

NICOLAE TITULESCU – AN ACUTE SENSE OF HISTORY

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Rezumat. *Se împlinesc 70 de ani de când Nicolae Titulescu s-a frânt din viață, la 17 martie 1941, la Cannes.*

Prefigurând marile convulsii ce aveau să vină în scurt timp, anticipând declanșarea celui de al Doilea Război Mondial, Nicolae Titulescu a pledat în centre importante ale marilor democrații occidentale pentru conștientizarea tuturor forțelor politice responsabile chemate să-și asume destinele securității și păcii europene și globale.

A gândit totdeauna angajamentele și șansele României în coordonate europene, înțelegând că România este în Europa și că Europa fără România nu poate fi.

„Pelerin al păcii”, Nicolae Titulescu s-a făcut pe cele mai diverse meridiane exponentul unei necesități și apărătorul unui ideal.

Am ales spre publicare în această revistă câteva din marile sale pledoarii pentru pace, pronunțate în 1937 în Franța, Marea Britanie și Cehoslovacia.

Substanța și spiritul acestor conferințe coagulează în demersuri politice, asumându-și semnificația unor semnale de alarmă.

Pericolele relevate de involuțiile politico-militare din vremea sa, ascensiunea regimurilor de extrema dreaptă sau de extrema stângă, proliferarea manifestărilor de forță, accentuarea pretențiilor revizioniste și revanșarde, multiplicarea expresiilor de terorism politic și a confruntărilor de ordin etnic și religios, l-au angajat pe Nicolae Titulescu într-un efort fără egal pentru trezirea la realitate.

Nicolae Titulescu nu a ezitat să reamintească marilor democrații occidentale că interesele lor nu se pot opri la propriile granițe, că pacea și securitatea sunt fenomene indivizibile, precum și faptul că niciun stat al continentului – oricât de îndepărtat geografic de o zonă de conflict potențial sau efectiv – nu se poate deroba de responsabilitățile ce-i revin în plan european și global.

Discuțiilor sterile, proiectelor himerice, rivalităților mari sau mici, verbiajului devorator de timp și acțiune, Titulescu le-a opus analize de referință, propuneri și inițiative concrete.

Observator lucid al realităților interbelice, al forțelor și proceselor distructive, creator și apărător al principiilor de drept internațional, promotor al unei noi ordini politice, economice și morale la scară globală, soldat în prima linie și până la moarte în „tranșeele păcii”, Nicolae Titulescu a fost deopotrivă vizionar, precursor și promotor al Europei Unite, numele său aflându-se cu îndreptățire alături de acelea ale lui Jean Monnet și Robert Schumann, ca părinți fondatori ai Uniunii Europene de astăzi.

Umanismul și democratismul concepției, pe de o parte, realismul și pasiunea acțiunii, pe de altă parte, s-au îngemănat într-o operă de mare valoare teoretică și de remarcabilă importanță practică, în care interesele naționale au fost înțelese și susținute în deplin acord cu acelea ale comunității internaționale.

În ajunul celui de al Doilea Război Mondial, renumitul gazetar francez Raymond Cartier scria: „Ti-tu-les-cu! Cele patru silabe ale numelui său sonor au umplut istoria diplomatică de după război. El a fost unul dintre marii oameni ai României, unul dintre marii oameni ai Micii Înțelegeri, unul dintre marii oameni ai Genevei și, pentru a spune totul, unul dintre marii oameni ai Europei [...]. El a fost cel mai strălucit și cel mai dinamic dintre toți cei care au vrut să construiască o Europă nouă, bazată pe egalitatea puterilor și pe respectul tratatelor. Când norii au suit la orizont, el a fost unul dintre primii care a înțeles și primul care a vrut să ridice un dig contra inundației care se anunța”.

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A avut însă soarta Casandrei.

Și totuși...

Opera lui Nicolae Titulescu nu rămâne o simplă pagină de istorie.

Opera lui Nicolae Titulescu păstrează și proiectează valoarea unui mesaj de mare actualitate.

O mare conștiință a veacului trecut, Nicolae Titulescu ne însoțește contemporan dincolo de timp și spațiu.

Abstract. *There are 70 years since Nicolae Titulescu passed away on March 17, 1941, at Cannes.*

Foreshadowing the big convulsions that would not delay to break out, Nicolae Titulescu pleaded in the important cities of the great western democracies of the time for making aware all the forces and joining the efforts of all those called upon to assume consciously the destinies of European and global security and peace.

He always thought of Romania's commitments and the chances in European coordinates, meaning that Romania is in Europe and that Europe cannot be without Romania.

"Pilgrim of Peace", Nicolae Titulescu was on the various meridians the exponent of a necessity and the defender of an ideal. I have chosen for publication in this magazine some of his great pleas for peace pronounced in 1937, in France, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia.

The substance and spirit of these conferences coagulate in political démarches, assuming the significance of some alarm signals.

The dangers pointed out by the political and military involutions of his time, the ascent of the extreme right or extreme left regimes, the development of the aggressive forces, the proliferation of force displays, the accentuation of revisionist and revenge-seeking claims, the multiplication of political terrorism expressions and of ethnical and religious confrontations, engaged him in an unequalled effort to awaken the world to reality.

Nicolae Titulescu did not hesitate to recall to the great western democracies that their interests could not stop at their own borders, that peace and security were indivisible phenomena, as well as the fact that no state on this Continent – however geographically far away from a potential or effective conflict zone it might be – could dodge the responsibilities incumbent to it at a European and global level.

To the sterile discussions, to chimerical projects, to small and great rivalries, to time and action devouring jazz, Titulescu opposed reference analyses, proposals and palpable initiatives.

A lucid observer of inter-war realities, of the forces and destructive processes, creator and defender of the principles of international law, and promoter of a new political, economic and moral order at a global scale, front-line soldier to his ultimate breath in the "trenches of peace", Nicolae Titulescu was a visionary, precursor and promoter of a United Europe, his name standing rightfully alongside those of Jean Monnet and Robert Schumann, as founding fathers of today's European Union.

