in scope, it resulted from mutual acceptance of "a number of principles of the projected Confederation." It provided for cooperation in foreign policy, defense, economic and financial matters, as well as social policy, transport, posts, and telegraphs. The Agreement envisaged a customs union

and, like the Greek-Yugoslav pact, allowed for accession of other East-Central European states. Simultaneously with the Agreement the Czechoslovak and Polish Governments published a declaration welcoming the Greek-Yugoslav treaty.²⁶

The Czechoslovak-Polish Agreement fell short of the expectations of those who desired real federal union of the two states. Moreover, it did not constitute a formal treaty binding upon the two Governments. The Czechoslovaks emphasized that no binding treaty could be signed in exile. But the document represented undoubtedly an important step in the direction of closer Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation, and had a significance which did not go unrecognized.

British reaction to the document was, on the whole, very favorable. Geoffrey Mander in the House of Commons declared that "the negotiations that have recently been brought to a successful conclusion between certain of our Allies . . . will have a valuable effect during the war and in the peace which follows." He said that he was referring to the agreement between the Greek and Yugoslav Governments by which the two states agreed "to pool, among other things, their foreign policy and defence and to group around them, if possible, other States in the Balkans." He had also in mind the Czechoslovak-Polish agreement which proposed "close unity between the two States," and he stated that "other States in the Danubian Basin" might be drawn into closer cooperation. That, Mander added, "is exactly the sort of thing we want to have growing up."²⁷ Foreign Secretary Eden reminded the House of Churchill's statement that "His Majesty's Government warmly welcomed the original Polish-Czechoslovak Declaration of 11th November 1940." He then declared that "They equally welcome the new Agreement as marking a further important stage in the development of closer relations between these two Allies."²⁸

As usual, the Economist passed a sober and penetrating judgment upon the Agreement which, it said, represented a notable step forward in consolidating national structures and political and economic conditions east of Germany; and for that reason the two

treaties were to be welcomed, "but chiefly as an earnest of more that is to come." Although passing some criticism on the texts, the Economist remarked that "to write in this way is not to criticize the search for security, nor to despise the promise of better things that come from the federal movement. It is simply to suggest that a weak federation will be a snare and a delusion, and that very much more needs to be done before the proposed federations can be regarded as strong."²⁹ Returning to the problem of Czechoslovak-Polish relations a few days later, the Economist made another point by contending that "a great opportunity for practising the principles of the agreement was missed when Poland and Czechoslovakia chose to conduct separate negotiations with Russia."³⁰ This, however, was not the opinion of the Times which remained faithful to its advocacy of "spheres of influence." Commenting on the Czechoslovak-Polish Agreement, the Times worried chiefly about Russian reactions. But after quoting with approval Ripka's speech in the Czechoslovak State Council in which he "expressed the view that Russia would hereafter be a decisive factor in world politics and in the organization of Central Europe," the Times went on to say that "the agreements now being reached . . . derive additional strength and significance from the understanding established with the major Slav Power."³¹

The Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations during the period following the Soviet entry into the war thus had culminated in the important agreement of January 23, 1942. The negotiations, however, began to change almost imperceptibly because of the very presence of Soviet Russia in the Grand Alliance. The Western partners had welcomed Russian participation in the war unreservedly, and in their effort to make cooperation with Russia as easy as possible they failed to stress clearly the importance which they attached to Czechoslovak-Polish confederation or to a democratic organization of East-Central Europe. On the contrary, Churchill's pressure on Sikorski to come to terms with Moscow indicated British anxiety to placate Russian interests. In the long run this attitude was bound to render Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation

dependent on the good-will of the Soviet Union.

For the time being Russia offered no objection. The Czechoslovak ambassador in Moscow, Fierlinger, was assured by Vyshinski that Moscow approved the rapprochement. The London Times, advocating the "spheres of influence" concept, rejoiced over the understanding achieved by the smaller East-Central European Allies with Russia; the Polish-Czechoslovak negotiations could go on; the results thus far testified to the sincere desire on the part of the Czechoslovaks and Poles to achieve close cooperation. It is true that certain difficulties persisted. Beneš' attitude toward the Trans-Olza problem stiffened as the position of the Czechoslovak government in exile grew stronger. The January Agreement fell short of Polish desires for a federal union. But the Agreement taken together with the almost simultaneous Greek-Yugoslav pact and with the manifestation of solidarity of the Czechoslovaks, Poles, Greeks, and Yugoslavs at the ILO Conference in New York represented the growing trend in favor of regional organization in East-Central Europe. Nevertheless the Soviet shadow continued to hang over all the proposed confederations; and since so many statesmen viewed the Soviet attitude as decisive in matters of East-Central Europe, Moscow found it easy to block any development which she disliked. The "major Slav Power," as the London Times had put it, had a very special interpretation of the word "understanding." Moscow realized quickly that cooperation between states within the Soviet "sphere of influence" was moving forward, instead of foundering on the rocks of existing difficulties, and decided to disrupt such cooperation by its own methods.

Notes

1. C. Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (2 vols., New York 1948), II, 973.

2. R. E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York, 1948), p. 323ff.

3. W. C. Bullitt, The Great Globe Itself (New York, 1946), p. 11.

4. The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg (Boston, 1952), p. 45.
5. Elliott Roosevelt and Joseph P. Lash, eds., FDR: His Personal Letters; 1928-1945 (2 vols., New York, 1947), II, 1177.
6. W. S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston, 1950), p. 391.
7. Izvestia, Aug. 3, 1941.
8. See below, Appendix 3.
9. The Times contended that leadership in Eastern Europe was "essential," and that this "leadership can fall only to Germany or to Russia." London Times, Aug. 1, 1941.
10. Economist, Aug. 16, 1941.
11. E. Táborský, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation," p. 388.
12. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 53.
13. The Poles found this very hard to swallow, especially since Beneš himself admitted, in the course of a conversation with President Raczkiewicz on Aug. 29, 1940, that he had committed several mistakes in his dealing with Poland.
14. S. Mackiewicz, "Korespondencja Benesza z Sikorskim."
15. The Polish name was "Projekt Aktu Konstytucyjnego Związku Polsko-Czechosłowackiego."
16. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," pp. 74-79.
17. Ibid., pp. 55-56.
18. Czechoslovak Information Service, Czechoslovak Sources and Documents, No. 1: Speeches of Jan Masaryk in America (New York, 1942), p. 15.
19. London Times, Oct. 29, 1941.
20. There is a full text in Czechoslovak Sources and Documents, No. 2: Struggle for Freedom (New York, 1943).
21. F. Gross, "The Central and Eastern European Planning Board," New Europe, II (March, 1942); Central and Eastern European Planning Board, Documents and Reports, No. 1-6 (New York, n.d.).
22. Economist, Nov. 8, 1941.

23. See below, Appendix 4.

24. There is a full text in Inter-Allied Review: A Monthly Summary of Documents on the Allied Struggle for Freedom, II (Feb. 15, 1942). See also N. Mirkowich, "The Greek-Yugoslav Treaty and the Balkans," New Europe, II (Feb. 1942).

25. See below, Appendix 5.

26. See below, Appendix 6.

27. 377 H. C. Deb., 5 s., c. 651.

28. Ibid., c. 1158.

29. Economist, Jan. 24, 1942.

30. Ibid., Jan. 31.

31. London Times, Jan. 24.

Chapter Four

BREAKDOWN OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

I

To achieve her ambition of dominating East-Central Europe—in which a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, independent of Russia, was clearly an obstacle—the Soviet Union used all political weapons at her disposal. First there was an attempt to weaken Poland by making territorial claims on that country. Second, Moscow put pressure on the Czechoslovaks to discourage them from cooperation with the Poles, exploiting both Czechoslovak fears of antagonizing Russia and the existing differences between Beneš and Sikorski. Finally the Soviets attempted to mobilize public opinion in the Western countries against the idea of “reactionary federations,” which were likened to a cordon sanitaire, and to put the whole blame on the Poles who were, of course, implacable enemies of the Russian people. Thus the impression was created that Russia opposed confederation in East-Central Europe, not because of any expansionist plans of its own but simply because of alleged Polish unwillingness to cooperate sincerely with the Russian Ally.

Soviet territorial demands on Poland were first clearly formulated during Sikorski's visit to Kuibyshev and Moscow in early December 1941. Sikorski went to Russia to negotiate the creation of a Polish army, and the talks were conducted in a seemingly friendly atmosphere. A Soviet-Polish Declaration of Friendship and Assistance was made public on December 4.¹ But in the course of the discussions with Sikorski at the Kremlin, Stalin brought up the question of the Soviet-Polish boundary, making it clear that the Soviet Union had not accepted the pre-1939 frontier. The Polish premier considered that he had no right to discuss an issue which, according to him, had been already settled by the Soviet-Polish

agreement in London, and he therefore refused to talk about frontier changes. The question was dropped; but while it did not seem to disturb the appearances of Russo-Polish relations it increased Polish anxiety about Russian intentions vis-à-vis Poland.

Having failed to obtain any concessions from Sikorski, Stalin discussed the Polish and other border problems with Eden during the latter's visit to Moscow a few days later. Eden went to Russia in connection with the forthcoming signature of the Soviet British treaty of alliance, and in the course of discussions he learned the Russian views of frontier changes in Europe. Among them was a desire to incorporate the Baltic states, as well as parts of Rumania and Eastern Poland. The Russians wanted Poland to receive East Prussia, favored the restoration of a separate Austria, and wished to see the Rhineland detached from Germany. Eden found himself in a difficult position. He indicated to Stalin, however, that he would "endeavor to obtain a favorable decision from his Government."² The British Government wavered when informed of the Russian stand. It fell to the United States, which entered the war as the result of Pearl Harbor on December 7 and thus greatly strengthened the anti-Axis camp, to stiffen the British attitude toward Soviet demands.³ Cordell Hull later would write that "there is no doubt that the Soviet Government has tremendous ambitions with regard to Europe and that at some time or other the United States and Great Britain will be forced to state that they cannot agree, at least in advance, to all of its demands."⁴ Consequently, Britain for the time being declined to discuss territorial settlements. The Soviet-British treaty as finally signed on May 26, 1942, contained no mention of them. The Soviet Union, realizing that the Western Allies were not yet ready for concessions, shelved the issue and decided to use other ways and means to further Russian objectives. Noticing that the Czechoslovaks and the Poles seemed to have drawn closer by their January Agreement, the Soviet Union decided to concentrate her efforts on the disruption of that cooperation.

A hint was dropped that Russia expected the Poles to seek

Soviet approval for their cooperation with Czechoslovakia. In February, 1942, the new Soviet ambassador in Washington, Maxim Litvinov, brought up the question of the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation in a talk with Raczyński who was on a visit to America. When Raczyński informed the Soviet ambassador of the stage reached by the negotiations in London, Litvinov remarked that this was "very interesting. But has your government consulted the Soviet Government on this matter?"⁵ Raczyński replied that he did not see any reason for such consultation. There the matter rested; and the Russians turned their attention to the Czechoslovaks who were more amenable to Soviet persuasion.

The Czechoslovak Government in London was continually insisting on the need of friendship with Russia. At the University of Aberdeen in November 1941, Beneš in a lecture entitled "The Present War and the Future Peace" emphasized that the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation must secure the "enduring friendship of the U.S.S.R." He also implied that Czechoslovakia would help Poland to live on friendly terms with the Soviet Union.⁶ Two months later Ripka in speaking in the Czechoslovak State Council declared that Czechoslovakia pursued three aims in foreign policy: friendly cooperation with the Great Powers, particularly Soviet Russia; cooperation with neighbors (Poland); and world-wide cooperation based on collective security. Ripka added that "we cannot forget that geographically the Soviet Union is nearest to us," and that Czechoslovakia and Poland "have a joint interest in gaining the friendly support of the great Eastern Power of the Soviet."⁷

The Poles viewed with great concern the fact that Ripka had mentioned Czechoslovak-Polish confederation only after cooperation with the Great Powers. It is possible that Russia drew its own conclusions from these pronouncements, and considered that the moment was opportune for exercising pressure on the Czechoslovaks.

In February, 1942, Moscow informed the Czechoslovak envoy in Russia, Fierlinger, that the Soviet Union did not view the Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations with favor. Fierlinger reported this to Beneš, and added his own opinion that cooperation with the

Poles was unrealistic and premature.⁸ The Soviet envoy to the Allied Governments in exile in London, A. Bogomolov, began also at this time to point out to Czechoslovak leaders the danger of rapprochement with Poland. A member of the Czechoslovak cabinet, Ladislav Feierabend, has recalled a violent discussion with Bogomolov, in which the latter asserted that cooperation with the Poles was downright harmful to Czechoslovakia. Soviet pressure on Czechoslovakia, as applied both through Fierlinger and Bogomolov, increased with Molotov's visit to England in May, 1942, and a press campaign was launched in London to attack the confederation plans. The Czech Communist paper in London, Mladé Československo, had asserted as early as February 1, 1942, that "We reject the project of confederation not because it affects the Poles, but simply because this conception is not in accordance with the interests of our nation . . . and it will harm the democratic idea and the democratic organization after the War." Attacks on Polish ambitions in White Russia and the Ukraine promptly followed.⁹ Another journal, Nová Svoboda, in February, 1942, also criticized the idea of confederation. Unfriendly remarks about Poland began to appear in the British press.

To this resolute Soviet pressure on all fronts, the Western Allies failed to make a counter pressure. In the spring of 1942 they felt embarrassed about the delay in the opening of a second front, and worried chiefly about not being friendly enough to the embattled Soviet Union. The United States withdrew its consular representatives from Finland mainly to please Russia. Harry Hopkins was actively putting forth a program for improvement of relations with Russia.¹⁰ Even president Roosevelt began to discourage Sikorski in his advocacy of federalist plans. He wrote to undersecretary of state Sumner Welles that "I think Sikorski should be definitely discouraged on this proposition. This is no time to talk about the post-war position of small nations and it would cause serious trouble with Russia."¹¹ The tendency to stress the differing status of the Big Four and the smaller Allies became more pronounced. It was noticeable, for instance, in the procedure

adopted for signing the Grand Alliance on January 1, 1942.¹²

In the second half of March, General Sikorski again went to the United States, ostensibly to pay respects to the great new Ally now at war with Germany. But in fact he went to Washington to try to counteract the increasing Soviet pressure. Sikorski spoke with president Roosevelt on March 24th and also on the 26th, and with Sumner Welles on the twenty-fifth. He emphasized Polish anxiety over Russian claims to the Baltic States, touched on the problem of Poland's boundaries, and spoke at length about the question of federations in East-Central Europe. As Ciechanowski, who accompanied him, later remembered, the premier "expressed regret that the Soviets did not seem to approve this policy, which was by no means aimed against them However, he thought the critical attitude of the Soviets toward European federation, coupled with recent Soviet territorial demands, might be proof of Soviet imperialist designs aimed not only at the Baltic States and Poland, but which might later develop in the direction of the Balkans."¹³ Roosevelt assured the Polish premier that the United States had not forgotten the Atlantic Charter, signed only nine months before. He also promised to stiffen the attitude of the British Government toward Russian demands. Polish anxiety at Soviet intentions, however, continued to grow. News came that in December a Polish Communist group had been organized in Saratov, and it soon began to publish a periodical, Nowe Widnokreği (New Horizons), which was distinctly hostile to the Polish Government in London.¹⁴ From this group there later emerged the Union of the Polish Patriots which formed the nucleus of the Communist Lublin Committee and of the future Communist Government of Poland.

II

Sikorski returned to London from America in the latter part of April, 1942, and in a speech to the Polish National Council on April 21, he again stressed the necessity for Central European Federation. The attitude of president Roosevelt and of American public opinion he described as "thoroughly understanding."¹⁵ Yet

Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations were not progressing and in spite of the Agreement of January 23 a certain tension prevailed between the two Governments. The Poles had not answered Beneš' memorandum of October 25, 1941, in which he had emphasized the need of settling the Trans-Olza question in favor of Czechoslovakia. Sikorski still felt that it was wiser to postpone discussion of this difficult issue. On April 28, Sikorski accompanied by his personal adviser, Dr. Józef Rettinger, and also by ambassador Raczynski, had an exchange of views with Churchill in the presence of Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Casey, and Duncan Sandys. The meeting took place at the British prime minister's residence at Chequers. During the talk the problems of Czechoslovak-Polish relations and of regional federations were raised, and all the British statesmen present expressed their support for the idea of East-Central European cooperation. Churchill showed his particular interest in a solution of the boundary dispute between Czechoslovakia and Poland and on the whole he supported the Czechoslovak point of view.

Three weeks later an event took place which the Poles interpreted as indication of gradual Czechoslovak surrender to Soviet pressure in the matter of Polish-Russian relations, on the one hand, and of making the solution of the Trans-Olza question a sine qua non of further discussions, on the other. The Czechoslovak State Council on May 18, 1942, unanimously adopted a resolution which among other things said that "Our foreign policy appreciates correctly the fact that the influence of Soviet Russia in Central and Eastern Europe, which undoubtedly will be advantageous and assure the existence of small democratic states and nations, will be very strong indeed." The resolution went on to say that "The Czechoslovak people sincerely wishes for friendly cooperation and good relations with the Polish nation, but it trusts and expects that all the injuries caused to our state by the Hitlerite intrigues and Beck's policy in the fateful year of 1938, will be undone." The State Council strongly emphasized that Czechoslovakia did not recognize "any annexations which took place after Munich, either in the Teschen district or in northern Slovakia," and expressed hope that "this

attitude will be impressed upon the American and British Governments." With regard to Polish-Russian problems, the resolution declared that "The Czechoslovak Republic, while fully understanding the vital interests of the Polish nation, respects at the same time the vital needs of the Soviet Union, and must therefore care for the realities which the U.S.S.R. considers basic to its policy and security." The resolution said finally that "It is impossible to overlook the declared view [of the Czechoslovak Government] that Czechoslovak foreign policy must always give priority, insofar as possible, to the largest alliance of democratic nations in Europe, rather than a mere confederation of two states."¹⁶

The Polish National Council replied immediately in a resolution which, while omitting the word Czechoslovakia in order not to create bad feelings, declared that the fundamental duty of the Polish Government was the defense of the integrity of the Polish state. A deadlock in Czechoslovak-Polish relations threatened.