Humanism and the democratic nature of conception on the one hand, the realism and passion on the other, joined in an oeuvre of great theoretical value and of remarkable practical importance, in which the national interests were understood and supported in full agreement with those of the international community.

On the brink of the Second World War, the renowned French journalist Raymond Cartier wrote: "Ti-tu-les-cu! The four syllables of his resounding name filled post-war diplomatic history out. He was one of the great men of the Little Entente, one of the great men of Geneva and, to leave nothing unsaid, one of the great men of Europe [...]. He was the most brilliant and the most dynamic of all people who wanted to build up a new Europe, founded on equality of powers and respect for treaties. When clouds loomed over the horizon, he was one of the first who wanted to raise a dam against the threatening floods."

But, he had the fate of Cassandra.

And yet...

Nicolae Titulescu's work does not remain a simple page of history.

Nicolae Titulescu's work preserved and projected the value of a message of great present interest. A great consciousness of the last century, Nicolae Titulescu accompanies us like a contemporary beyond time and space.

Keywords: *Titulescu, history, Cartier, Cassandra.*

Over April-June 1937, Nicolae Titulescu honoured with his presence several national and international institutions and forums in France, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia.

Nicolae Titulescu presided over, at Cap Martin, the Congress of the Medical Society of the Mediterranean Littoral. At the luncheon offered on April 11, 1937, by this Society, he delivered the speech *Sanctions can limit aggression*, published by us under the title *Intangibility of Frontiers is the First Condition of International Understanding*.

On June 26, 1937, during the afternoon, at Grand Théâtre, in the presence of veterans from the First World War, of high officials from the political world and journalistic personalities, Nicolae Titulescu delivered a vibrating speech, giving a fair warning of the danger of a new world war, with emphasis on the need for preventing a new global catastrophe, a speech published by us under the title *We can save peace only by fighting for Law*.

In this atmosphere of exalted spirituality, of moral encouragement of all the participants, united in the defence of ideals for which they had fought on the battlefields of the First World War, after the Conference, Nicolae Titulescu making at the end of his visit a written statement – in defence of international law – which after over 70 years, this statement confirms its value as a message of perpetual topicality. “Those who look as spectators to the infringement of international law, draw their country into the abyss. Only by serving Law, Justice and Morals can one work for one’s own interests and the national interest”.

Exiled by his own people, Nicolae Titulescu gave from here too alarm signals against the slumber of reason, which overwhelmed the political milieus and significant parts of public opinion.

His adversaries at home were rather surprised. They hoped or thought that Nicolae Titulescu – who had been seriously ill in September 1936 – would stay passive, they he would not involve himself in any way in international political life. And here he was again on the political scene, having talks with the Foreign Ministers of Yugoslavia and Turkey, and again on the public scene with wide-echoing presences in the political milieus and the Press. Continuing in the next interval of time to have new and new contacts, new public interventions, in France, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia, Nicolae Titulescu would offer his adversaries at home and abroad fresh opportunities, not to analyse his ideas, but to make hostile appreciations, which did not have more than once any solid basis.

All these irreducible adversaries could not forgive Nicolae Titulescu – as we have already said and written – the fact that he had survived the political blows received and, more than that, that he had actively manifested himself in public space. Nicolae Titulescu had never pretended to be a Messiah. But he judged realistically, he gave a cry of alarm but was not listened to, either in the great capitals of the western democracies, or, so much the more, in Bucharest, where Nicolae Titulescu – because he uttered hard truths – had become, in the opinion of the political circles obnubilated by hatred, Nicolae Titulescu the “traitor”!

In early summer 1937, Nicolae Titulescu was in Great Britain.

On the shore of The Thames, Nicolae Titulescu met with prominent British personalities, among whom: Arthur Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great Britain; Robert Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary; Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, President of the Committee for Peace and Defence; Lord David Lloyd George of Dwyfor, former Prime Minister; Lord Edgar Algernon Robert Cecil of Chelwood, several times minister; with members of the House of Commons Walter Rothschild; Sir Norman Angel; Ernest Brown; Philip Noel Baker; with Clement Richard Atlee, with former minister John Robert Clynes; with Hugh Dalton of Forest Frith, President of the Labour Party; Sir Archibald Sinclair, President of the Liberal Party; Sir Robert Gilbert Vansittart of Denham, Permanent *Undersecretary* of State at the Foreign Office; Lord Robert Arthur James Cranborne, Parliamentary *Undersecretary* of State at the Foreign Office and delegate at the League of Nations; William George Tyrrell of Avon, former Permanent *Undersecretary* of State at the Foreign Office, and later, Ambassador in Paris; Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, First Economic Councillor of Great Britain; Reginald Wilding-Allen Leeper, Director of the Press and Information at the Foreign Office; with Katherine Stewart-Murray, Duchess of Athol; Helen Violet Bonham-Carter, Baroness Asquith of Yarnbury; with the British Ambassador Sir Malcolm Arnold Robertson; with the historian and journalist Robert William Seton-Watson; with journalists Wickham Steed; Charles Vernon Oldfield Bartlett; E.D.Madge; with foreign diplomats Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London; with the former Minister of Greece in Great Britain, Demetrios Caclamanos; with Jan Masaryk, Minister of Czechoslovakia in London.

Nicolae Titulescu delivered on this occasion several conferences, being pieces of reference for his thinking and action. For a long time, the texts of these conferences had been considered lost, or uttered orally, without any written version. Their recovery and publication is an indisputable success, a restitution of most valuable pieces to the European intellectual patrimony.

On June 3, 1937, the Nicolae Titulescu addresses in The House of Commons, in front of the majority, the speech known as *On the Practical*

Methods to Preserve Existing Peace and published in full for the first time in Romania under the title *What we want is to avoid war, not to win it a second time*.

The next day, on June 4, 1937, he delivers at New College, Oxford University, in front of 50 professors, the speech *The International Situation of Europe*, and published in full by us, for the first time in Romania, under the title, *Millions of men died in the Great War so that a new international life might be born*.

At the request of the opposition in the British Parliament, Nicolae Titulescu, spoke again, on June 9, 1937, in the House of Commons, in front of 150 deputies, representing the Labour fraction, delivering the lecture *Orientation in present-day politics of European Democracies*, reproduced by us under the title *Silence is synonymous with Death. A Word spoken in time is synonymous with Life*.

On the same day, June 9, 1937, he presented at Chatham House (Royal Institute for Foreign Affairs), in front of an audience of 300 people, a speech titled *Is a Reform of the Covenant of the League of Nations Desirable?*

On June 14, 1937, during his sojourn in London, Nicolae Titulescu delivered his speech *But war is a calamity. What can be done to prevent it?*, occasioning numerous questions addressed to him in front of the Committee of Peace and Defence, presided by Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill.

We are certain today that, although he had had on his agenda a conference at the Cambridge University, this conference was cancelled, because on the same day the University had invited the Negus, Haile Selassie.

No other Romanian politician or diplomat had ever accomplished, before him or after, such a dense tour of conferences and in front of such prestigious forums.

Had Nicolae Titulescu been pleased with his tour in Great Britain? We have good reasons to believe that he was. It was an obvious success, meeting at a high level, the exigencies of the Romanian diplomat. The topics approached, the substance of the speeches, the quality of the audience made the British tours greatly surpass his French and Czechoslovak experiences.

We said before that all the gestures and actions made by Nicolae Titulescu abroad had been followed with utmost attention and deep suspicion by the Bucharest officialdom, who, in one way or another, tried to hinder them, and when they did not succeed, they presented them to the Romanian public opinion – through the intermediate of obedient newspapers – in a denigrating way.

No Romanian politician or diplomat had ever made in Great Britain, until then or afterwards such a dense program of conferences delivered in front of such prestigious forums.

The substance of such lectures is worth a deep-going study by political analysts, jurists, and historians, by sociologists and philosophers.

By perusing those lectures, we submit to your attention some of the estimates made and the ideas advanced by Nicolae Titulescu.

They can be found in one form or another in all the speeches delivered in Great Britain, the emphasis laid on this or that question being distinct from case to case, function of the auditorium.

Nicolae Titulescu made a deep-going analysis of the post-war political evolutions.

The conclusion may be shocking, but no less true.

We won the War, but we lost the Peace – stated Nicolae Titulescu.

a) Treaties of Peace omitted to bind together the new political entities in a common economic system. The Peace Treaties by dealing exclusively with the political aspects, caused a break up of economic units, permitted the development without limit of the system of closed markets, of economic autarchy.

b) Together with the last gun shot, the solidarity of some great groups of states ceased to function.

Making an X-ray of the European picture, Nicolae Titulescu noted:

- multiplication and consolidation of economic barriers, the launching of a bitter struggle for raw materials sources and markets;
- multiplication, deepening and prolongation of economic and financial crises against the background of unsolved questions of reparations and war debts.

Noting all this, Nicolae Titulescu concluded:

What most menaces Peace are the high economic barriers.

Nicolae Titulescu pointed out:

- configuration of two citadels politically, economically and propagandistically oriented and engaged to fight one another;
- distrust in the League of Nations, the appearance of a new functional and institutional crisis.

In Nicolae Titulescu's opinion, the deficient and frail system of peace treaties had as consequence the reactivation of conflicting problems, the appearance of new forms of expression, the configuration of new confrontation zones.

Nicolae Titulescu noted:

- renaissance of revisionist, revenge-seeking tendencies;
 - launching of frenzied armament races (by those who are and those who are not menaced);
 - lack of a substantial, coherent and credible reaction against revisionist propaganda, against aggressive tendencies and acts;
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There is only Aggression when there is a certainty of impunity – warned Nicolae Titulescu.

Nicolae Titulescu granted particular attention to the vanquished (especially Germany), stressing on the lack of a palpable policy in point of Germany (Great Britain and France having deeply divergent opinions in point of reparations) and the excessive magnitude of the obligations imposed on the vanquished, hardly acceptable morally and almost impossible to be economically and financially supported.

Nicolae Titulescu did not shrink to identify the responsibilities of those who had not had a prospective policy as Germany was concerned, by saying:

Germany took herself the rights she demanded and which might have been granted to her on the basis of a contract. And so international life entered a chaos of which no one can see the end.

The German question continued to stay alive in the attention of the political and diplomatic circles.

Their approaches – the approaches of the Great Powers – have been too diversified, absolutely inconsistent and often haphazard, oscillating between gratuitous menaces with the use of force and unjustified manifestations of conciliation.

Nicolae Titulescu noted with dissatisfaction and sadness the inefficiency, better say failure, of the chanceries of the great western democracies against the “political cancer” of Europe.

Addressing himself to Paris and London, Nicolae Titulescu stated:

We would indeed be the laughingstock of the whole world, if we were to finance German revenge on the pretext of pacifying Europe.

In front of the British members of Parliament, of eminent personalities from the academic life and some prestigious journalists, Nicolae Titulescu appealed to political realism, expressing his own point of view concerning the ways to avoid war, for the building up of some security systems, for the strengthening of peace.

In this sense Nicolae Titulescu proposed:

a) activation of the political and economic dialogue, multiplication and diversification of negotiations, drawing up, completion and signing of an as great number as possible of bi- and multilateral agreements;

b) strengthening of international institutions called upon to prevent war and defend peace;

c) consolidation of regional, continental and world security structures;

d) stronger affirmation on the international arena of the European democracies.

As for each of these directions, Nicolae Titulescu was firmly specifying:

A. Need of abandoning equivocal positions by Paris and London, exactingness of drawing up solutions of wide interest, equitable and efficient, able

to withdraw the Continent from the economic depression and, consequently, to relax the political climate.