To ease the prevailing tension, and clarify the respective positions of the two Governments, a meeting of the Czechoslovak-Polish Coordinating Committee was called for June 3, 1942. The Committee agreed to adopt a compromise resolution which assigned great importance to a general organization of democratic and peace-loving nations, but reaffirmed that confederation of Poland and Czechoslovakia still remained the primary and fundamental aim of both Governments. The resolution stated that this confederation should become the nucleus of a regional organization in East-Central Europe. Both Governments expressed approval of the resolution adopted by the Coordinating Committee. Hence, it seemed that the obstacle to continued negotiations was removed. The Polish National Council, for one, noted "with satisfaction the resolution of the joint Czechoslovak-Polish Coordinating Committee."¹⁷ To strengthen the impression that both Governments were as intent as ever on realization of a joint confederation, a Czechoslovak-Polish communiqué was issued on June 12 announcing convocation of the mixed commissions which were to study the problems of future organization of the confederation.¹⁸ Unfortunately, however, the mixed commissions met

only once and then suspended all work. The reason was clear. The resolution of the Coordinating Committee had not really solved any of the basic differences between the Poles and the Czechoslovaks. Since the Czechoslovaks were being pressed by Soviet Russia to give up their cooperation with the Poles, and Beneš had made the settling of border questions virtually a condition of further negotiations, there was nothing the commissions could do.

Russian pressure became ever more obvious. Molotov, who came to London in May to sign the British-Soviet treaty, met with Beneš on June 4, and expressed doubts about Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. According to Beneš' pro memoria, the Czechoslovak president attempted to explain to Molotov his reason for negotiation with Poland. Beneš said that "We cannot have the Poles in opposition to us, hemmed in as we are on three sides by the Germans and the Hungarians," and he assured Molotov that cooperation with Poland was not unqualified. "I emphasized our three conditions," he said:

- a. We cannot definitely decide anything as long as we are outside our own country. It is only possible to prepare it and the people at home must approve it before a common organization can commence to function.
- b. The social structure of both states must coincide because we cannot make a confederation with Polish aristocrats.
- c. Poland must come to an understanding with the U.S.S.R. concerning all controversial matters, and cooperate with it on friendly terms.

Molotov, in reply to these arguments, apparently stated that Russia had no differences with the Czechoslovaks but had some with the Poles. He wanted to know if the Czechoslovaks realized that by entering into confederation with Poland they might create the impression that they wanted to accept the Polish viewpoint. "I assured Molotov," Beneš said, "That all of us are of this opinion and that we have said it and are saying it quite frankly to the Poles. I am constantly repeating it to the British, telling them that the Poles must decide between Germany and Russia." Beneš concluded that "we are not interfering in the Soviet differences with Poland,

although we presume that in all probability we will become neighbors of the U.S.S.R."¹⁹

Beneš' last statement is rather surprising. Telling Molotov that Poland had to choose between Germany and Russia, and that he was "constantly repeating it to the British," Beneš seriously undermined Polish arguments for an East-Central European federation independent of Germany and Russia. His intimation that the Czechoslovak Government expected the Soviets to become a neighbor of Czechoslovakia, in other words, to annex Eastern Poland, stands in strange contrast with Beneš' previous assurance to Sikorski (June 5, 1941) that he would not "act in any way as to injure Polish actions or intentions anywhere." Beneš was obviously interfering in Polish-Russian relations in 1942, and he went on doing so in the years to come.²⁰ It may well be that, as Professor Táborský has written, "Beneš by no means underestimated the fact that a close union of Poland and Czechoslovakia strengthened the position of both countries in regard to Russia, provided the Poles had made in good time the necessary surgical cut in the East and thereby deprived the Soviets of their main pretext of opposition against the Polish-Czechoslovak cooperation."²¹ But to the Poles in London the advice to gain problematical Russian friendship at the price of severe territorial sacrifices sounded very much like French and British counsels to Czechoslovakia in 1938, when a "surgical cut" in the Sudetenland was advocated to establish peace in East-Central Europe.

The Russians did not say their last word in the Molotov-Beneš exchanges of June 9. On July 16, 1942, Masaryk had a talk with Bogomolov, who informed him that the Soviet Union definitely opposed Czechoslovak negotiations with the Poles. Two weeks later Beneš spoke to Bogomolov, and the latter said bluntly that the Czechoslovaks had no need for union with Poland. Beneš tried to argue, saying that "The world believes in confederations, in greater unions of states, and the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation had met with great sympathy both in American and Britain." He asked, "How shall one explain now the sudden retreat?

We must tell the British and the Poles the actual facts. You realize that this will be grist to the mill of those who oppose you and us."²² These arguments failed to impress Bogomolov, and the Soviet negative attitude remained unshaken. Professor Táborský has advanced several possible interpretations of the "sudden volte-face" in Soviet policy from the seemingly understanding attitude of Molotov on June 4 to the brutal veto on July 16. One of them is that a difference of opinion existed in Moscow with regard to Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, and that Molotov's point of view was overruled by the Kremlin. A second interpretation ascribes the change to Allied failure to establish a second front in France, which provoked the Soviets to reprisal. The question arises, however, as to whether there was in fact a "sudden" change in Soviet policy? Fierlinger had reported unfavorable reactions from Moscow as early as February, 1942. During the same month the Communist Czechoslovak paper in London attacked the proposed confederation. It seems that too much has been made of the rather vague agreement of Molotov on June 4. Earlier he had seriously questioned the idea of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. Thus it is quite possible that nothing revolutionary happened at all during the period from June 4 to July 16, but simply that the Kremlin judged the ground sufficiently well prepared, by its previous warnings and indirect attacks, to proceed to direct action.

In these circumstances Sikorski's long overdue reply to Beneš, sent on July 25, could not introduce any new elements into the Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations. Sikorski repeated the old formula of leaving the boundary question in abeyance. The premier stated that very little was being done to advance the future confederation, and urged Beneš to cooperate closely with the Poles, especially in furthering common war aims.²³ When the Czechoslovak president received this letter, he left it unanswered, probably feeling that Russian enmity was too heavy a price for Polish cooperation. Nevertheless, an attempt was made on August 17 to save the proposed confederation and prevent a complete breakdown. Sikorski and Beneš met again and discussed possible courses of

action. Beneš suggested that the whole matter be discussed with the British, American and Soviet Governments. Sikorski opposed, on the ground that it would be impossible to change the attitude of the Soviet Union. He proposed instead a bold move on the part of the Czechoslovak and Polish Governments which would confront the Great Powers with a fait accompli. Czechoslovakia and Poland, according to Sikorski, should immediately conclude an Act of Confederation. Such an act, Sikorski reasoned, would strengthen the bargaining position of the two Governments toward Russia. It would convince Britain and the United States that the two Governments were in earnest and that their policies were identical. In such a situation the Western Allies might be in better position to persuade the Soviet Union to acquiesce. The Russians would no longer be able to exploit Czechoslovak-Polish differences, meanwhile pretending that they were not vetoing any arrangement because no formal agreement existed.

The Polish ministry of foreign affairs elaborated Sikorski's oral proposal, and on September 24, 1942 Raczyński, the acting head of the ministry, presented a memorandum to the Czechoslovak foreign minister, Jan Masaryk. The Polish proposal to conclude "a definite and formal agreement concerning the future Confederation" consisted of four articles. Both Governments were to propose to their respective parliaments, after the liberation of Czechoslovakia and Poland, the establishment of a confederation. The draft of the Statute of the confederation was to be prepared at once. Secondly, both Governments would bind themselves not to do anything which might prejudice setting up of the future confederation. They were also to agree on all international questions vital to their countries. Should the Polish proposal be accepted, the Czechoslovak-Polish Agreement was to come into force on the day of its signature.²⁴

It is clear that the signing of the proposed agreement would have constituted a fait accompli, as far as Russia was concerned. It must be remembered, however, that in autumn, 1942, the Soviet Union still maintained outwardly correct relations with the Polish Government. Would a Czechoslovak-Polish agreement, supported

willy-nilly by Britain and the United States, have done real harm to the Czechoslovak Government's relations with Moscow? The question is difficult to answer, but one must realize that Beneš not only feared to antagonize Russia but had a sincere belief in Soviet good intentions. In a letter from Beneš to Professor Táborský, shortly before the president's death, there would appear the memorable words: "My greatest mistake was that I refused to believe to the very last that even Stalin lied to me cynically both in 1935 and later, and that his assurances to me and to Masaryk were an intentional deceit."²⁵ In the autumn of 1942 Beneš, unfortunately, was still trusting Stalin.

There were also other reasons for the rejection of the Polish proposal of September 24. First of all, the international position of Czechoslovakia had greatly improved. Molotov had assured Beneš that the Soviet Union recognized the pre-1938 frontiers of Czechoslovakia; and Eden in August, 1942, declared in the House of Commons that Britain considered the Munich agreement as non-existent.²⁶ The French National Committee in London made a similar declaration on September 29, 1942. Although aware of the importance of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation, Beneš thus felt that Czechoslovakia could play an important international part by herself.

Then too, there remained the unsolved question of Trans-Olza. The Czechoslovaks were prepared not to insist on its immediate cession as long as Polish cooperation was really needed, but now Beneš felt irritated that, after asking Czechoslovakia to undertake the risk of antagonizing Russia, Poland was not ready to give up the district. His annoyance must have increased when Eden was asked in the House of Commons about the Czechoslovak-Polish border in connection with the British repudiation of the Munich agreement, and declared that he spoke only about the Munich agreement. "The point my hon. friend makes concerns the frontiers between two allied countries and I have every confidence that will be dealt with on the basis of the close and friendly relations which now happily exist between them."²⁷

Under these conditions the Polish proposals stood utterly no chance of being accepted. Beneš and Sikorski were miles apart.

The Czechoslovak president presented his point of view clearly in his November 12, 1942, message to the Czechoslovak State Council. Beneš declared that the idea of confederation, "as the new basis for future peace in post-war Europe," had been stressed from the beginning of the war, "particularly while the Soviet Union was still not involved." But conditions in Central Europe were not ripe for it, and therefore no "binding and ultimate solution" could be adopted at this time. Beneš stated further that "we know that the application of the confederative principle in Central Europe is not only a matter for the nations affected. It affects also the whole of European politics and particularly certain Great Powers. In so far as they are our allies in the present war it would not be either possible or friendly for us to agree regarding these important matters among ourselves and to present them with some sort of a fait accompli."²⁸ In his message Beneš found it necessary to allay the fears of some Czechoslovaks who suspected that a secret agreement with the Soviet Union had been signed. He denied the existence of any sort of confederative link between the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia, or even contemplation of such a link.

This speech revealed clearly the gap between the Czechoslovaks and Poles. However, in spite of it, attempts were still made to bridge the gap and preserve some form of cooperation between the two countries. Masaryk on November 20 proposed to Raczyński the conclusion of a twenty-year alliance between Czechoslovakia and Poland—considerably less than the originally planned confederation. The Polish Government decided to accept the proffered alliance. When consulted by the Czechoslovaks, Britain declared that a simple treaty of alliance and friendship, between the Czechoslovak Government and the Polish Government, approved both by the British and the Soviet Governments, might be appropriate.

It is not at this point very clear whether the proposed

alliance was Masaryk's idea or whether initiative came from Beneš Professor Táborský suggests that the latter was the case. Polish circles tended to believe that there was a difference of opinion between Masaryk, who insisted on signature of the pact, and Beneš who hesitated and so allowed Soviet Russia to kill the proposed alliance. Whatever the correct interpretation, Bogomolov on January 28, 1943 told Beneš that a Czechoslovak-Polish alliance was totally unacceptable to the Soviet Union. Bogomolov's blunt statement seems to have been preceded by earlier Soviet démarches, because already on January 26—two days before the talk with the Soviet ambassador—Beneš had informed the Polish envoy Tarnowski that Russia saw no difference between a confederation and an alliance and opposed both.²⁹ Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations thus came to complete deadlock. Sikorski and Beneš had come to a parting of the ways. The Polish premier began attempts to persuade the United States and Britain to come out strongly in favor of the idea of confederation—and Beneš tried to find a new solution in a Russian-Czechoslovak-Polish tripartite arrangement.

III

In December, 1942, Sikorski went on his third and last visit to the United States. His journey was to a large extent caused by growing concern over Russian-Polish relations,³⁰ as well as by his hope to persuade the United States to support federalist solutions in East-Central Europe. His task was made difficult by the strong attraction which Soviet Russia at that time held for the Western Allies. Russia was the Great Ally in the East; and few people were able to see beyond the Soviet-Polish antagonism and to grasp the real issue of domination of East-Central Europe which clearly transcended the narrow boundary dispute. As on previous occasions Sikorski did his best to point to the intimate connection between the Polish question and the whole future of East-Central Europe.

The Polish premier on December 7, 1942, handed to Sumner Welles in Washington a memorandum containing the Polish point of view on the organization of East-Central Europe. Large

parts of the memorandum deserve to be quoted in full, as this document has neither been published nor mentioned by any other writers.

The memorandum stressed, first of all, the important place occupied by the countries of East-Central Europe in international politics. "The future international order which the United Nations will build up after the defeat of the Axis Powers can be lasting and permanent only if the problems of Central and South-Eastern Europe receive an adequate solution." To prove this point it dwelt at length on the origins of the second World War, and connected those origins to the failure to check German domination of East-Central Europe. The memorandum added that "the attempts at appeasing the German spirit of expansion by giving it a free hand in that part of the continent were one of the major and psychological errors committed after the first World War. The Locarno Pacts were examples of that tendency. The aggressive spirit of Germany and its military power can only be broken by definitely depriving the Germans of the possibility of conquering Central and South-Eastern Europe." The memorandum stated clearly that to replace German domination by Soviet rule was no solution. "It does not follow at all that the 'leadership' in that part of Europe should be left to Russia, because it would lead to the violation of independence of the states in this area, to the imposition of communist regimes on them, and to their isolation from European affairs and from international trade." The real solution lay in strengthening East-Central Europe by means of a "federal union" or else "two unions collaborating with each other." Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Rumania were mentioned as possible members of the one, while Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and perhaps Turkey could make up the other. "This 'bloc,' " the memorandum contended, "would not have any aggressive designs against Russia. On the contrary, it would serve her as a natural shield against any possible recurrence of German aggression. The central 'bloc' would also maintain correct neighborly relations with disarmed Germany."

But no political organization of East-Central Europe would solve the problem adequately without an economic development of the region which "requires a basic reconstruction." The memorandum proposed that "the economic consolidation of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe should be achieved by establishing uniform economic legislation, a uniform system of transport, financial and credit agreements, freedom of movement of labor, capital and goods." There followed a suggestion that Western credits and help be made available for reconstruction of East-Central Europe. After stressing the need of transforming the region of East-Central Europe into a factor of strength in international politics, the memorandum ended by saying that a strengthened East-Central Europe could, together with the West, "nip in the bud any new German aggression."

It is doubtful whether Sikorski's memorandum produced any great effect in Washington. No reference to it is to be found in any books or memoirs dealing with this period. Professor Lukacs has written that Sikorski could not secure any American reaffirmation of the Atlantic Charter concerning East-Central Europe.³¹ The general trend in the Western countries—of which the lead articles in the London Times, together with such books as E. H. Carr's Conditions of Peace and ambassador Joseph E. Davies' Mission to Moscow may be taken as indications—was distinctly pro-Soviet, and Sikorski's views were rapidly becoming unpopular. There were, of course, notable exceptions. The British review, Nineteenth Century and After, edited by F. A. Voigt, strongly supported the Polish views. It advocated re-establishment of the balance of power in Europe, "stabilized by regional alliances or federations."³² This balance of power, the editor wrote, "requires above all the existence of 'Central Europe' as a political reality." He maintained that "the Powers forming this zone should, as the result of this war, enjoy independence and . . . be drawn into close association with one another for mutual defence" which was "vital to the stability of Europe."³³ In June, in the same review, there appeared the contention that the security of Poland and Czechoslovak

and, therefore, of Europe demanded "close and permanent association in matters of strategy and foreign policy between Warsaw and Prague—something between an alliance and federal union, perhaps." Should a decisive Russian victory take place, "these buffer states, especially Poland, would be in danger of becoming Russian dependencies." The Nineteenth Century attacked the uncritical belief in Russian good will which was becoming fashionable, and said that there "is a common, but mistaken belief that allies in war must be allies for ever." It emphasized that in the interest of the United States, Britain, and France, "the states of the Middle Zone be on good terms with Russia, but not that any of them become vassals of Russia."