B. Need of a realistic and constructive attitude as to the League of Nations.

The League of Nations is not a moral academy. It is a political institution. Intended to prevent war and in certain cases to repress it.

– Subsequently, Nicolae Titulescu rejected the positions and demarches of those who contemplated the revision of the Covenant (Pact).

Convinced as he was that it was not the League of Nations Covenant that had failed, but the people, Nicolae Titulescu drew the metaphorical conclusion: *The Bible should not be changed because men are sinners!*

– he suggested the renunciation to the Wilsonian idea of a general war against partial aggression;

– noting the failure of applying sanctions step by step, he pleaded for universal economic sanctions.

C. Focusing on international security, Nicolae Titulescu

– showed how nefarious could be the division of continental security into western and eastern security;

– he demonstrated the need for a unique system of security, and brought into bold relief the logical relationship between regional security, continental security and world security;

– he pleaded for the conclusion of regional political and military understandings – in harmony with the principles and aims of the League of Nations – and for the building up, consolidation and perfecting of universal economic structures of cooperation;

– he proposed a new approach of the problem of frontiers; he launched and introduced in the ideology and ideography of international relations the idea of constant and progressive spiritualization of frontiers;

– he drew the attention of the British political leaders on the danger of expectative attitudes, of differentiated treatment of Western security and Oriental security, the Island being unable to afford shelter to the British people against attacks.

To whichever side the balance swings, whether to that of the bad facts I have just quoted, or to that of the good, I am of the opinion that the balance will swing to the side of Peace, if England speaks at the proper moment, saying that she is as interested in Peace in the East as in Peace in the West.

Silence is synonymous with death. A word spoken in time is synonymous with life!

D. As for the ascent of the revenge-seeking forces and the accentuations of the claims regarding the alteration of the political geography of the Continent, Nicolae Titulescu called upon Great Britain and France to make an effort and coagulate all the democratic forces against dictatorship and dictators.

– he stated that he made no difference between dictatorships, that, essentially, dictatorships are identical, nazism=fascism=communism.

Nicolae Titulescu appreciated metaphorically:

Someone asked me one day: “What is the difference between Communism and Hitlerism or Fascism?” I replied: “Suppose you have three cows. Communism takes them from you and you will never hear anything more of these cows. Hitlerism and Fascism will leave them with you on these terms: You will keep these cows but you will never again have the right to milk them. In addition you will pay all the costs of food and the upkeep of these cows.”

– he pleaded for the right of public opinion to correct and timely information, he called upon public opinion to become an active factor of political life, determining the orientation of government in keeping with national exigencies;

– he drew the attention on the danger to leave public opinion outside politics, to dissimulate the complicated and serious questions the country is confronting itself with.

Nicolae Titulescu used to say:

Great Britain is for me a Kodak film, which has already been exposed, but which has not yet been developed. I see the picture already. The man in the street will see it only when events allow the development of the film.

By mid-1937, Nicolae Titulescu asked the responsible factors and European democracies to abandon for good the world of chimeras and compromises, facing them with the great alternative of the moment:

Europe is struggling now to achieve its unity. Europe will obtain its unity, either by the victory of the parties of the Right, or by the victory of parties of the Left.

In the first case, we shall witness a backward step in history for, for some time, the liberties of democracy, the fruit of a long struggle and of bitter sacrifice, will be suspended.

In the second case, we shall see a scene of happiness: Europe will be living a healthy democracy, that can conciliate the demands of liberty with those of authority. It is for English democracy to put itself at the head of the great struggle which is beginning to that end. It is English democracy which must save the dignity of the human being. It is English democracy to dispel the anxiety caused by the fear that dictatorship may spread beyond its present frontiers, that it may install itself everywhere, in every country, to ravish from each one of us the principal reason for which we live – our Freedom.

We would like to mention that – obliged by time and space – we have stopped in above only to some valuations and ideas uttered by Nicolae Titulescu in Great Britain.

The dozens of pages summed up by these speeches offer researchers reasons for deep reflection, for new and new approaches.

No doubt, they will be done by more and more colleagues in this country and abroad.

All those who will study and re-study these interventions may note the substance of analyses, the bold judgments of value and the courage of the ideas advanced by him, the impeccable architecture and the crystal-clear public expression of Titulescu's discourse.

Nicolae Titulescu was a visionary. He does not come from the family of great inspired men, but from the limited series of the most lucid minds of the last century.

At first view, it may look almost incredible that in late 1937, Nicolae Titulescu could write:

It would be impossible not to draw from all the foregoing facts what are my conclusions with regard to the maintenance of the present peace – that is to say, not to mention the possibility of a future war, even if only affected Europe, would necessarily assume a world character, because of the bonds existing between our Continent and all the others.

Here we must make a distinction between the maintenance of the present peace and victory in a future war.

I am certain that victory will be on the side of France, England, the U.S.S.R. and the United States, even if the latter only give Europe a moral support.

I am not sure that, after the policy which has been followed, peace will not once again be shaken.

What I want is not a second victory, but the maintenance of peace as it exists today.

A seismograph of high fidelity, Nicolae Titulescu recorded with acuity and concern the mutations on the world political arena, the birth of totalitarian currents and forces, the foreshadowing of new alliances and the maturation of some policies questioning and asking in a warlike manner the alteration of the equilibrium configured by the system of treaties concluded after the First World War.

Nicolae Titulescu's message left to the posterity – and the pages of his speeches delivered in the summer before the Second World War – is that, beyond space and time, humanity is one single body, evolution obliging to a constant and lucid effort for survival, in which thought and soul are called upon, beyond frontiers, to shake hands in perfect harmony.

Listened to with interest and respect, Nicolae Titulescu had, alas, Cassandra's fate.

In mid-June 1937, Nicolae Titulescu paid a visit to Bratislava.

The Komensky University, in token of deep admiration for the personality of the illustrious Romanian diplomat and highly appreciating the great services made by him to the cause of peace, had decided to grant him – at the time when

Nicolae Titulescu was at the head of diplomatic Chancery – the title of Doctor *Honoris Causa*.