While the Polish Government was doing its best to persuade the Western Allies to support federation in East-Central Europe, Beneš tackled the problem along different lines. He thought of salvaging Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation by a direct approach to Russia. Determined above all to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union, he suggested a tripartite Russian-Czechoslovak-Polish treaty of alliance. This idea has been represented as a continuation of the confederation project, but it is difficult to treat it as such. The tripartite formula meant abandoning confederation of East-Central Europe based on the Czechoslovak-Polish and the Greek-Yugoslav agreements and independent of either of the big neighbors. Secondly, a tripartite treaty which joined together two medium-size states to powerful Russia was tantamount to a very effective limitation of the Czechoslovak and Polish freedom of action—which was precisely what the original confederation was meant to preserve and increase. Poland's part in the tripartite agreement appeared to be that of adjusting to Russia after having sacrificed her eastern territories. The Poles suspected therefore that the formula was only to cover Czechoslovak withdrawal from cooperation with Poland and could not be taken seriously.

Thus by 1943 the differences between the Czechoslovaks and the Poles in their methods of working for cooperation between their countries had become obvious beyond all shadow of a doubt.

Sikorski's efforts to convince the British and the Americans of the existence of Soviet danger received no support from Beneš, who instead advocated a tripartite arrangement. It is not surprising that Soviet propaganda made masterly use of Beneš' statements, and contrasted them with the "reactionary and imperialist" Polish views. The Times asserted that "The Soviet Press gave much prominence to an address by President Beneš in New York, in which he expressed the desire to see Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union permanent friends, and praised the Anglo-Soviet alliance as a contribution to the reconstruction of Europe. Space is also given to the Czechoslovak State Council's criticisms of General Sikorski's Government for not renouncing Polish claims to the parts of Silesia and Slovakia annexed by Colonel Beck's Government."³⁴ Poland appeared entirely in the wrong. Vernon Bartlett wrote in the News Chronicle that the Poles were becoming ever more suspicious of Russia, and that this suspicion was even leading to estrangement between Poland and Czechoslovakia.³⁵ Accusations were leveled against Poland, and Sikorski's Government found itself obliged to declare that "suspicions that Poland wanted to base the eastern frontier of the Republic on the Dnieper and the Black Sea . . . were completely absurd."³⁶ The Poles tried to explain that it was very misleading, to say the least, to talk about a cordon sanitaire. After repeating the argument that a Central European federation would constitute a shield protecting Russia against German aggression, the Polish minister of labor, Jan Stańczyk, wrote that "a Federation including nations so traditionally friendly to Russia as Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia or Bulgaria would give promise of fruitful cooperation and a good-neighbor policy with the Soviet Union."³⁷ Such arguments, however, were of little avail. As Harry Hopkins recorded in a letter of March, 1943, "Eden said Sikorski was forever meeting with the small states of the Balkans promoting Polish ambitions; that all this was known to the Russians and Eden thinks Sikorski is doing more harm for Poland than good. Poland has very large ambitions after the war and Eden says that privately they say that Russia will be so weakened and Germany crushed that Poland will emerge as

the most powerful state in that part of the world."³⁸

In spite of its critical attitude toward Polish policy, the British Government decided to attempt to reconcile the long-advocated federalist ideas with the tripartite formula of Beneš. In a broadcast on March 21, 1943, Churchill therefore outlined his conceptions on federalism, envisaging creation of a World Council based on regional councils for Europe, America, and the Pacific. Europe, according to him, was to be composed of states and confederations, among which he mentioned Danubian and Balkan federations. Poland and Czechoslovakia were not assigned to any of these, but were "to stand together in friendly relations to Russia."³⁹ This combination of federalist principles with the tripartite formula was, so far as East-Central Europe was concerned, highly unrealistic. It rested on the assumption that Russia would agree to confederations in this region, confined only to the Danubian basin and the Balkans. It also overlooked the fact that Eastern European confederations if deprived of the pivot states, Czechoslovakia and Poland, could not exist without running a danger of becoming Russian dependencies. Russian aims in East-Central Europe and the importance of Poland and Czechoslovakia for organization of the region between Germany and the Soviet Union were erroneously assessed. The Nineteenth Century had seen the issue much more clearly in saying that "if Poland is reduced to the conditions of a mutilated vassal, the whole eastern European order will be transformed." The review described such transformation as a calamity.⁴⁰ Unlike Churchill, it sounded a clarion of warning: "Even now, before the Second World War is over, another European conflict is adumbrated, for if Poland ceases to exist as an independent Power, Czechoslovakia cannot survive as an independent Power, either."⁴¹

IV

It is clear that Polish ideas on confederation in East-Central Europe were irreconcilable with the tripartite, Russian-Czechoslovak-Polish arrangement advocated by Beneš. The two policies

differed now so greatly that the Polish Government decided to send an official note to the Czechoslovak Government on March 20, 1943, which would place responsibility for failure of the confederation scheme on the shoulders of Czechoslovakia. The following reasons were given: first, the Polish proposal of September 24, 1942, to conclude an agreement on confederation had never been officially answered; second, the Czechoslovak Government had withdrawn its offer to conclude an alliance; third, the Czechoslovak delegates had refused to attend meetings of the joint mixed commissions. The Poles wanted to make clear that they could not be held responsible for the standstill in the negotiations.

Some three weeks later, on April 13, a startling announcement of Radio Berlin led Russia to break off relations with Poland. The Germans announced their discovery in German-occupied Russia of a mass grave at Katyn which contained nearly ten thousand bodies of Polish officers. This outrageous act, the German propaganda ministry asserted, had been committed by the Russians.

For nearly two years, Polish authorities had been attempting to locate these officers, originally deported to Soviet Russia in 1939-40, but had met only with evasive replies. Polish indignation rose instantly, upon the German announcement, and Sikorski's Government on April 17 issued a communiqué which, while condemning the "hypocritical indignation of German propaganda," declared that Poland was approaching the International Red Cross to investigate this mass murder. Protesting Russian innocence and alleging a German-Polish "plot," Molotov on April 26 informed the Polish ambassador in Moscow that the Soviet Union had broken off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government. Having previously isolated Poland, the Soviet Government now completed its work by an open breach with the Poles.

The Czechoslovak Government then took the final step and, on May 14, Masaryk sent a note to Raczyński informing him that Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations were suspended. A communiqué to that effect was published on May 17, and on the same day the Czechoslovak Government brought the news to the State Council.

The Poles reacted by a declaration made by Raczyński in the Polish National Council on May 25, that in spite of suspension of negotiations with Czechoslovakia, the Polish Government did not cease to believe in the need for integrating East-Central Europe. The Council reaffirmed this view in a resolution on June 8. Three weeks later Raczyński wrote to Ripka questioning the reasons given by the Czechoslovak Government for the suspension of negotiations.

The Economist presented an objective and perhaps the most balanced contemporary account of the breakdown of the Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations and its comments still deserve close reading. After saying that Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations had come to a standstill the paper declared that

At first, no official reasons for the deadlock were published and it is unfortunate that the Czech Foreign Minister, Dr. Ripka, should have felt called upon to give a somewhat tendentious account of the breakdown at the precise moment when the Polish Government is already involved in misunderstandings with the Russians. The chief aim of both the Czechs and the Poles, as constituent parts of the United Nations, must be to mend the breaches in the fabric of the alliance and, in Count Raczyński's words, to avoid "polemics when both countries are in need of constructive views for the future." The reasons given by Dr. Ripka for the breakdown were, briefly, that a friendly understanding with Russia was the precondition of agreement; that Poland's attitude towards Hungary was equivocal; and that the Poles maintained their right to retain Teschen which had been so disreputably filched from Czechoslovakia in 1938. Count Raczyński has taken up these points. When the negotiations began in November, 1940, Poland was at war with Russia; and Count Raczyński claims that a "gentleman's agreement" covered the question of relations with Russia, as well as the similar problem of Hungary and Czechoslovakia's other Central European neighbours. The Poles were not to be drawn into a conflict over Central Europe and the Czechs were not to be drawn in over Russia. This "gentleman's agreement" Count Raczyński states, also covered the problem of Teschen, which apparently simply meant that it was agreed to consider this point last.

After stressing that it would have been wiser for the Poles to have renounced Teschen, the Economist said that

the real problem goes deeper; it is the question of federations in Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe. Soviet Russia dislikes them The Czechs, determined to maintain the closest relations with Russia, have, therefore, dropped the negotiations with the Poles. On the other hand, Mr. Churchill has spoken of the need for federations and the Poles, declaring that a Polish-Czech federation "never could, and never in future will, have an anti-Soviet bias," are anxious to continue the negotiations The whole question of European federations should plainly be discussed between London, Washington and Moscow.⁴²

There may be no doubt that the Czechoslovak-Polish break isolated Poland. It left her in a highly difficult position. But it also meant, and this was not realized by many people, that Czechoslovakia was also left alone. The Nineteenth Century had not failed to point this out: "Czechoslovakia now stands isolated, isolated by sheer Russian friendliness towards herself and unfriendliness towards Poland and Yugoslavia." After recalling that Russia had thwarted efforts to establish federations in the area between the Baltic and the Aegean, the Nineteenth Century wrote that "The crisis can be solved if England, like Russia, and the United States—has a foreign policy and one that is so pursued and so expounded that there is no doubt as to what interests she regards as vital and where the interests lie." The review concluded that "On that basis collaboration with Russia is possible—and only on that basis."⁴³

What then were the respective positions of Russia and the Western Allies?

The Russian position was made crystal clear in The War and the Working Class, published in Moscow in June, 1943. An article in that publication declared pointedly that "Plans for the establishment of an Eastern European Federation hostile to the Soviet Union can be framed, but only by renouncing the necessity for friendship and collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and the Allies in the post-war period, only if the renunciation of the Anglo-Soviet treaty is considered."⁴⁴ The threats contained in this article were quite obvious.

The attitude of the Western countries, on the other hand, was confused and far from uniform. An apt illustration of the state

of mind of certain political circles was provided by a speech made in the House of Commons by F. Seymour Cocks. Speaking in November, 1943, Cocks declared that "some time ago there were rumors that certain reactionary forces were planning to form a federation of States in Eastern Europe headed by Poland which would form a barrier or a cordon sanitaire between Soviet Russia and the rest of Europe." He expressed satisfaction that an American assistant secretary of state had said that America "did not support any plan of that sort, which after all could not be formed anyhow against the opposition of Czechoslovakia." Cocks hoped that nothing more would be heard of the "formation of a body of States of that kind."⁴⁵

The Moscow Conference of Great Power foreign ministers in October, 1943, offered opportunity for an exchange of views on confederations in East-Central Europe, and both the Soviets and the Western Allies brought up the question. The Western Powers did not present a united front. Eden submitted a proposal for confederations, with particular reference to the Danubian area, but Cordell Hull simply refused to go along. He considered that general principles of world-wide application had to be agreed upon before discussing specific areas. Then Molotov read "a statement that emphatically criticized the idea of planning federations of small nations at this time. His Government considered the active consideration or encouragement of such schemes as premature and even harmful, not only to the interests of the small countries but also to the general question of European stability."⁴⁶ Molotov's statement was given publicity by Izvestia on November 19. The reaction of the Western statesmen to this forceful exposition of the Soviet attitude was weak. Eden protested that his Government had no intention of creating any bloc against the Soviet Union. There was great force in Molotov's statement, he said, and he would not therefore insist. Hull limited himself to saying that the United States Government consistently upheld the rights of small nations, provided they did not affect the larger questions of peace and security.⁴⁷ Thus the Western Powers, upon whom the matter at

last devolved, failed to counter the Soviet veto.

The cause of confederation in East-Central Europe thus was lost.

During the remaining months of 1943 the Poles still made a number of declarations expressing desire to renew negotiations with the Czechoslovak Government, but such statements were of little practical significance. The new Polish premier, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, (who replaced Sikorski after the latter's death in an air crash), declared that the aim of the Polish Government was to recommence talks with the Czechoslovaks. The new minister of foreign affairs, Tadeusz Romer, expressed a similar view. The four main political parties which constituted the basis of the Polish Political Representation in the Homeland (the underground organization in Poland) adopted a similar resolution on August 15, 1943. The Czechoslovaks also mentioned several times Czechoslovak-Polish confederation. Beneš especially referred to it on many occasions during his stay in the United States in May and June, 1943.⁴⁸ He stressed that such a confederation would remain in friendly relations with the Soviet Union, but it seems that he used the term confederation to embrace the tripartite arrangement as well. Beneš' visit to the United States, followed by his journey to Russia in December, grew out of a desire to "discuss the problems of Czechoslovakia's future with the two more distant powers."⁴⁹ It was probably linked with the idea of Czechoslovakia becoming the "bridge" between the East and West. In these circumstances the term confederation was no more really than a useful phrase to which the Western public was already accustomed. The scheme was finally buried in Moscow in December, 1943. The British opposed Beneš' journey to Moscow which was undertaken to sign a Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance; "Eden declared that the British Government deemed such a trip inappropriate on the ground that such an agreement between Russia and Czechoslovakia would isolate Poland still more and thus further weaken that country's position";⁵⁰ but Beneš held a different opinion, and with the British dropping their opposition he made the trip.

The Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty was signed in Moscow on December 12, and the Times commented that "for Czechoslovakia herself the treaty represents the fulfilment of a long accepted policy."⁵¹ The Times intimated that Poland should learn her lesson from this treaty and realize that she must rely on either Germany or Russia. Beneš' tripartite formula found its expression in a special protocol to the treaty which obviously referred to Poland. "The USSR and the Czechoslovak Republic," the protocol read, "agree that in the event of any third State which has common frontiers with the USSR or with the Czechoslovak Republic, and which in the present war has been the object of German aggression, desiring to become a party to this agreement, such State shall be given the opportunity with the sanction of the USSR and the Czechoslovak Republic of signing this agreement, which thereby would acquire the quality of a tripartite agreement."⁵² But the satisfaction with the signing of the Moscow treaty must have mingled with uneasiness, at least in certain quarters, since Masaryk found it necessary to declare on December 20 that "I did not sell out to Russia. We intend to live our life in our own way, and we know that Russia will respect our way of living."⁵³ The Moscow treaty finally closed the chapter in the relations between the two countries, which bears the name of the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation. The Moscow treaty sounded the requiem for a free East-Central European system.

The Communist press rejoiced. The New York Daily Worker declared on December 19 that the treaty drove "another nail in the coffin of reactionary confederations that could be directed against the USSR," and signified "the new position of the USSR in Europe and in the world, already acknowledged by the Moscow conferences and at Teheran."⁵⁴ Yet there was a tragic prophecy in the words of president Beneš pronounced after signing the Moscow treaty. He said that the Soviet Union's "intentions towards Poland are exactly the same as they are towards Czechoslovakia." This was, unfortunately, altogether true.

One must say, then, that the proposed Czechoslovak-Polish

confederation broke down because of Soviet Russia. Russian pressure had manifested itself shortly after the Czechoslovak-Polish Agreement of January 23, 1942. Failing to obtain territorial concessions from Sikorski and from Eden, the Soviet Union concentrated its efforts on wrecking the confederation project. In February, 1942, Moscow told Fierlinger of its dislike of the idea, and the Communist press began to attack it. The Western Allies failed to counteract strongly enough this Soviet pressure, in spite of Sikorski's efforts in Washington in March, 1942, to obtain genuine support for Czechoslovak-Polish confederation.

As a consequence the Czechoslovaks began to falter—the more so as there remained important differences between Beneš and Sikorski. The resolution of the Czechoslovak State Council, of May 18, giving priority to wider cooperation over a “mere confederation,” almost produced a breach, but the joint Coordinating Committee temporarily patched things up. The two Governments decided to call mixed commissions to work on the confederation project; but given the general situation this move remained an empty gesture. The Russians redoubled their efforts. Molotov questioned the need for a confederation in June, but did not push his opposition too far. A month later, however, on July 16, the Soviet envoy Bogomolov informed the Czechoslovaks of Soviet determination to oppose Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. Although Beneš and Sikorski attempted to save the proposed confederation, Sikorski insisted on a bold policy of a fait accompli whereas Beneš wanted a general discussion among the Allies. Lacking agreement on basic method, the two Governments were pulled in opposite directions. Masaryk's suggestion to replace confederation by a simple alliance was accepted by the Poles, approved by the British, but sharply opposed by the Soviet Union; and even this substitute scheme was dropped.

Sikorski and Beneš made then a new effort to save Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation, but their ways of approaching the problem became irreconcilable. Sikorski, remaining true to the original idea, went to the United States seeking help from Washington. Beneš

meanwhile adopted a new formula of a tripartite Czechoslovak-Polish-Russian agreement, which deprived the proposed confederation of much of its content. Churchill's advocacy of federalism in Eastern Europe—with exclusion of Poland and Czechoslovakia, which were to be linked with Russia—neither convinced the Russians of British support nor contributed to the solution of the problem.

The Polish Government, at last convinced that it alone had not changed its attitude or abandoned the confederation principle, informed the Czechoslovaks finally in March, 1943, that it held them responsible for failure to achieve lasting cooperation between the two countries. Shortly afterward there occurred the sudden German announcement of the Katyn massacre, which led to the Soviet's breaking off diplomatic relations with the Polish Government. A few weeks later the Czechoslovak Government officially announced that Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations were suspended. It was now up to the Western Powers either to take a determined stand in favor of confederations in East-Central Europe or to become reconciled to the unflinching Russian opposition to them. At the Moscow Conference Eden and Hull did not seriously try to overcome Soviet objections, and the cause of confederations in Eastern Europe was irrevocably lost. Beneš' journey to Moscow in December, 1943, and the Russo-Czechoslovak alliance finally sealed the fate of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. Thus the idea of a joint confederation, born in the winter of 1939, developed in the Joint Declaration of November 11, 1940, achieving fullest expression in the January 23, 1942, Agreement, was buried. A serious obstacle to Soviet postwar domination of East-Central Europe was removed. A network of treaties, binding the East-Central European countries in a most servile manner to Moscow, replaced the proposed free confederation in this region.