On June 19, 1937, in a solemn ceremony, the Komensky University granted the title of Doctor *Honoris Causa* to the Romanian politician and diplomat.

After being handed over the prestigious title, Nicolae Titulescu delivered a speech, *Orderly Thinking*, a genuine masterpiece in point of substance, structure and style, included in the great anthologies of oratory.

Far from us the intention to place the speech *Orderly Thinking* among his other great pleas for peace – be they delivered in Berlin, London, Cambridge, Geneva, Rome – and even more difficult would be to have it analyzed in detail, the substance of ideas demanding dimensions which we do not propose to allot here and are not available.

The political message formulated by Nicolae Titulescu over 70 years ago – at the beginning of the disintegration which led to the outbreak of the Second World War – is as topical as ever, being a signal on the deadly dangers represented by the moments of grave turbulence at international level. His plea for a new international organization, grounded on law and morals, confirms that he was a deep thinker and a responsible political man.

We are living troubled times, without precedent in history – stated Nicolae Titulescu. People say that we want to prevent war, and war is very near to us, but our eyes refuse to see it. [...] People say that we want to live under the reign of international law, but the world assists impassively to its repeated violation and to the idolization of those who are violating it, happy that the latter agree to accept a discussion, the already accomplished facts never being re-discussed. // The world today needs something that prevails over everything: Orderly thinking. // If this order is not quickly re-established, everything else would be useless and the man would go deep down, even lower than he used to be at the time of primitive tribes, for at least, at those times his fate was in ascension, while the fate of the man of tomorrow, is only the pain suffered from falling from peaks into an abyss. // Let's take action, this is the order of the times we are living now.

We are reading these lines with the feeling that we are in front of an analysis done at the beginning of the year 2000. Now, when more than seven decades have elapsed from the delivery of this speech, we realize that in spite of the huge progress recorded in science and technology, the human kind had not got the plus of wisdom and humanity it needs to survive and progress continuing to be both the author and victim of major problems and tensions that keep it under the sign of the dangerous unforeseeable.

For me – stated Nicolae Titulescu – the situation of public opinions in the West resembles oddly with a Kodak film already exposed, but not yet developed. As for me, I already can see the image. The man in the street will see it only in the day the events would allow the development of the film. But then, it will be too

late; the war will be inevitable and the man in the street will be obliged to make it. // Or, our aim is to maintain peace and not to win it for the second time.

On various meridians, there were written hundreds along times, maybe thousands, of chronologies and exegeses of international relations after the Second World War. They make an inventory of the incredibly numerous conflicts and wars in this half of a century, more than in all the others taken together. The Cold War was the longest and most costly war in the history of humanity. Only our generation can evaluate *post factum* its profoundly destabilizing effects demographically, economically and ecologically. Common people find that they are not implied in the causes of these decades' wars, being only innocent victims of some interests that do not belong to them and of decisions which were made without consulting them.

This disastrous succession of conflicts, affecting greater and greater geographic zones and longer and longer periods of time are not representing though an impalpable reality, a fatality.

Dedicating himself to peace, with all his being, Nicolae Titulescu emphasized that indifference to bellicose evolutions was unacceptable, that neutrality hid irresponsible egotisms and perils hard to anticipate. At the same time, Nicolae Titulescu pleaded in the name of the common man to know, to be informed, to say his viewpoint, that nobody, ever, would have the right to engage a nation in a war without telling people why, with what costs, with what results.

If the common man is able to give his life without knowing for what he is doing so, we should show him at least the respect he is entitled to, by explaining him frankly which it is the international duty of the country, and through it, which is his own interest. // When he will understand that silence can lead him to death and that a word spoken in time can save his life, he will impose to governments everywhere to speak and utter the necessary words that will make swords bend down and cannons to shut up.

At the end of his discourse, of a man who happily assembled the virtues of the jurist, of the philosopher, of the sociologist, of the diplomat and of the man of politics, Nicolae Titulescu, considered by some just an idealist – and what would be wrong with that and how can idealism exclude *de plano* the policy of the real – the visionary not only saw the war, but also its end, prefiguring a prospect in which the too numerous trials and sufferings should have left a place to finding and serving of a sole Truth:

Only then when politics will be identical with law, when the political spirit will not oppose the juridical spirit, only when people will understand that the true juridical spirit will merge into the sharpest political spirit, because it consists of the harmonization of momentary contradictions in the service of the master called law, because it knows that it is not worth any more to be called a master and must be replaced by a new master, adapted to the new exigencies called equally the law, but a new law, only then when the law will shine like a

sunrise in the soul of all people, like a guiding directive, like a categorical imperative asserting itself, like a self-submission identical with organized liberty, only then would mankind be saved, because in the peace created by juridical order, man would be able to fulfil his destiny, according to the commandment of the Creative Ideal. // The Creative Ideal wants the Kingdom of Heaven which is in us to be accomplished around us in the visible world of matter. // The Creative Ideal does not content itself to instil into man's heart the seed of belief in a future life, where wisdom will hold hands with kindness; it demands especially the necessary efforts, however great they might be, to integrate in matter all the instinctive buoyancies of the human soul towards beauty and goodness, which are not sufficient to be foreseen, but which we must know to create! // The Creative Ideal makes no difference between spirit and matter; it sees in the first the sculptor's genius, and in the second the marble which accepts to be polished in order to let beauty appear in full light, hidden before in the deep recesses of the human soul. // Peace in order, law in perpetual becoming in keeping with the changing course of life, the human soul in a continuous effort to accomplish itself in the palpable forms of a thinking and generosity in uninterrupted ascension, these are the prerequisites demanded by the exit from chaos and by the organized life to which human beings are aspiring. // Only by law as a method, by the domination of law as an objective, by the functioning of law in the service of improving law, as a rule of conduct, will we be able to accomplish the exigencies of the Creative Ideal, will we cease being humble kowtowing in front of the hardships of existence, will we be able to become the masters of life, whose slaves we had thought ourselves due to our ignorance, will we feel, to put it briefly, that God is really within us.