Notes

1. A Czechoslovak-Soviet military treaty was signed somewhat earlier, on September 28.

2. Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1168.
3. J. A. Lukacs, The Great Powers and Eastern Europe (New York, 1953), pp. 467ff.
4. Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1169.
5. J. Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, p. 93.
6. Dziennik Polski, Nov. 12, 1941.
7. The Inter-Allied Review, II (Mar. 15, 1942), 48-49.
8. It is certain that Fierlinger did his best to help the Soviets sabotage Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation. In his memoirs published in Czechoslovakia, he has written that he had opposed it. Fierlinger served the cause of Communism far more faithfully than that of the Czechoslovak Government in London, and he even attempted to influence leading Czech Social Democrats against cooperation with Poland. I was told by members of the Czechoslovak Government in London that efforts had been made to persuade Beneš to recall Fierlinger from his post in Moscow, but that they had not been successful. For an appraisal of Fierlinger, see Václav Beneš' review of Fierlinger's memoirs in Journal of Central European Affairs, XI (1951), 110-112.
9. Quoted in a letter from Polish minister Stanisław Stroński to Juraj Slávik, London, August 10, 1942. l.dz.8882,42/45/2.
10. Hopkins proposed, among other things, to "establish the general policy throughout all U.S. departments and agencies that Russia must be considered as a real friend and be treated accordingly and that personnel must be assigned to Russian contacts that are loyal to this concept." These remarks come from a memorandum prepared by General Burns, but Sherwood wrote that "it was an excellent statement of Hopkins' own views." R. H. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 643. Italics mine.
11. FDR: His Personal Letters, II, 1290.
12. J. Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, pp. 85-89; W. H. McNeill, America, Britain and Russia: Their Cooperation and Conflict (London, 1943), pp. 96-99.
13. J. Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory, p. 102.
14. Nowe Widnokreği was first published in 1940 in Russian-occupied Eastern Poland, as an organ of "The Soviet writers of the U.S.S.R." As revived in 1942, it became a Polish Communist paper under the editorship of the noted Polish Communist, Wanda

Wasilewska. B. Kusnierz, Stalin and the Poles (London, 1949), p. 159.

15. Dziennik Polski, Apr. 24, 1942.

16. Čechoslovák, May 29, 1942.

17. Dziennik Polski, June 13, 1942.

18. See below, Appendix 7.

19. E. Táborský, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation," pp. 389-390.

20. Churchill wrote that Beneš "may be most useful in trying to make the Poles see reason and in reconciling them to the Russians, whose confidence he has long possessed. He brought a new map with pencil marks by Uncle Joe showing the eastern frontier [of Poland]." Closing the Ring (Boston, 1951), p. 452.

21. E. Táborský, "A Polish Czechoslovak Confederation," p. 392.

22. Ibid., p. 390.

23. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 63.

24. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," (1948), No. 1/5, 46-47.

25. E. Táborský, "Beneš and Stalin—Moscow, 1943 and 1945," Journal of Central European Affairs, XIII (1953), 162.

26. Exchange of Notes between the British and the Czechoslovak Governments, Cmd. 6374 (London, 1942).

27. London Times, Aug. 6, 1942.

The Trans-Olza question was, however, in one respect a useful weapon in the hands of Beneš. Once realizing that Czechoslovak-Polish confederation was unlikely, Beneš could use the Trans-Olza issue to demonstrate Polish intractability which, in turn, would be represented as the real obstacle to genuine cooperation.

28. Czechoslovak Documents and Sources no. 1: E. Beneš, The Way to Victory (London, 1942), pp. 13-14.

29. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 48.

30. Incidents were multiplying. There had, for example, been the execution of two Jewish-Polish socialist leaders, Henryk Ehrlich and Wiktor Alter, by the Soviets.

31. The Great Powers and Eastern Europe, p. 480.
32. "The Balance of Power," Nineteenth Century and After, vol. 131 (1942), 49.
33. "The Baltic States," ibid., vol. 131 (1942), 196.
34. London Times, May 24, 1943.
35. News Chronicle, Feb. 23, 1943, quoted in Dziennik Polski Feb. 26.
36. Dziennik Polski, Feb. 26, 1943.
37. J. Stanczyk, "Central Eastern Europe, and the USSR," New Europe, IV (Feb. 1944), 13.
38. R. E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 710.
39. Churchill discussed these ideas in Washington at a luncheon in the British Embassy, May 22, 1943. The Hinge of Fate, p. 803.
40. "Principles of Foreign Policy," Nineteenth Century and After, vol. 133 (1943), 158-159.
41. "The Situation," ibid., 205.
42. Economist, May 29, 1943. Italics mine.
43. "Poland, Russia and Great Britain," Nineteenth Century and After, vol. 133 (1943), 257-259.
44. Quoted in the London Times, Aug. 18, 1943.
45. 392 H. C. Deb., 5 s., c. 120.
46. Memoirs of Cordell Hull, II, 1298.
47. Ibid., pp. 1298-1299.
48. Czechoslovak Sources and Documents no. 4: President Beneš on War and Peace (New York, 1943). passim.
49. S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History (Princeton, 1953), p. 427.
50. E. Táborský, "Beneš and Stalin," p. 157.
51. London Times, Dec. 14, 1943.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., Dec. 22, 1943.
54. W. C. Bullitt, The Great Globe Itself, p. 265.

Chapter Five

THE CONFEDERATION IN RETROSPECT

The wartime effort to establish a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation forms a most important chapter in the history of the two countries. Confederation would have greatly strengthened the position of the small nations of East-Central Europe, and might well have made them factors of strength in European politics, rather than weakness. Moreover, the negotiations for confederation served to bring into sharpest relief the international divergences of Russia vis-à-vis England and the United States, displaying in a most obvious manner the utter unwillingness of Russia to compromise on a question affecting her future "sphere of influence," East-Central Europe. They also displayed the deep-seated nature of Polish-Czechoslovak differences, which could yield to adjustment only under the pressure of a great war and the defeat or occupation of both countries—and even then this adjustment came with great difficulty and slowness.

What, then, in conclusion, were the reasons for this great wartime effort at rapprochement between two nations with so conflicting a recent past? How could Czechoslovakia and Poland, in light of their divergent and clashing interwar policies, attempt in the war years a confederation? Were the reasons of a purely temporary and opportunist character or did they correspond to a real desire on the part of the Poles and the Czechoslovaks to begin a new period in their mutual relations?

Seen in retrospect, the Czechoslovak position toward rapprochement suggests three different interpretations of motive. First, there is some evidence that the original Czechoslovak attitude toward confederation corresponded very closely to Polish views. The Poles saw in confederation a source of power in East-Central

Europe, balancing German and Russian threats, completely independent of both Berlin and Moscow. They also viewed confederation as opening a way to a federal organization of Europe based on regional groupings. Several statements by Beneš indicate that he held similar opinions. He at one time wrote, for instance, that "Smaller States will be united in larger units which are either federal or confederate, like the union now discussed between Czechoslovakia and Poland. There should be federal or confederate units in the Balkans, in Northern Europe and among the smaller States of Western Europe." Beneš did not believe in the possibility of establishing a federated Europe immediately; but "the development of small federations may lead eventually . . . to the realization of a Federal Europe." He stressed that this development must proceed along democratic lines, because Europe while struggling against fascism has also been "in conflict with the totalitarianism of the Communists."¹ Jan Masaryk also declared himself in favor of European federation, and said that the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments "have resolved to start the ball rolling," and were "forming an important nucleus for the building of a better Europe."² On at least one occasion Hubert Ripka also stressed that Germany, Russia, or Italy should be excluded from direct participation in any confederative scheme in East-Central Europe, because otherwise "the smaller States would fall into political dependence on them."³ Senator Vojta Beneš, brother of the Czechoslovak president, equally emphasized that "the first task" of the Confederation would be their "common defense against aggression from any side."⁴

But were these the only motives which prompted the Czechoslovak leaders to undertake a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation? If such an interpretation were accepted, the subsequent change of Czechoslovak position would appear as a complete volte-face, a negation of principles under pressure of the Soviet Union. While the decisive part played by the Russians in wrecking the Czechoslovak-Polish plan cannot be overestimated, it is doubtful if the change in Czechoslovak foreign policy ever constituted such a complete departure from its original premises. Other consider-

ations, therefore, must have influenced the Czechoslovak leaders when they framed their plans of confederation.

It is possible to find some evidence that the rapprochement with the Poles was of an opportunist nature.⁵ Before entry of Soviet Russia into the war, Czechoslovak foreign policy operated almost in a vacuum, since the only power on which Czechoslovakia could rely was Russia.⁶ The vacuum had to be filled temporarily by a Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement, which was useful because it strengthened the international position of the Czechoslovaks in exile. Before June, 1941, it seemed that, should Soviet Russia enter the war on the side of the Allies, the Polish link could be maintained and somehow fitted into a Czechoslovak-Russian entente. In case the Soviet Union did not view federation favorably, the Czechoslovak-Polish agreement could always be scrapped. The hypothesis that the main reason for cooperation with the Poles was opportunist, could find support in the extreme caution displayed by Beneš during the London negotiations and in his desire not to become too deeply involved. He himself said that he stressed the idea of federation or confederation "particularly while the Soviet Union still was not involved," and that "the requisite conditions" for federation in East-Central Europe were "not yet ripe."⁷ This surely conveys the impression that Beneš considered the federalist principle only as a stopgap, adopted for reasons of expediency. In his fourth message to the Czechoslovak State Council in February, 1944, he emphasized that the Russian alliance was the "cornerstone" of Czechoslovak foreign policy, and that already in 1941 he had wanted a tripartite Czechoslovak-Polish-Russian agreement.

It is difficult to reconcile these statements with the other Czechoslovak pronouncements, previously quoted, indicating a more idealist approach to Czechoslovak-Polish confederation. If, however, Beneš' policy really was sheerly opportunistic, the evolution of Czechoslovak foreign policy under Soviet pressure, from about 1942 onward, would amount to a change of tactics only, and not to abandonment of any fundamental principles.

The real reasons which prompted Czechoslovak eagerness to

create a confederation in East-Central Europe were probably more complex than either of the interpretations we have mentioned. Czechoslovak policy during the early war years was guided both by short-range tactical considerations and larger and more lofty visions. In analyzing Beneš's reasons it is impossible to exclude the existence of a sincere desire for the improvement of Czechoslovak-Polish relations, just as it is clear that Beneš was convinced of the need for bigger economic units in East-Central Europe after the war. On the other hand, he expected an early entry of Soviet Russia into the war on the side of the Allies, and he believed in a Russian victory. "From what I recall of my London visit in the summer of 1941," one American observer in Europe wrote, "the only person I met who was confident about the power of the Russians to hold the Germans was Eduard Benes."⁸ He thought that a defeated Germany might turn Communist and in alliance with the Soviets it might control the whole of East-Central Europe. To minimize this danger, Beneš reasoned that a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation friendly to Russia would prove more effective in restraining Germany than either of the two countries acting separately. The Czechoslovak president foresaw no real trouble coming from the Russian side, except possible territorial claims to Eastern Poland and perhaps Subcarpathian Ruthenia. This was the main reason why he insisted on Czechoslovak "neutrality" in Polish-Russian matters, and in later stages supported the Soviet point of view.⁹ With respect to Subcarpathian Ruthenia, Beneš obviously hoped to retain it, but he held that if Russia were determined to get this province there was nothing he could do to prevent it. Thus the Czechoslovak-Polish union was never to be used against Russia; but Beneš thought that it could be valuable in resisting German pressure or hindering German-Russian cooperation. The proposed confederation also held another attraction. Beneš thought that in view of the traditionally friendly Czech-Russian relations, the union could improve the relations between Poland and Russia. In this as in his other ideas, the Czechoslovak statesman took it for granted that the Soviets wanted friendly and cooperative neighbors, not satellites. When speaking about extension of the Czechoslovak-

Polish confederation and establishment of other similar unions in East-Central Europe, Beneš assumed that the Soviet Union would not oppose them. That was his main condition for supporting a larger regional grouping in this area, which he thought could never materialize in the teeth of Russian opposition.

Another reason for the Czechoslovak president's advocacy of Czechoslovak-Polish confederation was undoubtedly his regard for public opinion in the West, where the idea of establishing greater units in East-Central Europe was popular. In the first years of the war certain conservative circles in England even talked about resurrecting the old Habsburg monarchy, and Beneš, strongly opposed, was glad to have the more realistic Czechoslovak-Polish confederation as a counter-project. Thus he considered a Polish-Czechoslovak confederation useful economically. By settling relations between the two countries on a permanent basis, it would be a bulwark against German expansion. A confederation might fit in with a larger agreement with the Soviet Union, which would guarantee its existence, for the grouping would not be powerful enough to exist without backing of a big neighbor.

On the other hand, Polish reasons for advocating Czechoslovak-Polish confederation were simpler than those of Beneš. Throughout the negotiations the Polish attitude was less flexible and more consistent.

The Polish Government adopted the idea of confederation in East-Central Europe as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. The conception had been proclaimed in December, 1939, in the first Polish official statement of war aims. Almost a year later Sikorski elaborated his own views in a speech at Foyle's Literary Luncheon in London (November, 1940) in which he said that the Poles were fighting this war "not only to get back to our homes and country. We have wider aspirations, we have already given definite proofs of this by a comprehensive understanding with Czechoslovakia, and thus began a real federation of the European powers." Sikorski stressed that this understanding with Czechoslovakia, "based upon a close co-operation with Great Britain," would pave the way for a

new era in Europe characterized by "justice, democracy and co-operation between all nations."¹⁰ The Polish Government believed that the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation would lead to organization of the whole region between Germany and Russia, irrespective of the wishes of those two powers. This would transform East-Central Europe into a factor of strength in European politics. When linked with the West, especially with Britain and the United States, it might be strong enough to withstand pressure from either Germany or Russia. Addressing the Polish National Council in April, 1942, Sikorski stated that "without creating organizational ties, and raising the area economically," it was "impossible to speak about assuring lasting peace." Only states linked thus, by a union, can in common with Western federations, keep Germany in check. "Otherwise the nations of Europe . . . will be threatened with a new war after 25 years, or will succumb to a new hegemony." The Polish premier added that he desired "to work together with Russia, loyally and on the basis of equality."¹¹ His distinguishing between Germany—which nation, he said, would have to be checked—and Russia (with which it would be possible to cooperate) seems at first glance to be identical with that of Beneš. In fact, however, the idea was very different.

First of all, Sikorski distinguished between the West, on which the confederation would lean for support, and Russia with which it would cooperate. Secondly, he made it quite plain that he would favor cooperation with the Soviet Union provided Russia would respect the rights of East-Central European nations. In regard to Poland this meant that Russia would observe the Treaty of Riga of 1921. Sikorski repudiated on several occasions the idea of buying Soviet support at the price of territorial concessions, and in this respect he differed fundamentally from Beneš. The Poles believed that it was possible to create an East-Central European confederation despite Russian opposition. They assumed that the British and Americans realized the importance of this part of Europe, and would give their fullest support to confederative plans. Also, while Beneš expected a Russian victory, Sikorski was doubtful as to the final

outcome of hostilities on the Eastern front. He thought that in any case Russia would emerge so seriously weakened as not to be able to override a resolute Allied pressure in favor of East-Central European confederations. Finally, Sikorski insisted on absolute solidarity between Czechoslovakia and Poland vis-à-vis Russia, considering that a determined stand of the nations of that area would convince the West of the seriousness of their federalist plans, and restrain Russia from becoming too expansionist.

Hence, while Beneš wanted to assure the Soviet Union of the friendliness of countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia in order to obtain its blessing for the proposed confederation, Sikorski favored a firm attitude toward Russia. The latter was willing to be friendly to the Soviets as long as Russia did not interfere in East-Central European affairs. To succeed, his policy required very strong backing by the Western Allies, and a high degree of solidarity on the part of Czechoslovakia and other East-Central European nations. As regards tactical reasons for Polish cooperation with Czechoslovakia, it is likely that the Polish premier wished to show that his constructive approach to European politics was producing results, the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation being concrete proof of it. Furthermore, Sikorski may have believed that by strengthening the Czechoslovak position in the early months of the war and committing himself to the backing of Beneš, he would induce the latter to assume certain commitments towards Poland, e.g., support for the Polish prewar eastern border and thus link inseparably the cause of Czechoslovakia with that of Poland.

The Polish attitude toward cooperation, which I identified here largely with that of Sikorski, as well as Czechoslovak ideas exemplified by the views of Beneš, were, of course, not completely uniform. There were divergences among the Czechoslovaks even if we exclude the groups totally opposed to Beneš' policy. The Agrarians on the whole went farther than Beneš in their advocacy of cooperation, while the Social Democrats were less enthusiastic.¹² On the Polish side, except for certain extreme nationalists such as Adam Doboszyński,¹³ there was general agreement with Sikorski's

point of view, although there were differences as to the appraisal of the Czechoslovak motives for cooperation. Certain Polish leaders, including president Raczkiewicz, did not trust the sincerity of Beneš and favored the adoption of more cautious tactics in dealing with the Czechoslovaks.

II

Any analysis of the London rapprochement in terms of pure power politics is, however, misleading if it fails to indicate the genuine interest of Czechoslovaks and Poles in the proposed confederation. It is at once apparent to anyone who looks closely at the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments in exile that Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation in London transcended the narrow limits of diplomatic negotiations. Cooperation manifested itself in many different fields.

In the sphere of journalism, for example, attempts were made during the war years to establish close cooperation between the Polish and the Czechoslovak press. At a joint meeting of Czechoslovak and Polish journalists in February, 1941, held at the request of the Union of Polish Journalists (Związek Dziennikarzy R. P.), Stroński and Ripka addressed the gathering on behalf of their respective Governments and two leading newspapermen spoke for their fellows. They agreed to set up a joint committee for the exchange of articles and also to assure press coordination and Czechoslovak-Polish journalistic understanding.¹⁴ Similar meetings were held in March and April, the latter presided over by Karol Popiel, with Bohuš Beneš acting as secretary. These gatherings provided an additional platform for Czechoslovak-Polish discussions and a somewhat plainer language was spoken there than at the diplomatic conferences. It was probably in connection with the press agreement that numerous articles about Polish affairs appeared in the Czechoslovak press and vice versa. A special issue devoted to Czechoslovak matters was published by the Wiadomości Polskie on June 15, 1941, and the Čechoslovák replied with a "Polish Issue" (Polské Číslo) on November 21, 1941. Mention can also be made of

a pamphlet by K. Leskowiec entitled Ku Federacji z Czechosłowacją (Toward a Federation with Czechoslovakia) which appeared in London in 1941.¹⁵

In the field of education, the proposal to set up an Association of Czechoslovak and Polish Teachers was put forward at a Teachers' Conference in Oxford on January 17, 1941.¹⁶ The representatives of the trade unions of the two countries also decided to establish close cooperation, and adopted a resolution to that effect at a meeting held in the Polish Hearth (Ognisko Polskie) on August 16, 1942. Well-known socialists and members of the two Governments, František Němec and Jan Stańczyk, spoke at the meeting.¹⁷ Cooperation was even extended to the field of medicine; a Czechoslovak-Polish medical congress was held in Edinburgh on September 11 and 12, 1941, and the names of several well-known doctors such as Krůta, Skládal, Langer, Macháček, Jurasz, Rostowski, are to be found among the organizers. There was established a permanent joint committee of physicians of both countries.¹⁸

Two organizations, the Union of Poles Abroad (Światowy Związek Polaków Zagranicą) and the Union of Czechoslovaks Abroad (Svaz Zahraničních Čechoslovaků), decided to join forces in support of Czechoslovak-Polish confederation, and a coordinating committee was set up in 1942. The two organizations published a joint manifesto addressed to Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks living abroad. The manifesto said among other things that the war had brought "our two brotherly, and equally endangered nations . . . close together, so close as perhaps never before." Stressing the important role of the Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles who lived permanently abroad, the two organizations appealed for joint efforts to promote the cause of Czechoslovak-Polish confederation. The appeal was signed by the two leading officers of the Czechoslovak Union, G. Bečvař and J. Waldmuller, and on the Polish side by B. Hełczyński and Z. Nagórski, Sr.¹⁹

Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation also made some headway in the armed forces. General Sikorski on January 2, 1941, opened a military academy in London in which a number of Czechoslovak

officers studied alongside the Poles. The Czechoslovak chief of staff, General Jaroslav Znamenáček, was present at the opening ceremony.²⁰ Training courses, in which officers of both countries participated, were organized in Scotland.

A full list of joint lectures, meetings and interviews held in England would be very long indeed. Mention can only be made of one more important debate organized at the University of Liverpool on May 13, 1942, at which Ladislav Feierabend and Henryk Strasburger, the latter a member of the Polish Cabinet, spoke on the problems of the future confederation.²¹

Delegates of the Czechoslovak State Council were present as guests at certain meetings of the Polish National Council. Their presence was reported at a session of the National Council on February 24, 1942, at which Sikorski made a speech on the international situation. Even at the time when Soviet pressure was becoming more evident, the Czechoslovak leaders of the Agrarian Party, L. Feierabend and J. Lichner, signed in July, 1942, a Peasant Program for Middle Europe which emphasized regional cooperation.

The movement in favor of Czechoslovak-Polish confederation spread also to the United States, where on January 12, 1941, a great meeting was held in Chicago. Among others, Vojta Beneš and a Polish-American leader, Józef L. Kania, were present. A Czechoslovak-Polish Institute was established in Chicago with Mr. Love-Szydlowski and Father Brodač as president and vice-president respectively.²²

Even the reports from the Polish underground reaching the Government in London emphasized a great interest and support in the homeland for the proposed confederation.²³

There thus was much good will and interest on the part of large groups of Czechoslovaks and Poles who desired to see the London negotiations achieve a concrete result. "The feeling that the negotiations go too slow," Hubert Ripka reported in an interview with Dziennik Polski on June 24, 1941, "is clearly discernible among the Czechoslovak and the Polish masses." This, then, undoubtedly was an important factor which at least partly explains the

persistence of both Governments in trying to find a solution to Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation when Soviet pressure began to manifest itself.

III

The significance of the Czechoslovak-Polish attempt to establish a confederation should not be underestimated merely because it ended in failure. The agreement between the Poles and the Czechoslovaks during the early years of the second World War preceded other similar arrangements in Europe. It may have inspired Churchill's regionalist ideas; it had an indirect influence on the Belgian-Dutch-Luxembourg treaty signed in London in 1944, from which Benelux has grown; it undoubtedly influenced in a direct fashion the Greek-Yugoslav pact of January, 1942. In many respects the Czechoslovak-Polish plan can be considered as a forerunner of European federalism, which gained in momentum and led to the spectacular federalist movement in Western Europe in the first years after the war. The proposed confederation could obviously have no practical application after 1945 when the Soviet Union installed Communist rule over East-Central Europe. But it is likely that the impact of the Czechoslovak-Polish agreement on the development of the region between Germany and Russia would have been very considerable, since even in exile the project led to several federalist developments among the representatives of East-Central European countries in the West. The establishment of a Central Eastern European Planning Board in New York in 1942 was closely linked with the Czechoslovak-Polish and Greek-Yugoslav negotiations in London. So was the creation in April, 1943, of a sort of East-Central European UNESCO, called the Institute of Educational Reconstruction in Central Eastern Europe, and sponsored by the above-mentioned Planning Board.

Another institution set up in New York toward the end of 1942 was the Baltic Committee for Studies and Cooperation, under the chairmanship of Colonel K. Grinius, with Karel Pusta as secretary general. The aims of the Committee were to "strengthen

the ties of friendship and to further political, economic and cultural collaboration among the three [Baltic] nations, with a view to a close Union of the Baltic States; to study, from the point of view of these nations, the possibility of the political, economic and cultural organization of a new Europe, and to cooperate with corresponding Research and Post War Planning Agencies of other friendly nations.

The Pan-European Conference held in New York on June 5, 1943, provided yet another example of the growing spirit of cooperation among representatives of East-Central Europe. The regionalist idea was propagated at the Conference, and it was stated that "to counterbalance the power of Germany within Europe, it would be advisable to constitute sub-federations superior or equal to Germany in size and populations. These sub-federations would constitute federal groups of states within the European federation."²⁵

The setting up of federal Central European Clubs, and the organization of an Association of Central European Youth which held a great meeting at the Dorchester Hotel in London in November 1942, indicated that the regionalist movement was gaining ground.²⁶

All these developments were clearly influenced by the original Czechoslovak-Polish initiative, and proved the attraction of confederative and regionalist ideas for the East-Central Europeans in exile. The Czechoslovak-Polish and the Greek-Yugoslav agreements thus constituted undoubtedly important international events insofar as they seemed to have laid the groundwork for a comprehensive political organization in East-Central Europe. In speaking at a Czechoslovak-Yugoslav luncheon Beneš declared that "Both the Yugoslav-Greek and Czechoslovak-Polish pacts form a basis for wider agreement and for complete organization of Central and Southeastern Europe," while King Peter expressed similar sentiments by saying that "your efforts together with Poland for the formation of a Central European Union, and ours with Greece for the formation of a Balkan Union, show that we have drawn necessary lessons from . . . [the past's] fateful events."²⁷ Turkish newspapers in commenting on the attempts at creation of a Balkan Union, free from interference by any big power, expressed their

understanding of and sympathy for such plans.²⁸

It is clear that the ideas of a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation and of a Balkan Union were firmly grounded in reality. Even in the years 1947-48 Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, together with the Bulgarian premier, Georgi Dimitrov, favored setting up first a Balkan Union and then extending it to all so-called satellite countries. Needless to add, such plans were clearly unacceptable to Russia, and Tito's expulsion from the Cominform may have been the result of his federalist conceptions. The Communist Government of Poland in 1947-48 signed political and economic agreements with Czechoslovakia which planned far-reaching cooperation, including a Czechoslovak free zone in the port of Szczecin (Stettin) and integration of the Silesian basin. But the Soviets succeeded in stopping the formation of any industrial center independent of Russian control, just as they destroyed the Tito-Dimitrov project. Nevertheless these two attempts projected under virtual Soviet occupation indicate the extent to which the idea of regional cooperation was alive after the war in the countries of East-Central Europe.

The Czechoslovak-Polish confederation agreement in London, largely forgotten today, produced at the time of its signature the feeling of a new and healthy approach toward East-Central European politics. One well-known British writer wrote that "To thinking men, one of the significant developments of the early months of the war was the rapprochement between Poland and Czechoslovakia resulting eventually in an announcement that a federation of the two countries was envisaged after the war."²⁹ And as the Economist reported on March 29, 1941, the agreement between the Poles and the Czechoslovaks, that their postwar relations should be based upon confederation and the fullest economic cooperation, gave clear evidence that the disease of Europe, after all, was not incurable.

Notes

1. E. Beneš, "The New Order in Europe," Nineteenth Century and After, vol. 130 (1941), 154.

2. Czechoslovak Sources and Documents, no. 1: Speeches of Jan Masaryk in America, p. 15.

3. H. Ripka, "Is a Federation in the Baltic-Aegean Area Possible?" New Europe, I (Feb., 1941), 54.

4. V. Beneš, The Mission of a Small State (Chicago, 1941), pp. 90ff.

5. This is the interpretation given by Z. Fierlinger, Ve službách ČSR : Paměti z druhého zahraničního odboje (Prague, 1948), pp. 343-348.

6. It has been suggested that Beneš had developed a "Munich complex," which amounted to an extreme mistrust of the French and the English, together with the belief that the exclusion of the USSR from European politics made Munich agreement possible.

7. Czechoslovak Documents and Sources no. 1: E. Beneš, The Way to Victory, pp. 13-14.

8. The observer was Dorothy Thompson. R. E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, p. 319.

9. W. J. Rose, "Wladyslaw Sikorski," Slavonic and East European Review, XXIII (1945), passim.

10. Polish News Bulletin, no. 5, (Nov. 15, 1940).

11. Dziennik Polski, Apr. 24, 1942.

12. I was told by well-informed Czechoslovaks that the Social Democratic leader, Mr. Rudolf Bechyně, was rather pleased with the breakdown of the negotiations while the Czechoslovak premier, Msgr. Jan Šrámek, chairman of the Catholic-oriented Populist Party, favored a simple alliance rather than confederation.

13. A reply to Doboszyński's criticism of Czechoslovak leaders appeared in Dziennik Polski, Jan. 27, 1941.

14. Dziennik Polski, Feb. 26, 1941.

15. Leskowiec was the pseudonym used by a leading Polish Christian Democrat, Stanisław Sopicki.

16. Dziennik Polski, Jan. 31, 1941.

17. Ibid., Jan. 31, 1941.

18. Ibid., Aug. 22, 1942.

19. Ibid., Mar. 24, 1942.
20. Ibid., Jan. 9, 1941.
21. "Liverpool Discussion on Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation," Central European Observer, XIX (1942), 192.
22. Ibid., Mar. 17, 1942.
23. T. Komarnicki, "Próby," p. 51.
24. New Europe, III (Jan. 1943), 15.
25. Ibid., III (July-Aug. 1943), 15.
26. Dziennik Polski, Nov. 28, 1942.
27. Inter-Allied Review, II (Feb. 15, 1942), 36ff.
28. London Times, Jan. 28, 1942.
29. Bernard Newman, The New Europe (New York, 1943), p. 418.

Chapter Six

PROSPECT

The collapse of the proposed Czechoslovak-Polish confederation was a stepping stone to Soviet domination of the entire region between the Baltic, Adriatic, and Black Sea. Moreover, the inclusion of East-Central Europe into the sphere of influence of a Great Power, far from being a solution to the problems of Europe, has produced a division of the countries of the Continent, brought enslavement of free nations, and contributed enormously to the tensions of the "cold war." Assuming that the present uneasy settlement cannot, because of its very nature, be final, the question arises as to what relevance if any the proposed Czechoslovak-Polish confederation may have for the future. The confederation, seen as a nucleus of a regional organization in East-Central Europe, clearly transcends the original milieu in which it first appeared. It offers a third alternative to the problem of small East-Central European states—the first being German hegemony, tried in the years 1938-45; and the second being the present Soviet domination. These latter "solutions" led either to a world war or gravely endangered peace. Considering, then, the postwar developments in Europe, has the need for a free East-European organization increased, or diminished? I believe that it has increased, and for several reasons.

The present European federalist movement, of which the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation agreement was one of the earliest manifestations, has become a dominant trend of Western European politics. The Council of Europe and the European Community of Coal and Steel give ample proof of the vitality of the federalist idea. On the other hand the development of European unification has been retarded by fears of German hegemony in the

Western part of the Continent. Also, regional interests in Europe proved much stronger than the idealists in Strasbourg ever imagined. Whereas the Council of Europe vainly attempted to transform itself into a genuine parliament, regional cooperation exemplified by Benelux, the Nordic Council, and the Greek-Turkish-Yugoslav Entente continued to make headway. The collapse of the European Defense Community showed that the postwar truncated free Europe had no internal balance, and that a comprehensive European federation if deprived of its eastern part could not really come into existence.

Then too, should East-Central Europe become liberated from the Soviets it would perforce reveal features distinctly different from the rest of the Continent. The present economic integration of the region and the quick pace of industrialization have made of East-Central Europe a regional unit to a larger extent than ever before in its history. Today East-Central European integration is pointed toward and directed by the Soviet Union; and when the United States proposed the Marshall Plan, Russia permitted neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia to accept an invitation to the Paris Conference. If the East-European states were again to become masters of their own destiny, they would undoubtedly turn to the West; but their direct integration into a European economy, disregarding their internal links, could easily result in chaos. A regional organization would obviously be necessary gradually to adapt East-Central Europe to the West.

An East-Central European organization also would depend to a large degree on cooperation between the two pivotal states of the region, namely, Czechoslovakia and Poland. What was true in 1940-43 is even more evident today. The inclusion within Poland of the whole industrial basin of Silesia, connected by waterways with the Baltic ports, has made Poland together with Czechoslovakia the natural center of East-Central Europe. As the economic potential of the two countries has increased, so too have the prospects of regional organization. It would indeed constitute a sort of Schuman Plan for the East.

As compared with the 1940-43 period, what would be the chances today of genuine Czechoslovak-Polish federation? What would be the conditions for its realization?

There are many similarities with the past. There still remain the free Czechoslovak and Polish political centers in exile. The homelands are again, though in a different way, under the domination of one Great Power. The only possible Allies are the Western democracies, above all the United States. The main difference today is that no war is being fought for East European liberation, and the West is not committed to any liberation policy. But "cold war" still rages in the world. Thus before even considering the conditions of a successful Czechoslovak-Polish federation, one must stress that the only thing the exiled leaders can do today is to plan, for the practical realization of their plans lies at present beyond their control.

The first condition for preparing a Czechoslovak-Polish federation is that there should be complete solidarity in all essential matters of foreign policy. That was one of the conditions insisted on by Sikorski during the war years, and as events have shown, it proved unworkable. Would this condition be more easily fulfilled today? The bitter experience of the recent past has clearly demonstrated that the Czechoslovaks and the Poles are truly in the same boat. If the London negotiations proved anything, it was surely that the interests of the two countries are interdependent. Dr. Ripka has stated recently that as far as Russia—the main obstacle during the London negotiations—was concerned, "today the Poles and the Czechoslovaks can much easier than before co-ordinate their foreign policy and defend their needs and interests." He added that the Czechs and the Poles "assume on the whole an identical attitude towards Russia."¹ The traditional Czech friendship toward Russia has suffered a severe blow, and it is doubtful whether Czechoslovak statesmen will ever be able to return to the old policy of trust in Russian promises.

The Czechoslovaks and Poles who differed in their respective attitudes toward Hungary during the war would today agree

more readily to see Hungary as a close associate in the work of building a free East-Central European organization.² The views of certain Hungarian leaders in exile seem, however, to be very different from those of the Czechoslovaks and Poles on the subject of a proposed regional organization. There are, nevertheless, numerous Hungarians today supporting the idea of a regional federation.³ The Czechoslovaks would definitely like to see Austria within a proposed regional federation in East-Central Europe. This they stress more strongly than the Poles. Yet it seems that the Polish point of view has evolved gradually since the days of Sikorski, and is now nearer to that of the Czechoslovaks.⁴ Finally, in regard to Germany it seems that the common experience of Poland and Czechoslovakia in the course of a long period of direct contact with that country has produced an identical outlook. During negotiations between Sikorski and Beneš no disagreement ever arose over Germany, but would that be the case today? On the whole, both Czechoslovaks and Poles are determined to oppose any future German attempts to dominate East-Central Europe. There is less complete agreement among the exiles on the matter of Germany's eastern frontiers. The Poles unanimously support the present Oder-Neisse boundary and in this respect their views coincide with those of the Poles at home.⁵ They equally favor the Czechoslovak Sudeten settlement. The Czechoslovaks are less united, some of them supporting the Polish standpoint, others considering the Polish-German frontier as an exclusively Polish matter and professing an attitude of "benevolent neutrality." This attitude is reminiscent of the stand of Beneš on the Polish-Russian frontier during the war years, and should the Czechoslovaks forget the lessons of the past the story of the Beneš-Sikorski confederation might repeat itself.