The citizens of United Europe – the amplest and most solid political and economic construction in history – may find in Nicolae Titulescu's *Orderly Thinking* a support and a stimulus, the great moral and juridical values, called upon to be at the basis of the consolidation of their own oeuvre and of its development at the level of the whole continent.

DOCUMENTS**« L'INTANGIBILITÉ DES FRONTIÈRES
EST LA CONDITION PREMIÈRE
DE LA CONCORDE INTERNATIONALE »¹**

Mes chers Présidents,
Mesdames,
Messieurs,

L'honneur qui m'échoit aujourd'hui de présider le déjeuner de la Société Médicale du Littoral Méditerranéen reste pour moi une énigme.

J'ai cherché à me l'expliquer à moi-même de différentes manières mais aucune d'elles ne me donna satisfaction.

Je suis allé jusqu'à supposer que peut-être les médecins pensaient que les hommes politiques tournaient souvent leur esprit du côté de la médecine, ce qui serait certainement un bienfait, car ils apprendraient qu'il y a du moins un domaine où leur bon vouloir connaîtrait des limites infranchissables, notamment celles des lois naturelles que l'on ne saurait violer impunément ou bien que les médecins tourneraient leur regard vers la politique, ce qui serait un gain encore plus considérable, car je ne connais pas de carrière plus glorieuse pour sa patrie que celle que fit un certain médecin dans un certain pays. Nommons-les de suite : c'est Clemenceau et la France.

Puis, finalement, j'ai trouvé que tout ceci était trop compliqué et que je devais l'honneur de me trouver ici à une double curiosité de votre part: d'abord, celle de savoir si un homme qui a été récemment malade, et qui a été soigné par des confrères, a été guéri au point où il fallait, ensuite, celle du savoir si la confrérie que ce malade représente à son tour, notamment celle des hommes politiques, a réussi, elle aussi, à guérir le patient dont elle ne cesse de s'occuper et qui s'appelle le Monde.

Eh bien, pour être franc, je dois vous dire que si votre première curiosité, celle de savoir si les médecins réussissent à guérir des malades, appelle une réponse pleinement affirmative, on ne peut répondre de manière aussi nette et aussi honorable à votre seconde curiosité.

C'est un axiome que j'exprime en disant: les médecins réussissent beaucoup mieux dans leur combat contre les maux physiques que ne réussissent les dirigeants des États dans leur combat contre les maux politiques.

Je ne veux pas plaider les circonstances atténuantes, en attirant votre attention sur le fait que pour l'homme politique le malade est de dimensions

¹ Discours prononcé en français à la Société Médicale du Littoral Méditerranéen, Cap Martin, le 11 Avril 1937.

beaucoup plus considérables que le patient ordinaire, qu'il est moins obéissant que ce dernier, vu que le suffrage universel lui donne le droit de dicter lui-même ses propres ordonnances, et enfin, que la maladie d'une collectivité présente, quoiqu'on dise, plus de complications qu'une maladie physique.

Il y a cependant parmi les besoins que ressent une collectivité un, qui prime tous les autres, et qui, s'il est satisfait, fait que les erreurs que l'on pourrait commettre quand aux autres deviennent facilement pardonnables; c'est le besoin de maintenir la paix.

Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait eu un moment où les peuples aient été plus avides de paix qu'aujourd'hui et où leur Gouvernement, pour des différences d'intérêt, ait agi de telle sorte qu'on n'a jamais réussi à enrayer le spectre de a guerre de nos visions journalières.

Or, quel travail fructueux peut-on entreprendre si l'on croit constamment que la catastrophe est pour demain?

Il y a actuellement deux raisons qui rendent les peuples malheureux. C'est d'abord le manque des moyens de vivre, le travail et les matières premières. C'est ensuite le désir d'accroître leur territoire parce que l'on considère que ceux qui ont été perdus par les traités de paix leur ont été injustement ravis.

Je fais entre ces deux raisons de mécontentement des nations une distinction capitale. Si la première est juste, si la première doit obliger tout membre de la communauté internationale à faire des sacrifices nécessaires pour donner aux peuples qui en manquent ce dont ils ont besoin, si la première peut donc faire l'objet d'une entente internationale, la seconde est non seulement injuste, mais elle est la cause des discordes internationales qui ne peuvent finir que par guerre.

Il n'y a pas de pays qui soit disposé à céder un pouce de son territoire autrement que contraint par la force. Bien plus, nul pays ne consentira à faire les sacrifices nécessaires pour arriver à une entente internationale équitable sur les échanges et les matières premières que dans la mesure où il sera sûr que son territoire ne sera pas touché.

L'intangibilité des frontières est donc la condition première de la concorde internationale.

D'ailleurs, qu'est-ce une frontière sinon un empêchement au passage des hommes et des marchandises ? Plus on la menace, plus on la défendra par l'aggravation des empêchements déjà existants. Plus on sera sûr de garder sa frontière, plus on sera disposé à faciliter la circulation économique.

J'ai toujours soutenu que ce n'est pas la révision des frontières, que ce n'est pas le déplacement du mal que constitue la frontière, mais que c'est la spiritualisation de la frontière par la destruction des entraves qu'elle représente qui fera le bonheur des nations.

D'ailleurs vous êtes-vous jamais demandé combien sont ceux que les frontières actuelles mécontentent ? Si l'on prend en considération que l'Empire

Britannique, qui représente la cinquième partie du monde, que l'Amérique du Nord, l'Amérique du Sud, la France, la Belgique, la Hollande, l'Espagne, le Portugal, la Suisse, les Pays Nordiques, la Pologne, les Baltes, les pays de la Petite Entente, les pays de l'Entente Balkanique ne demandent à qui que ce soit un centimètre carré de leur territoire, si l'on prend en considération que l'Union Soviétique pratique actuellement une politique de non révisionnisme, on arrive à la conclusion que ceux qui veulent changer les frontières sont une infime minorité par rapport à ceux qui veulent les conserver. Pourtant il est inconcevable que de vouloir provoquer un trouble planétaire pour donner satisfaction à quelques-uns au détriment de tous.