Solidarity, then, is necessary between the Poles and Czechoslovaks, if there is to be any hope of future East-Central European union. A second condition for future successful confederation lies in unequivocal adoption of the federalist principle. During the London negotiations the Czechoslovaks on the whole

favored economic integration, rather than close political links, and differed in this respect from the Poles. While economic integration would be supported today by both sides, the Polish economic position having improved through inclusion of Silesia and the Baltic ports, federalist principles seem to have become more popular among Czechoslovak and Polish exiles, though the Poles still show more interest in them. If we take as an indication of present trend the poll conducted by the Polish monthly Kultura, about 89% of Poles living in exile are in favor of federalism based on regional groupings, 6.5% are against, and 4.5% undecided.⁶ The successes of the Union of Polish Federalists with its branches in Britain and France under the chairmanship of Rowmund Piłsudski, and of its sister organization in the United States, provides another example of the popularity of the federalist ideas.⁷ The Polish monthly, Trybuna, published in London, is constantly supporting the federalist solution. As regards Poland itself, it is extremely hard to estimate how many people are interested in federalism and would support it if it should become a practical issue. Nevertheless, interviews with Poles recently escaped from behind the Iron Curtain occasion favorable remarks about a future federation in East-Central Europe.

Among the Czechoslovaks there have been numerous indications of interest in federalist problems, and a Czechoslovak Union of Federalists was created by members of the younger generation shortly after the war. Like its Polish counterpart, it joined the European Union of Federalists with headquarters in Paris. Czechoslovak monthlies such as Skutečnost and Tribuna have been actively propagating federalist ideas. Hubert Ripka has recently published a study on A Federation of Central Europe which offers clear and cogent arguments in support of a federalist solution.⁸ The Czechoslovak research section of Radio Free Europe in Munich has compiled a survey of Czechoslovak opinions on federalism, including interviews with people who have recently escaped Czechoslovakia and shown interest in and support for federalist ideas.⁹ Several platforms of Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation have been drawn in the West, one of the more active being the Czechoslovak-Polish

Research Committee established in May, 1952, in New York, which publishes a quarterly, The Central European Federalist.

A third condition very strongly emphasized by the Czechoslovaks during the London negotiations is the similarity of the respective political, economic, and social structures. This condition is more easily fulfilled now than under the circumstances prevailing in 1940's. As Dr. Ripka has said recently:

Poland and Czechoslovakia will be in the future, even in their inner structure, much closer to each other than ever before. Similar situations will prevail also in other Mid-European countries. It is one of the main reasons why we hope that a Federalistic Association of East-Central Europe will, after the liberation, be possible. Only those states can form a federation whose regimes are based on identical political and social principles.

Speaking from his personal experience of the wartime Czechoslovak-Polish negotiations, Dr. Ripka said that the "difference in the structure and systems of our two countries was not the last obstacle on which the [wartime] effort for . . . cooperation was wrecked."¹⁰ The great changes which have taken place behind the Iron Curtain have brought the two countries much nearer to each other in regard to their economic structures.

A distinctly agricultural Poland and a well-balanced industrial Czechoslovakia belong largely to the past. Poland is rapidly becoming industrialized and Czechoslovakia has in a sense become over-industrialized. The distinguished Polish economist, Jan Wszelaki, pointed out recently that "There is a potential danger in the excessive industrialization of a country without direct access to the sea, with insufficient manpower and food basis, and without a large home market for industrial goods. This danger could be effectively counterbalanced by Czechoslovakia's integration with Poland, who though much poorer, possesses all four of these attributes. . . ." Wszelaki added that "Poland would have the advantage in being helped in its further industrial expansion by a friendly power which possesses much more experience," and which would not dominate its neighbor.¹¹ The present-day interdependence of the two countries is evident if one realizes that in 1938 Poland was

Czechoslovakia's customer No. 14, and Czechoslovakia Poland's No 9, while in 1951 each country was second on the list of the other. The possession by Poland of the whole of the Silesian basin and of such ports as Szczecin and Gdańsk (Danzig) is one of the reasons for this change. The transformation of the social structures of Czechoslovakia and Poland also renders the old ideas of the "bourgeois Czechoslovakia" and "aristocratic Poland" — which from the outset of course were oversimplifications — completely obsolete.

I have mentioned that, to create an East-Central European federation in the future, it will be necessary first of all to have solidarity between Czechoslovakia and Poland. A second essential will be a sincere adoption of federalist principles. A third will be a similarity of political, economic, and social structures. The fourth condition for realization of a Czechoslovak-Polish federation is psychological. This element played an important part in the past and often made genuine Czechoslovak-Poland cooperation difficult.¹² The methods used by statesmen of both countries frequently disregarded the national susceptibilities of the Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles. Such methods, more than anything else, helped to poison Czechoslovak-Polish relations during the period between the two World Wars, and created certain mistrust which prevailed in London. A better knowledge and tolerance of the characteristics of Czechoslovak and Polish temperament would greatly contribute to mutual understanding.

A fifth condition is that an unfavorable attitude toward Czechoslovak-Polish federation on the part of either Germany or Russia should not be accepted as an unsurmountable obstacle. The Czechoslovak Government in 1940-43 laid down as one of its prerequisites for common confederation that the Soviet Union should be friendly, since no regional organization in East-Central Europe could be achieved against Russian opposition. The Poles took a different stand, asserting that future confederation could not be dependent on Soviet good will, because Soviet Russia might never agree to a confederation unless it were entirely controlled by her. Both sides were in a sense right. It was the Soviet veto which

finally put a stop to Czechoslovak-Polish plans, but lack of solidarity between the Czechoslovaks and the Poles facilitated Russia's task. Assuming that Czechoslovakia and Poland will not be powerful enough by themselves to overcome any opposition from their big neighbors, a Great Power support for their plans will in fact become indispensable. In that respect the older Czechoslovak and Polish arguments had much cogency. But the international situation has greatly changed since the 1940's. Two super powers have emerged, the United States and the U.S.S.R., and all other powers have declined. Should East-Central Europe become liberated the United States would be in a position to overcome all possible objections to a regional organization. Would the United States then consider it in the American interest to support Czechoslovakia and Poland, disregarding local difficulties which might arise in East-Central Europe or between that region and Germany?

The history of the efforts of Sikorski and Beneš to set up a Czechoslovak-Polish confederation has a moral for the Western democracies. It is clear that during the second World War the importance of a Czechoslovak-Polish association was not properly appreciated. The Soviet Union presented to the Western Allies the Polish-Russian boundary problems as a local matter in order to obscure the vital issue of the future of East-Central Europe. It might be important for the United States to realize that future problems such as a German-Polish border dispute may also be more than a local matter and in fact carry implications for the whole of the East-Central European region. No one can underestimate the importance of a region where, in the course of a half-century, events at Sarajevo and Danzig forced Americans to cross the Atlantic twice to fight costly European battles. The rapid industrialization of East-Central Europe is transforming the area into an even more important element in European and, by implication, world politics. Lack of unity in East-Central Europe, along with the prewar appeasement policies, led to occupation by Nazi Germany. Then, the "sphere of influence" theory weakened the determination of the West to oppose resolutely the Soviet westward drive.

Should favorable conditions arise, any arrangement of East-Central Europe which reckoned only with the desires of Russia and Germany could not work effectively. There must, then, be regional organization; which, with American support, could improve enormously the conditions of life and bring stability to this important area of the Continent.

The wartime agreement looking toward Czechoslovak-Polish confederation was abandoned for the sake of friendly relations with the Soviet Union, and, as we see it now, this sacrifice was in vain. May we not hope, therefore, that in the years which lie ahead, Czechoslovaks, Poles, and, above all, the people of the Western democratic powers will remember the failure of the past and the possibilities of the future.

Notes

1. H. Ripka, "Poland and Czechoslovakia in a Future Europe," a lecture at the Polish Federalist Association in New York, Feb. 2, 1953.

2. For Czechoslovak views on Hungary see H. Ripka, "Czechoslovakia's Attitude to Germany and Hungary," Slavonic and East European Review, XXIII (1945).

3. See, for example, Francois de Honti, "Union: The Condition for the Independence of Central and Eastern Europe," Eastern Quarterly (Aug.-Oct. 1952).

4. For the differing views see H. Ripka, "O Federację Polsko-Czeską," Kultura, no. 62 (1952); Z. Raczyński, "Účast Československa a Polska v organisaci budoucího zařízení východostřední Evropy," Hlas Československa (Jan. 1953).

5. Z. Jordan, Oder-Neisse Line; A Study of the Political, Economic and European Significance of Poland's Western Frontier (London, 1952).

6. Kultura, no. 66 (1953).

7. Związek Polskich Federalistów, Federalizm a Niepodległość (New York, 1954).

8. H. Ripka, A Federation of Central Europe, mimeograph

(New York, 1953).

9. L. Cerych, ed., European Federation in Czechoslovak Eyes (Munich, 1952).

10. H. Ripka, "Poland and Czechoslovakia in a future Europe."

11. J. Wszelaki, An address delivered at the Polish-Czechoslovak meeting of the Polish Federalist Association, Feb. 7, New York, 1953; see also J. Wszelaki, "O wschodni Plan Schumana," Kultura, no. 68 (1953); and "The Rise of Industrial Middle Europe," Foreign Affairs, vol. 30 (1951); J. Rudzki and G. Trutnovsky, "Social Basis for Integration," Central European Federalist, I (1953).

12. J. Kolaja, "Polityczne Konsekwencje Cech Narodowych," Kultura, no. 61 (1952).

Appendix 1

**JOINT DECLARATION
OF THE POLISH AND CZECHOSLOVAK GOVERNMENTS FAVORING
CLOSER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION***

London, November 11, 1940

I

The Polish Government and the Provisional Czechoslovak Government have decided to issue the following declaration:

Imbued with an inflexible faith that the heroic struggle now being waged by Great Britain, together with her Allies, against German tyranny will end in the final defeat of the forces of evil and destruction;

Animated by the profound conviction that the future order of the world must be based on the cooperation of all elements which recognize the principle of freedom and justice, as constituting the moral foundation of all our common civilization;

The two Governments consider it imperative to declare solemnly even now that Poland and Czechoslovakia, closing once and for all the period of past recriminations and disputes, and taking into consideration the community of their fundamental interests, are determined on the conclusion of this war, to enter as independent and sovereign States into a closer political and economic association which would become the basis of a new order in Central Europe and a guarantee of its stability. Moreover, both Governments express the hope that in this cooperation based on respect for the freedom of nations, the principles of democracy and the dignity of man, they will also be joined by other countries in that part of the European continent. The two Governments are resolved already now to cooperate closely for the defense of their common interest and for the preparation of the future association of the two countries.

II

The Two Governments also stigmatize in the gravest terms the cynical farce which the leaders of Nazi Germany are endeavoring to stage by proclaiming themselves the builders of a New European Order. The hypocrisy of their assertions is most clearly revealed in the light of German endeavors aiming at the complete

*Czechoslovak Sources and Documents; No. 2, Struggle for Freedom (New York, 1943).

destruction of our two ancient nations, which have contributed so greatly to human civilization. The violence and cruelty to which our two nations are being subjected, the expulsion of the native populations from immense areas of its secular homelands, the banishing of hundreds of thousands of men and women to the interior of Germany as forced labor, mass executions and deportation to concentration camps, the plundering of public and private property, the extermination of the intellectual class and of all manifestations of cultural life, the spoliation of the treasure of science and art and the persecution of all religious beliefs—are unparalleled in human history. They offer a striking example of the spirit and methods of the Germanic new order.

The two Governments address this burning appeal to all free peoples immune from the German terror, that in the measure of their strength they should help the nations allied in the struggle for freedom of all nations to achieve the speediest possible deliverance of the world from its present monstrous nightmare.

Appendix 2

LIST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MIXED COMMISSIONS CREATED
IN ACCORD WITH THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF MARCH 22, 1941*A. Commissions to study problems connected with the creation of
the Polish-Czechoslovak Federation:

1. Politico-Judicial Commission

Jan Masaryk, Dr. H. Ripka, F. Němec, S. Osuský, Prof. Stránský (Czechosl.); A. Zaleski, M. Seyda, Prof. Winiarski, Dr. H. Liberman (Pol.)

2. Economic-Financial Commission

È. Outrata, J. Nečas, Dr. L. Feierabend, J. Lichner, Dr. Friedman (Czechosl.); H. Strasburger, S. Mikolajczyk, Dr. A. Pragier, Dr. Mincer, Dr. Kirkor (Pol.)

3. Social Policy Commission

F. Němec, J. Bečko, N. Outrata, Laušman, Robětín (Czechosl.); J. Stańczyk, Popiel, Dr. Barański, Dr. Jaworski, Msgr. Kaczyński (Pol.)

4. Military Commission

Gen. S. Ingr, Gen. R. Viest, Col. S. Bosý, Lt. Col. Kalla (Czechosl.)
Gen. K. Sosnkowski, Gen. Klimecki, Col. Sulisławski, Col. Sznuk (Pol.)

B. Commissions dealing with current cooperation:

1. Foreign Affairs Commission

J. Masaryk, H. Ripka (Czechosl.); A. Zaleski, E. Raczyński (Pol.)

2. Military Commission

Col. S. Bosý, Col. Moravec, Col. Chodský (Czechosl.); Gen. Klimeck
Col. Mitkiewicz, Col. Smoleński (Pol.)

3. Propaganda Commission

H. Ripka, J. Nečas, Lisický, Dr. Kraus (Czechosl.); St. Stroński,
E. Raczyński, Msgr. Kaczyński, A. Pragier (Pol.)

*Dziennik Polski, March 22, 1941

Appendix 3

JOINT POLISH-CZECHOSLOVAK DECLARATION
OF SEPTEMBER 24, 1941*

The Polish and the Czechoslovak Governments, animated by the spirit of solidarity which inspired their joint declaration of November 11, 1940, on the necessity of establishing after the war a confederation between the two countries, make the following joint declaration before the Conference of the Allies;

The Governments of the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Czechoslovakia declare that they are determined to assist in the spirit of close and friendly collaboration in the realisation of the principal aims of the Roosevelt-Churchill declaration, namely the security against a third war and the economic prosperity of the world. Moreover, remembering the experience of the Polish and Czechoslovak nations, which have suffered so much from the insatiable aggressiveness of Germany, both Governments are of the opinion that safeguards against a third German war must be sought not only in the complete preventive destruction of the means which Germany might use in the future in another attempt at the realization of her aggressive plans, but also in furnishing effective political and material guarantees, and in offering the necessary economic assistance for the reconstruction of the despoiled economies of these nations, which were, and may again become, the object of the initial aggressive acts on the part of Germany.

The two Governments are convinced that by carrying out of the Roosevelt-Churchill declaration in the spirit of justice, which does not admit the uniformity of treatment of those guilty of provoking world wars and the victims of these wars, will lay the foundations of a new order in Europe, based upon a permanent system of general security, on general prosperity, and on social justice. The achievements of this aim will convince the nations of the continent that their sufferings during the world war of 1914-1918 and during the present war were neither unavailing nor fruitless.

*Inter-Allied Review: A Monthly Summary of Documents,
I (October 15, 1941).

Appendix 4

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED ON THE
ANNIVERSARY OF THE JOINT POLISH-CZECHOSLOVAK
DECLARATION, NOVEMBER 11, 1941*

The Polish-Czechoslovak Coordination Committee, composed of the representatives of the two Governments, held a meeting to continue the coordination of the work aiming at the establishment of a Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation after the war.

The meeting reviewed the work accomplished during the twelve months which elapsed since the Declaration of the two Governments of November 11, 1940, envisaging the formation of such a Confederation, was issued. The work consisted in the preliminary examination of the principles of the Confederation of Poland and Czechoslovakia, and of the close current political collaboration, of which the joint declarations of the Polish and Czechoslovak Governments, such as were made during the Inter-Allied Conference on September 24, 1941, was outward manifestation.

On the basis of the results achieved up till now the Committee decided to proceed with the detailed elaboration of the principles of the Confederation. In conformity with the agreed opinion of the two Governments, the Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation is to be a nucleus of the political and economic organization of that European region, in the security and development of which both Poland and Czechoslovakia are interested, and therefore, the Confederation is to constitute one of the indispensable elements of the new, democratic order in Europe.

*Inter-Allied Review, II (January 15, 1942).

Appendix 5

POLISH-CZECHOSLOVAK AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 23, 1942*

In execution of the declaration of the Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia of November 11, 1940, whereby both Governments decided that after the war Poland and Czechoslovakia shall form a Confederation of States in that area of Europe with which the vital interests of the two countries are bound, the Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia conducted uninterrupted negotiations on the subject of the method of bringing the above declaration to fruition. At the same time both Governments adopted a resolution expressing their satisfaction with the conclusion of the Greek-Yugoslav agreement of January 15, 1942 and their conviction that the security and prosperity of the area of Europe situated between the Baltic and Aegean Seas depend primarily on the collaboration of two confederations the foundation of one of which has been laid by the Polish-Czechoslovak agreement and of the other by the Greek-Yugoslav agreement. Both Governments reached agreement with regard to a number of principles of the projected Confederation which were defined in the following declaration, London, January 23, 1942:

The Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia have agreed on the following points with regard to the future Confederation of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

1. The two Governments desire that the Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation should embrace other states of the European area with which the vital interests of Poland and Czechoslovakia are linked up.
2. The purpose of the Confederation is to assure common policy with regard to foreign affairs, defense, economic and financial matters, social questions, transport, posts and telegraphs.
3. The Confederation will have a common general staff, whose task it will be to assure the means of defense, while in the event of war a unified supreme command will be appointed.
4. The Confederation will coordinate the policy of foreign trade and custom tariffs of the states forming the Confederation with a view to the conclusion of a custom union.
5. The Confederation will have an agreed monetary policy. Autonomous banks of issue of the states forming the Confederation

*Czechoslovak Sources and Documents: No. 2, Struggle for Freedom (New York, 1943).

will be maintained. It will be their task to assure that the parity established between the various national currencies shall be permanently maintained.

6. The Confederation will coordinate the financial policy of the states forming the Confederation, especially with regard to taxation.

7. The development and administration of railway, road, water and air transport as also the telecommunication services will be carried out according to a common plan. An identical tariff for postal and telecommunication services will be binding on all the territories of the Confederation. The states in possession of sea and inland harbors will take into consideration the economic interests of the Confederation as a whole. Moreover, the states forming the Confederation will mutually support the interests of the sea and inland harbors of the states forming the Confederation.

8. Coordination will also be applied in the realm of social policy of the various states of the Confederation.

9. The Confederation will assure cooperation among its members in educational and cultural matters.

10. Questions of nationality will remain within the competence of the individual states forming the Confederation. The passenger traffic between various states included in the Confederation will take place without any restrictions in particular without passports and visas. The question of free domicile and of the right to exercise any gainful occupation of the citizens of the individual states forming the Confederation over the whole territory of the Confederation will be regulated.

11. The question of the mutual recognition by the states forming the Confederation of school and professional diplomas, of documents and sentences of court, as well as the question of mutual legal aid in particular in the execution of court sentences will be regulated.

12. The constitution of the individual states included in the Confederation will guarantee to the citizens of these states the following rights; freedom of conscience, personal freedom, freedom of learning, freedom of the spoken and written word, freedom of organization and association, equality of all citizens before the law, free admission of all citizens to the performance of all state functions, the independence of the courts of law, and the control of government by the representative national bodies elected by means of free elections.

13. Both Governments have agreed that in order to ensure the common policy with regard to the above-mentioned spheres, the

establishment of common organs of the Confederation will be necessary.

14. The states included in the Confederation will jointly defray the costs of its maintenance.

Appendix 6

**CZECHOSLOVAK-POLISH DECLARATION
WELCOMING THE GREEK-YUGOSLAV AGREEMENT***

On January 24, 1942 the governments of Czechoslovakia and Poland adopted a resolution expressing their satisfaction with the conclusion of the Greek-Yugoslav agreement of January 15, 1942 and their conviction that the security and prosperity of the area of Europe situated between the Baltic and Aegean Seas depend primarily on the collaboration of the two confederations, the foundation of one of which had been laid by the Polish-Czechoslovak agreement and of the other by the Greek-Yugoslav agreement. The resolution was adopted in the following terms:

The governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia united in their set determination to form a confederation of states in Central Europe, based on close political, military and economic collaboration, convinced, that the confederation of states in Central Europe will be called upon to collaborate with the Balkan union envisaged by the governments of Greece and Yugoslavia, confident that only cooperation of those two regional organizations can assure security and develop prosperity of the vast region stretching between the Baltic and Aegean Seas, warmly congratulates the governments of Greece and Yugoslavia on their initiation of a Balkan union by their agreement concluded on January 15, 1942 inspired by the same sentiment of fraternity, which animates the relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia.

*New Europe, II (February, 1942).

Appendix 7

JOINT CZECHOSLOVAK-POLISH COMMUNIQUÉ OF JUNE 12, 1942*

While attaching greatest importance to the general international organization of all democratic and peace-loving nations from a point of view both of the security and prosperity of Europe, the Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia consider, however, the confederation of Poland and Czechoslovakia to be a primary and fundamental aim of their foreign policy during and after the war. This, in the opinion of the two Governments, should serve as a basis for regional organization of that part of Europe with which the vital interests of their countries are bound. The two Governments, abiding by their common decisions of November 11, 1940, and January 19,¹ 1942, and being desirous of speeding up preparatory work in this respect, have instructed the Czechoslovak-Polish Coordination Committee to convoke four mixed commissions: economic, military, social, and cultural. It will be the duty of these commissions to study the principles and methods of economic, military, cultural, and social organization of confederation.

1. The Declaration of January 23, 1942 was agreed upon on the 19th.

*Inter-Allied Review, II (June 15, 1942).

NOTE ON SOURCES

A historian of Czechoslovak-Polish relations faces at present the great difficulty of finding original documents and unpublished sources. The archives of the Czechoslovak foreign ministry in Prague are of course inaccessible to Western students, and it is hard to say how many documents have survived first the German occupation and then the Communist regime. Since the time when the Czechoslovak Government in exile returned to Prague after the war there have been only a few documents, in possession of individuals mainly, which are available in Western Europe or America. The archives of the Polish ministry of foreign affairs are almost equally inaccessible. But the documents in possession of the Polish wartime Government were not returned to Poland and these are in the West, partly deposited in Europe, partly in the safekeeping of the Hoover Institute and Library on War, Revolution and Peace, in Stanford. Others still are in possession of private individuals.

The first chapter of this essay which is an introductory survey of Czechoslovak-Polish relations during the 1918-39 period is mainly based on published material. The bulk of this essay, however, which deals with the London rapprochement, is the result of a painstaking process of gathering scattered documents, often in possession of those who actually took part in the wartime negotiations, supplemented by contemporary press accounts and documents published in the few official collections which appeared at the time of the rapprochement. I have attempted to fill the gaps by submitting questionnaires to certain leading Czechoslovak and Polish statesmen, who were good enough to give me valuable information and interpret events of the past in a proper historical setting. Though I was unable to consult Hoover Library archives—which would have undoubtedly made this study more complete—the general picture of the negotiations emerges clearly from the material available to me.

I. Bibliographies

The best general bibliography for the period between the two World Wars is William L. Langer and Hamilton Fish Armstrong Foreign Affairs Bibliography: 1919-32 (New York, 1935), R. G. Woolbert, Foreign Affairs Bibliography: 1933-42 (New York, 1945), and H. L. Roberts, Foreign Affairs Bibliography: 1942-52 (New York, 1955). For Eastern European problems there are bibliographies in such periodicals as the Journal of Central European Affairs, Slavonic and East European Review, Foreign Affairs, American Slavic and

East European Review, as well as the prewar Polish Sprawy Obce and the postwar Sprawy Międzynarodowe (both of which were only published for short periods) and the prewar Czechoslovak Zahraňní Politika. No adequate East-Central European bibliography exists as yet. An invaluable guide to the vast literature bearing on the Czechoslovak-Polish wartime cooperation is provided in a mimeographed list of Hoover Library holdings, entitled Bibliography of Books, Pamphlets and Articles in Periodicals Dealing with Federation Plans for Central and Eastern Europe Developed During the Second World War, (Stanford, California, December, 1954), edited by Witold S. Sworakowski.

II. General Works

The number of books on European politics during the inter-war years is, of course, enormous, and although very many have references to Czechoslovak-Polish problems I will make no attempt to reproduce here all titles of a general nature. Many in any event can be dismissed as purely propagandist—written to forward a political case.

If one were to mention only a few books there would be, first of all, G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs: 1920-1939 (London, 1950), a brief, objective survey of European politics. The chapters on East-Central Europe are a competent introduction to the principal diplomatic events. It may well be used with the Survey of International Affairs and the Documents on International Affairs, both published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Hajo Holborn, The Political Collapse of Europe (New York, 1951) is another brief and excellent study of the inter-war period. Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France between the Wars (New York, 1940) contains some penetrating remarks on Polish and Czechoslovak foreign policies. The Diplomats (Princeton, 1953) edited by Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert has two interesting and well-written chapters by Paul E. Zinner, "Czechoslovakia: The Diplomacy of Eduard Benes," and Henry L. Roberts, "The Diplomacy of Colonel Beck." Both of these chapters are very useful and are based on the latest material available. Harold Butler, The Lost Peace (London, 1941) is characterized by much genuine insight into East-Central European problems and the author has a few bitter words to say about the failures of Western diplomacy. The three works of Sir Lewis Namier, Europe in Decay: A Study of Disintegration 1935-1940 (London, 1950); Diplomatic Prelude: 1938-1939 (London, 1939); and In the Nazi Era (London, 1952) are examples of brilliant writing and the chapters dealing with Eastern European

problems are well worth reading. If Sir Lewis is occasionally biased, he is frank enough to show his likes and dislikes.

John A. Lukacs, The Great Powers and Eastern Europe (New York, 1953) fills an important gap insofar as it is exclusively concerned with international politics in East-Central Europe. He treats the period prior to 1934 in a very sketchy fashion and concentrates on the later years. With regard to Czechoslovak-Polish problems, one should add, Lukacs' general attitude is much more sympathetic to the Poles than to the Czechs. Hugh Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe Between the Wars: 1918-1941 (Cambridge, 1946) contains illuminating chapters on the foreign policies of the respective countries. As compared with Lukacs, Seton-Watson is on the whole more friendly to the Czechoslovaks than to the Poles. The recent book by the eminent Polish historian Oscar Halecki, Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East-Central Europe (New York, 1952) has two chapters on interwar relations relevant to the study of Czechoslovak and Polish policies. A brief but well-written and objective chapter on international relations in East-Central Europe is Henry L. Roberts, "International Relations Between the Wars" in Cyril E. Black, ed., Challenge in Eastern Europe (New Brunswick, 1954).

There is no single book dealing exclusively with Czechoslovak-Polish relations during the interwar period. The collective work of Zygmunt Wojciechowski, T. Lehr-Spławiński and W. Piwarski, Polska-Czechy: Dziesięć Wieków Sąsiedztwa [Poland and Bohemia; Ten Centuries of Neighborhood] (Wrocław, 1947) treats the period after 1919 very briefly. The prewar Polish press attaché in Prague, Kazimierz Wierzbiański, has written a perceptive article on the relations between the two countries, entitled "Czechy a Polska" [Czechoslovakia and Poland], Niepodległość, IV (1952). Being based on personal experiences and firsthand information, the article contains valuable new material. W. Łypacewicz, Polish-Czech Relations (Warsaw, 1936) and the anonymously published Pologne et Tchécoslovaquie: où faut-il chercher les raisons des conflits polono-tchécoslovaques (Prague, 1934) present the Polish and the Czechoslovak sides of relations between Warsaw and Prague. A stimulating study of the same topic is William J. Rose, "Czechs and Poles as Neighbors," Journal of Central European Affairs, XI (1951).

The foreign policies of Czechoslovakia and of Poland, taken as a whole, still await their historian. The best analysis of Polish foreign policy is to be found in an article by the prominent Polish diplomat Tytus Komarnicki, "Piłsudski a polityka wielkich

moocarstw" [Piłsudski and the Policy of the Great Powers], Niepodległość, IV (1952). An interesting book by the former Polish minister of national economy, Adam Rose, La Politique polonaise entre les deux guerres (Neuchatel, 1945) has a stimulating chapter on Polish foreign policy. The noted Polish writer Casimir Smogorzewski has written extensively on diplomatic affairs, to mention only his "Poland's Foreign Relations," Slavonic and East European Review, XVII (1938), "Polish Foreign Policy," Contemporary Review, vol. 154 (1938), and sections in La Pologne Restaurée (Paris, 1927). The collective work, Pologne 1919-1939 (3 vols., Neuchatel, 1946-47) has capable sections describing Poland's foreign relations. Robert Machray, Poland of Piłsudski: 1914-1936 (London, 1936), and Raymond L. Buell, Poland: Key to Europe (New York, 1939) contain useful information. Bernadotte E. Schmitt, Poland (Berkeley, Calif., 1945) has an excellent chapter on foreign policy by S. Harrison Thomson. Zygmunt Wojciechowski, Poland's Place in Europe (Poznań, 1947) may also be profitably consulted.

The basic book on Czechoslovak foreign relations remains that of Felix J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia: 1918-1935 (New York, 1937). It is a clearly written and generally sound book, but since it was published before Munich and the 1939 crisis it does not cover the entire period between the World Wars. Another volume which suffers from the same fault is Emil Strauss, Tschechoslowakische Aussenpolitik (Prague, 1936). The formative years of Czechoslovak diplomacy are described in the monumental Ferdinand Peroutka, Budování Státu [The Building of the State] (4 vols., Prague, 1932-36). Robert J. Kerner, ed., Czechoslovakia: Twenty Years of Independence (Berkeley, 1940) has three valuable chapters on foreign policy: F. J. Vondracek, "Diplomatic Origins and Foreign Policy;" H. N. Howard, "The Little Entente and the Balkan Union;" and B. E. Schmitt, "The Road to Munich and Beyond." S. Harrison Thomson, Czechoslovakia in European History (Princeton, 1953) has illuminating chapters on diplomatic relations and an excellent bibliography. R. W. Seton-Watson, Twenty-Five Years of Czechoslovakia (London, 1943) is the work of another scholar with deep understanding of Czechoslovak problems.

III. Monographs and Memoirs

Although, as mentioned above, there is no single book dealing with Czechoslovak-Polish relations from 1918 to 1939, studies bearing on particular topics are fairly numerous. Several students, for example, have discussed the problem of Teschen. The issue itself and its antecedents are clearly presented in H. W. V. Temperley,

A History of the Peace Conference in Paris (6 vols., London, 1931), chiefly vol. 4. The Polish case is presented in Witold Sworakowski Polacy na Śląsku za Olzą [The Poles in the Trans-Olza] (Warsaw, 1935). Two French studies of the Teschen dispute are V. Tapié, Le Pays de Teschen et les rapports entre la Pologne et la Tchécoslovaquie (Paris, 1936) and Jules Laroche "La Question de Teschen," Revue d'histoire diplomatique, vol. 62 (1948). The latter analysis, written by the onetime French ambassador in Poland, is particularly interesting. Damian S. Wandycz, Zapomniany List Piłsudskiego do Masaryka [The Forgotten Letter of Piłsudski to Masaryk] (New York, 1953), written by a member of the Polish mission which had borne the letter to Prague in 1918, throws much light on the Czechoslovak-Polish talks which preceded the actual armed clash.

The Munich crisis has by now its own bibliography, and I shall limit myself to suggesting two books which seem to be particularly relevant for the Czechoslovak-Polish problems of the period—Hubert Ripka, Munich: Before and After (London, 1939), written by a prominent Czechoslovak statesman, presumably after consultation with President Beneš, and J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, Munich: Prologue to Tragedy (New York, 1948). The Trans-Olza settlement in 1938 was described by W. J. Rose, "Czech-Polish Understanding: The Teschen Question," The Contemporary Review, vol. 154 (1938). It is an account clearly favorable to the Poles, and contrasts forcibly with highly critical appraisals found in most books dealing with the Munich crisis.

There is much valuable material in memoirs or books written contemporaneously by leading Polish, Czechoslovak, and other politicians and diplomats who discussed foreign policy problems from a firsthand knowledge.

Early stages of Polish foreign policy are described in Roman Dmowski, Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa [Polish Policy and the Rebuilding of the State] (Warsaw, 1926). Dmowski as the leading Polish delegate at the Peace Conference in Paris had of course much knowledge of international politics. The work of the two Polish foreign secretaries, Count Alexander Skrzyński, Poland and Peace (London, 1925), and A. Zaleski, Discours et Déclarations (Warsaw, 1929) may also be consulted. There are interesting remarks on Poland and Czechoslovakia in Lord D'Abernon, An Ambassador of Peace (3 vols., London, 1929-30). Most interesting appraisals of Polish foreign policy are in the memoirs of two French ambassadors in Warsaw, Jules Laroche, La Pologne de Piłsudski: Souvenirs d'une ambassade, 1926-1935 (Paris, 1953), and Leon Noël, Une Ambassade à Varsovie, 1935-39: l'Agression

allemande contre la Pologne (Paris, 1946). While both diplomats are highly critical of Beck's policy, Noël seems influenced in his judgments by a personal antipathy for the Polish minister. Beck seems to have inspired a good deal of intense dislike on the part of foreign statesmen. For example, Eduard Beneš, "Postwar Czechoslovakia," Foreign Affairs, XXIV (1946) contains violently hostile remarks. A Polish right wing journalist, Stanisław Mackiewicz, also subjected Beck to a searching criticism in Colonel Beck and His Policy (London, 1944). The book by the former Rumanian foreign minister, Grigore Gafencu, Last Days of Europe (New Haven, 1948), is also unfavorable to Beck. Michał Sokolnicki, "Sprawa Józefa Becka" [The Case of Józef Beck], Kultura, no. 51 (1952) is a spirited defense of the foreign minister by a former Polish diplomat and historian. J. H. Harley, The Authentic Biography of Colonel Beck (London, 1939) is an uncritical eulogy. Beck's collected speeches, Przemówienia, Deklaracje, Wywiady: 1931-1937 [Speeches, Declarations, and Interviews] (Warsaw, 1938) is of some interest, although Beck in the manner of a true diplomat always sought to make his public pronouncements as unintelligible as possible. A German translation of this book, Beiträge zur Europäischen Politik (Essen, 1939) contains all the speeches up to 1939. J. Beck, Dernier rapport: Politique polonaise, 1926-1939 (Neuchâtel, 1951) contains Beck's essays on Polish foreign policy written in exile in Rumania and published after his death; although of great interest, the book is in many ways unsatisfactory because of the conditions under which it was written. It leaves many questions unanswered, and parts of it are altogether unimpressive. A critical review of it written by L. Noël, "Le drame de la Pologne: Le dernier rapport du colonel Beck," Libre Belgique, Dec. 4, 1951 contains familiar criticisms of Beck's policy but is well written and moderate in tone. Probably the most objective and balanced account of Beck's policy is the already-mentioned chapter by Henry L. Roberts in The Diplomats.