D'ailleurs sur quoi se fondent ces prétentions au territoire des autres ? Sur le soi-disant droit historique. Une nation a été asservie et a vécu pendant des siècles sous le joug étranger, une autre a été partagée sans gêne au profit des tiers. Les Traités de paix donnent la liberté à la première, et assurent la résurrection de la seconde. Ceux qui se sont vu privés de territoire dans ces conditions se lamentent bruyamment. Je demande: en quoi le facteur temps, dans la mesure où il a joué dans le domaine de l'injustice, peut-il créer le droit historique et dans la mesure dans laquelle il a joué dans le domaine de la justice ne peut-il créer aucun droit d'aucune sorte ?

J'ai relevé ce point, car je veux l'écarter pour pouvoir à mon tour insister sur l'égalité du droit des nations au travail et aux richesses économiques du monde, basée sur le *statu quo* territorial. Je veux insister sur la nécessité d'une entente internationale concernant les échanges et les matières premières. Je veux insister sur la nécessité de transposer la doctrine démocratique de l'intérieur des États au delà des frontières.

Ce n'est que dans la mesure où un accord de ce genre pourra être passé que la paix pourra être assurée.

Pour un tel accord, un instrument international est nécessaire.

En effet, des conventions d'État à État ne suffisent pas. Et elles ne sauraient suffire, car elles seraient faites à la mesure des besoins locaux et non pas des besoins internationaux généraux.

Cet instrument existe: il s'appelle la Société des Nations. Et quoi qu'on dise et quoi qu'on fasse, on ne peut en concevoir un autre à sa place.

Je sais que la Société des Nations traverse une crise. Je sais que dans certains pays elle est considérée avec hostilité, et qu'en France, qui a pourtant basé sa politique sur elle, sa cote n'est pas haute.

Parce que j'ai représenté mon pays à la Société des Nations depuis sa création, parce que je me suis gardé de l'exagérer, même à l'époque de sa gloire, je crois avoir une certaine autorité de parler d'elle, même aux yeux des mécréants, s'il s'en trouve parmi nous.

Le grand défaut de beaucoup de gens qui ont pratiqué la Société des Nations, c'est de l'avoir ou surestimée ou sous-estimée. Moi, je l'ai toujours prise

en sérieuse considération, mais sans jamais lui demander ce qu'elle ne pouvait rendre.

Je vais vous faire une confession : que ne dit-on pas aux médecins, surtout quand on a été malade ? Et je veux faire cette confession, au risque de déplaire à mes amis, le président Benès, le président Herriot, le président MacDonald¹ et le ministre Politis², auteurs et principaux soutiens du Protocole de 1924: c'est moi qui suis responsable de la non signature de ce Protocole par la Roumanie.

Je suis un idéaliste. Mais ce Protocole était tellement fruit de la théorie, il transférait à tel point le Paradis sur terre que mon sens des réalités me fit prédire que la nation britannique ne suivrait pas ses ministres, ce qui se passa d'ailleurs, et que les formules de justice du Protocole cachaient bien des dangers pour les intérêts de mon pays. Je parle pour le passé; je n'engage pas l'avenir.

Ne pas avoir signé le Protocole de 1924 et avoir cependant été l'objet d'un honneur unique dans les annales de la Société des Nations: mon élection deux fois de suite à la présidence de l'Assemblée ordinaire de la Société des Nations, vous prouvent que, du moins quand il s'agit de la Société des Nations, je parle avec un équilibre sûr et reconnu.

La Société des Nations ne connut pas seulement l'échec de la non réalisation du Protocole de 1924, mais encore l'échec de la Conférence du désarmement et celui de son intervention dans le conflit italo-éthiopien.

Loin de moi l'idée d'évoquer ici la question des sanctions. Je me contenterai de dire qu'elle correspond à une des plus douloureuses de ma vie. J'aime l'Italie, je la porte dans mon sang. Mais mon pays a un intérêt capital à ce que les principes du Pacte soient respectés. Aussi ne puis-je que répéter ce que j'ai dit à Genève, en Juin 1936: dans cette affaire, la politique que j'ai suivie comme Ministre des Affaires Étrangères est celle de la ligne droite, celle de la ligne droite de la balle qui traverse d'abord le cœur avant d'atteindre le but.

Malgré tous ces déboires, je crois à la Société des Nations et je prédis la résurrection prochaine de son autorité morale, ainsi que son renforcement par tous les moyens appropriés.

Dans ce but toute réforme du Pacte me semble inutile. Ce n'est pas le Pacte, ce sont les hommes qui ont failli. Quelques compléments, quelques précisions apportées à notre Charte fondamentale suffisent.

L'expérience nous a prouvé que les sanctions économiques non accompagnées de sanctions militaires sont inefficaces.

D'autre part, la conception wilsonienne de l'entrée en guerre de la planète toute entière pour parer à une agression, n'importe où elle se produise, crée une obligation impossible, donc inexécutable.

Personne ne se battra que là où ses intérêts sont en jeu.

Si donc l'on partagerait l'Europe en zones géographiques au point de vue de la sécurité, si donc pour chaque agression, les puissances intéressées de la région prenaient l'obligation de prêter assistance à la victime, on aura substitué à

la conception grandiose du Pacte actuel, une conception plus modeste, mais on se trouvera sur un terrain solide.

Sanctions économiques universelles, sanctions militaires régionales, et concomitance des deux genres de sanctions, voilà les trois commandements qui transformeront sous peu Genève en réalité politique effective.

C'est à cette Société des Nations ainsi corrigée qu'incombe la mission de réaliser l'entente économique internationale, base unique et *sine qua non* du maintien de la paix.