J. Szembek, Journal: 1933-1939 (Paris, 1952), a diary of the Polish undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, reveals many new facets of Polish diplomacy in the interwar years. Like Beck's Dernier Rapport, it was published posthumously and without adequate comments, so that the context of some of the diary entries is not always clear and an injudicious use of the book may lead to distortions. This has been rightly pointed out by Michał Sokolnicki, "Archiwum Ministra Szembeka," Kultura, no. 59 (1952). There are, in addition, two valuable articles by the former Polish ambassador in Paris, Juliusz Łukasiewicz, "Sprawa Czechosłowacka 1938r. na

tle stosunków polsko-francuskich" [The Czechoslovak Question in 1938 in the Perspective of Polish-French Relations], Sprawy Międzynarodowe, no. 3/6 (1948); and by the Polish ambassador in Berlin, Józef Lipski, "Stosunki polsko-niemieckie w świetle aktów norymberskich," [Polish-German Relations in the Light of the Nuremberg Acts], Sprawy Międzynarodowe, no. 2/3 (1947).

The early stages of Czechoslovak foreign policy have been authoritatively described by Eduard Beneš himself. Among his books the most interesting from our point of view are Où vont les Slaves (Paris, 1938) and Problémy nové Evropy a zahraniční politika československa [The Problems of new Europe and the Czechoslovak Foreign Policy] (Prague, 1924). The latter book contains especially interesting material on the Teschen dispute and on early Czechoslovak-Polish relations. Beneš' collected speeches appeared in Boj o mír a bezpečnost státu (Prague, 1934) [The Struggle for Peace and Security of the State].

Beneš' foreign policy, in distinction to that of Beck, has been very positively appraised by most Western and Czechoslovak historians. References to it may be found in many of the books quoted so far. A useful and interesting biography of Beneš is Godfrey Lias, Benes of Czechoslovakia (London, 1941). E. Lennhoff, In Defense of Dr. Benes and Czechoslovak Foreign Policy (London, 1938) is closely linked with the period of Munich. For unfavorable opinions of Beneš one should look to Hungarian and some Polish works. S. Mackiewicz, "Benesz i Beck," Wiadomości, no. 319 (1952) is highly critical of Beneš, though Mackiewicz was by no means an admirer of Beck. The recently published book by the former Hungarian prime minister, N. Kállay, Hungarian Premier: A Personal Account of a Nation's Struggle in the Second World War (London, 1954) is also strongly antagonistic to Beneš' diplomacy. The previously cited chapter on Beneš in The Diplomats is fairly objective, though undoubtedly less striking than the one on Beck in the same volume. Most Czechoslovak and Polish writers analyzing Beneš and Beck usually take sides in a very clear fashion and an absolutely objective and dispassionate appraisal of their respective policies will become possible only when more documents are available and passions have cooled.

Interesting light on Czechoslovak foreign policy is thrown by the two former premiers, Kamil Krofta, Z Dob naší první republiky [From the Era of Our First Republic] (Prague, 1939) and M. Hodža, Federation in Central Europe: Reflections and Reminiscences (London, 1942). Krofta in addition to being a politician was an outstanding historian—perhaps primarily so—and all his writing

are remarkably interesting. Hodža as a Slovak had in certain cases a different outlook on politics from the Czechs and during the second World War he opposed Beneš' policy. Many important speeches on foreign affairs by Beneš, Hodža, Krofta, and other leading statesmen were published in the official collection, Sources et Documents Tchécoslovaques (Prague, 1919 ff), of which nos. 4, 6, 8, 15, 16, 24, 25, 29, 32, 36, 39, 40, 41, and 44 are particularly relevant.

The Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement in London in the years 1940 to 1943 has been described so far in two interesting articles. Professor Eduard Táborský, formerly a secretary of Beneš, wrote "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation: A Story of the First Soviet Veto," Journal of Central European Affairs, IX (1950). The previously mentioned Polish historian and diplomat, T. Komarnicki, contributed "Próby stworzenia związku polsko-czeskiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej" [Attempts at the Creation of a Polish-Czech Union during the Second World War], Sprawy Międzynarodowe, no. 2/3 (1947) and no. 1/5 (1948). The respective writers present the negotiations from Czechoslovak and Polish points of view. Táborský seems to rely almost exclusively on Beneš' papers—presumably in his possession—and Komarnicki bases his account chiefly on Polish documents. The latter article is more detailed and exhaustive, the former shorter and more interpretative. Táborský emphasized the Russian position, hence "the Soviet veto" in his subtitle, but neither author devoted much space to the general international setting, to Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation outside of purely diplomatic contacts, and to British and American reactions. An earlier article by Táborský, "The Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation," New Commonwealth Quarterly, VII (1942), written during the actual negotiations, explains the significance of the rapprochement and emphasizes its importance. P. S. Wandycz, "The Benes-Sikorski Agreement," The Central European Federalist, I (1953) is a brief summary of the London negotiations. S. Mackiewicz, "Korespondencja Benesza z Sikorskim" [The Beneš-Sikorski Correspondence] Wiadomości, no. 315/316 (1952) contains a short analysis of the exchange between the two statesmen. W. J. Rose, "Wladyslaw Sikorski," The Slavonic and East European Review, XXIII (1945) is a favorable appraisal of the first prime minister of the Polish Government in exile. B. Kusnierz, Stalin and the Poles: An Indictment of the Soviet Leaders (London, 1949), written by a member of the Polish Government in London, deals with relations between the Soviet Union and Poland.

The relations between Beneš and the Russians are the subject of two articles by Táborský, "Beneš and the Soviets," Foreign Affairs, VIII (1949), and "Beneš and Stalin—Moscow, 1943 and 1945,"

Journal of Central European Affairs, XIII (1953).

Beneš himself expressed his ideas on foreign policy in numerous articles which appeared during the war. The following deserve special attention: "The Future of the Small Nations and the Idea of Federation," Central European Observer, XIX (1942); "The New Central Europe," Journal of Central European Affairs, I (1941); "The New Order in Europe," Nineteenth Century and After, vol. 130 (1941); "The New Slav Policy," Free World, VII (1944); "The Organization of Postwar Europe," Foreign Affairs, XX (1942); "Postwar Czechoslovakia," Foreign Affairs, XXIV (1946). Beneš planned to write memoirs covering the whole period from the Munich crisis to the return of the Czechoslovak government from London to Prague in 1945. Unfortunately only one volume appeared, Paměti: Od Mnichova k nové válce a k novému vítězství, Part 2, vol. 1 (Prague, 1947). It has been recently translated into English and appears under the title, Memoirs of Dr. Eduard Benes: From Munich to New War and New Victory (London, 1954). This is of course an important book, although it contains little material on the London rapprochement. The subject was to be discussed in another volume, but the fate of further material—including whether or not it was ever completed—remains unknown.

Other leading Czechoslovaks have referred to the question of the Polish rapprochement and of confederation in several books and articles. The brother of the Czechoslovak president, Vojta Beneš, wrote The Mission of a Small State (Chicago, 1941) and The Vanguard of the "Drang nach Osten" (Chicago, 1943). Both books advocate regional cooperation in East-Central Europe. The Czechoslovak diplomat Jan Papanek stressed the Czechoslovak interest in regional cooperation in "The Significance of the Czechoslovak-Polish Declaration" New Europe, I (1940). J. Papanek, Czechoslovakia (New York, 1945) is also interesting in that respect. Hubert Ripka, "Is a federation in the Baltic-Aegean Area Possible?" New Europe, I (1941) is an important article, given Ripka's active part in the negotiations. His second article, "The First Year of Czechoslovak-Polish Cooperation," Central European Observer, XVIII (1941) is also valuable. Jar Masaryk, "Czechoslovakia looks East and West," Free Europe, VII (1944) is mainly important because of its author—Czechoslovak foreign minister and son of the great Thomas Masaryk. Ladislav Feierabend, "Czechoslovakia and Central Europe," Journal of Central European Affairs, II (1943) also deserves to be mentioned. Zdaněk Fierlinger, Ve službach ČSR: Paměti z druhého zahraničního odboje [In the Service of the Czechoslovak Republic: Memoirs of the Second World War] (Prague, 1947) is of particular interest because

Fierlinger was Czechoslovak envoy in Moscow during the war years and his service to the Republic consisted of generally assisting the Soviets and, in particular, sabotaging Czechoslovak-Polish rapprochement. His book was penetratingly reviewed by Vaclav Beneš, in Journal of Central European Affairs, XI (1951) who commented on Fierlinger's pro-Communist policy. The two articles by Ivan Du-hacek, "The Polish Frontiers of the 'Middle Zone,'" Central European Observer, XX (1943) and F. Mestic, "The Question of Teschen," *ibid.*, offer good illustration of the Czechoslovak-Polish recriminations which accompanied the breakdown of the London negotiations.

Among the numerous writings by Czechoslovaks less directly involved in politics are such articles and books as J. Hanc, "From Polish-Czechoslovak Collaboration to Eastern European Organization," New Europe, I (1941); V. Jezernik, Západoslovenská federální unie a svaz středoevropských států [Western Slav Federation and the Union of Central European States] (Edinburgh, 1942); A. Suha, Economic Problems of Eastern Europe and Federation (Cambridge, 1942); and Joseph Roucek, "The Sociological Weakness of Federal Plan for Central Europe," Journal of Legal and Political Sociology, II (1943).

Czechoslovak-Polish problems as seen from Washington are mentioned several times in the book by the wartime Polish ambassador in America, Jan Ciechanowski, Defeat in Victory (New York, 1947). The broader aspects of federation were ably discussed in Feliks Gross, Crossroads of Two Continents: A Democratic Federation of East-Central Europe (New York, 1945). Professor Gross has been a fervent partisan of regional cooperation, and was active during the war in the Central Eastern European Planning Board. The Polish diplomat in opposition to Sikorski but a strong supporter of Czechoslovak-Polish federation, Tytus Filipowicz, wrote Poland and Central Europe after the War (London, 1941), which may be consulted with profit. Ignacy Matuszewski, Wybór Pism [Selected Writings], (New York, 1946), contains interesting ideas on Polish foreign policy by a brilliant opponent of Sikorski. Karol Leskowiec (pseud. of Stanisław Sopicki, a leading Christian Democrat), Ku federacji z Czechosłowacją [Toward a federation with Czechoslovakia], (London, 1941) contains a useful discussion, and T. Piszczkowski, Polska a Nowa Europa: Uwagi o polityce zagranicznej Polski [Poland and the New Europe: Remarks on the Foreign Policy of Poland], (London, 1942) reflects the opinions of some of the Polish National-Democratic circles.

There would be little value in a long list of Polish articles advocating Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation and regional solutions in East-Central Europe, for they all display essential unanimity of

views. I shall mention only Tadeusz Romer, "Poland's Foreign Policy," Free Europe, VIII (1943), written by one of the successive Polish foreign ministers in London; Henryk Strasburger, "Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation," Free Europe, V (1942); and Witold Kulski, "Poland and Central Europe," Journal of Central European Affairs, II (1943). Both Strasburger and Kulski were intimately associated with the London negotiations. Henryk Tennenbaum, Central and Eastern Europe in World Economy (London, 1942) was the work of a noted Polish economist, and contains a critical analysis of the problems involved in federation. A. Zajaczkowska, "La Presse polonaise clandestine et l'idée de fédération," Solidarité, III (1943) deals with the attitude of the people in Poland to the proposed Czechoslovak-Polish and generally regional federation.

Two books written in England during and shortly after the war devote some space to Czechoslovak-Polish problems. They are George W. Keeton and Rudolf Schlesinger, Russia and her Western Neighbors (London, 1942) and G. W. Keeton and Georg Schwarzenberger, Czechoslovakia between East and West (London, 1947). The former book especially is distinctly unfavorable to the Poles. On the other hand Bernard Newman, The New Europe (New York, 1943) comes out strongly in support of regional cooperation.

Several memoirs by outstanding British and American statesmen and diplomats illuminate Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation in London. Sir Winston Churchill refers to the Polish and Czechoslovak wartime policies in The Grand Alliance (Boston, 1950); The Hinge of Fate (Boston, 1950); and Closing the Ring (Boston, 1951). R. H. Bruce Lockhart, who served for a time as the British representative to the Czechoslovak Government in London has some interesting things to say in Comes the Reckoning (London, 1947), especially on British-Czechoslovak relations. His views on Soviet policy and on Polish problems in London are rather naive. The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (2 vols., New York, 1948) contain passages which show interesting aspects of wartime diplomacy which had bearing on Czechoslovak and Polish problems. William C. Bullitt, The Great Globe Itself (New York, 1946) offers critical comment on American policy toward Russia, some of which is relevant to our subject. Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History (New York, 1948) has also random references to Polish and Czechoslovak policies in London and the British attitude toward them. Philip E. Mosely "Hopes and Failures: American Policy Toward East Central Europe, 1941-1947," Review of Politics, XVII (1955), provides a valuable general analysis of American policy during the war period.

IV. Documents and Official Publications

The scarcity of published documents and the impossibility of obtaining access to the various European archives, almost all of which suffered a good deal during the second World War, perforce makes this section rather inadequate.

For the interwar years there is some useful material for Czechoslovak-Polish relations in the Polish White Book: Official Documents concerning Polish-German and Polish-Soviet Relations —1933-1939 (London, 1939). This collection, however, is mainly based on documents which were in Polish embassies abroad, and is necessarily incomplete. The Germans published almost one hundred Polish documents allegedly found in Warsaw in the German White Paper: Full Text of the Polish Documents issued by the Berlin Foreign Office (New York, 1940). Their value is, of course, questionable. The Russian publication, Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War: November 1937-38 (Moscow, 1949), I, is open to the same objection. Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 (Washington, 1949-) contain some important documents which have bearing on Czechoslovak-Polish relations. They are chiefly reports from the German ambassadors in Warsaw and Prague. E. L. Woodward and Rohan D. Butler, eds., Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939 (London, 1946-) have occasionally interesting material.

On the Czechoslovak side there were the already-mentioned Sources et Documents Tchécoslovaques, but they published mostly reports by Beneš and his ministers to the Czechoslovak parliament. After the occupation of Prague in 1939 the German Government sponsored the publication edited by Fritz Berber, Europäische Politik 1933-1938 im Spiegel der Prager Akten (Essen, 1942), based allegedly on Czechoslovak documents in the archives of the Prague foreign ministry. Some documents may also be found in the Czechoslovak periodical, Central European Observer, published before the war in Prague.

For the period of the London rapprochement the published material is also painfully scarce. Through its Information Service, the Czechoslovak Government published Czechoslovak Sources and Documents of which the following are important: No. 1, Speeches of Jan Masaryk in America (New York, 1942); No. 2, Struggle for Freedom (New York, 1943); No. 4, President Beneš on War and Peace (New York, 1943). In another series published by the ministry of foreign affairs, Information Service, Czechoslovak Documents and Sources, there appeared No. 1, E. Beneš, The Way to Victory (1942); no. 3, E. Beneš, What Would be a Good Peace? (1943); No. 7, H. Ripka,

The Problems of Central Europe (1943); No. 9, H. Ripka, Small and Great Nations (1944). The Czechoslovak Yearbook of International Law (London, 1942) is also useful. The majority of the texts of the Czechoslovak-Polish agreements were published either in the above cited documents, or in the Inter-Allied Review: A Monthly Summary of Documents on the Allied Struggle for Freedom (New York, 1940-43).

Correspondence between the Czechoslovak and British Governments leading to the British repudiation of the Munich agreements was published as a White Paper, Exchange of Notes between the British and the Czechoslovak Governments, Cmd 6374 (London, 1943). The declaration of the Polish Government bearing on Poland's war aims is in Geneva Research Centre, Official Statements of War and Peace Aims; I, European Belligerents (Geneva, 1940). Hansard may be consulted for British views on Czechoslovak-Polish problems. W. Jedrzejewicz, ed., Poland in the British Parliament: 1939-1945: I, March 1939 to August 1941 (New York, 1946) offers a useful guide for the early war years, but additional volumes have not appeared as yet. Polish News Bulletin, published by the Polish government in London, may also be profitably consulted. The only guide to the unpublished documents known to me is the List of Archive Material Dealing with Federation Plans for Central and Eastern Europe Developed During the Second World War (mimeographed, Stanford, December 1954) ed. by Witold S. Sworakowski and H. Sworakowski.

V. Journals and Periodicals

The two basic newspapers reflecting the opinions of the Czechoslovak and Polish Governments in London were, respectively, the Čechoslovák and the Dziennik Polski. Two periodicals in the English language Free Europe, published in London and New Europe, published in New York, were to all practical purposes Polish-sponsored ventures, while the Central European Observer, a continuation of the periodical published before the war in Prague, was Czechoslovak-inspired. All contain innumerable articles dealing with the problem of confederation in East-Central Europe. The London Times, New York Times, and Christian Science Monitor, reported fully on Czechoslovak-Polish wartime relations and agreements. The Economist and the Nineteenth Century and After are indispensable for their discussions on the problem of confederation. The latter especially diagnosed correctly the Russian menace to East-Central Europe. The Journal of Central European Affairs reprinted several of the pertinent Czechoslovak-Polish documents, and it also published articles on East-Central European questions. Foreign Affairs should be consulted, especially for articles by Beneš.

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