C'est à cette œuvre que les nations devront s'adonner au plus tôt.

À leur tête, je veux voir, comme toujours, la France, mais une France agissante, une France que l'on suit, une France qui commande.

Pour ceci, une seule condition est nécessaire: que la France réalise l'immense chose qu'elle représente aux yeux du monde, qu'elle prenne conscience de sa force, qu'elle fasse, par un geste viril, cesser la politique internationale qui consiste à avoir des prétentions en rapport inverse des moyens.

Mais, quoi qu'elle fasse, la Roumanie n'abandonnera jamais la France, car cela signifierait qu'elle s'abandonne elle-même.

Quant à moi, ma foi dans les destinées de la France est tellement grande, que je ressens un sentiment de profonde reconnaissance à l'égard de ceux qui m'ont donné l'occasion de la proclamer une fois de plus, et de dire publiquement que je la propagerai à tous ceux qui doutent de la France, par faiblesse de caractère, ou à ceux qui n'ont pas encore la foi dans la France, par ignorance de l'Histoire.

Je lève mon verre à la santé du président de la République Française, des présidents de la Société Médicale et de ses membres, à la prospérité et à la grandeur de la France.

Vive la France!

**“WHAT WE WANT IS TO AVOID WAR,
NOT TO WIN IT A SECOND TIME”¹**

Mr. Chairman,
Gentlemen,

I perform today one of the greatest acts of courage in my life: I speak English to members of the House of Commons without knowing English. Therefore my first words will be to ask for your indulgence. But as I know the British people pretty well, I shall not ask for indulgence based on the Christian spirit of Charity, but on the character of the British people which I myself have experienced. One day someone asked me – “What is the difference between a Frenchman and an Englishman?” I said that is very easy to answer. If you make the slightest fault in French, the Frenchman will say to you, with severity, “How is it possible that you don’t know that!” When on the other hand, you stammer some words in English, an Englishman says, “How nice! You know that.” But if my first words are to ask for indulgence, I hope that when I finish my lecture I shall not be compelled to ask for it again.

If one wished to embody in a formula all those international happenings which have occurred, from 1918 till the present day, I think that what would best correspond to the realities we have lived through, would be to say: We won the War, but we lost the Peace.

We won the War, because the feeling of defeat had overcome the enemy armies, and so the legal representatives of their countries were obliged to accept the terms of Peace that we put forward. But, and it is a fact, very important to note for the whole psychology of international life, which was to follow immediately the signature of the Peace Treaties, we won the War without our principal adversaries having had the feeling that they had lost it. The majority of the countries who won the War suffered enemy occupation and the destruction of riches which that implied, not to speak of the state of mind engendered by the forcible imposition of a foreign yoke. Our principal adversaries never knew that aspect of the horrors of War. And yet we lost the Peace for two reasons:

The first was because the Treaties of Peace after applying the principle of nationality and so dividing up the large political units into smaller pieces – more homogeneous evidently from the nationality point of view – omitted to bind together the new political entities in a common economic system. Had they done this, they would have created large economic units based on the association of the States which had been either newly created or greatly enlarged by the treaties. The Peace Treaties by dealing exclusively with the political aspects, caused a break up of economic units, permitted the development without limit of the system of

¹Speech made in English at the House of Commons, London, June 3, 1937.

closed markets, of economic autarchy, which is the greatest enemy of true international life.

The second reason for which we lost the Peace is the fact that the solidarity, which bound together a large group of states, ceased abruptly with the last cannon shot.

I shall quote examples to express in a concrete way the two abstract ideas which I have just put forward, and which are at the basis of the present international situation, which causes us so much anxiety from the point of view of the maintenance of Peace.

Let us take the case of Central Europe. Austria-Hungary was divided up, either to give rebirth to States like Poland and Czechoslovakia that had disappeared, or to give to existing States, like Romania and Yugoslavia, the frontiers demanded by the principle of nationalities.

How many criticisms have been levied at the method of dividing up Austria-Hungary? Those which have had the widest repercussion are those which concern the frontiers established. I have not the intention to raise this question here. The reproach I have to make, against the Peace Treaties which created Central Europe, is much more serious, but it is fortunately a thing which can be remedied; it is, that having traced the frontiers of the five Danubian countries, these treaties did not incorporate them in one single economic system. Had this been done, political frictions would have been lessened, and the suffering occasioned by the new regime would have been to a great extent avoided.

It is true that the production of the five Danubian countries is not complementary, that these States need different markets beyond their frontiers. But they would have been much better able, had they been bound together by a common economic system, to find outlets, than when divided both by political controversies and by the conflict of their economic interests.

The question of frontiers would have been of much less importance, had these five Danubian States been living in close economic collaboration. What is a frontier if not an obstacle to the passage of goods and people? If such obstacles had been removed at the very beginning by the Peace Treaties themselves, life would have been far less bitter than it has been to those of us who have lived in Central Europe. That is why I have always been of the opinion that it is not the revision of the frontier, that is to say the transfer of the evil, that it represents, from one spot to another, but it is the destruction of the frontier by the constant and progressive spiritualisation of what it represents, which will bring to the nations the happiness to which they are entitled.

The community of economic interests is so great that the union of the countries of Central Europe would have come to pass long since, in spite of the errors of the Peace Treaties, had not two great Powers, Germany and Italy, seen in that union a challenge to their own interests. For that reason, the problem has been complicated each time that an attempt has been made to solve it. The plan drawn

by President Tardieu³ was the most serious attempt⁴ in this direction. I know both the breadth of the ideas which President Tardieu wished to put into practice, and the tremendous efforts he made to get his plan accepted. The new Little Entente⁵, created in 1933 by my friends Dr. E. Beneš⁶, President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, President Jevtić⁷, former Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, and myself, has transformed the old military alliance⁸ of 1921 into a superior international unit, leaving the door open to their neighbours, Austria and Hungary, and setting up a common foreign and economic policy. Neither the plan of Mr. Tardieu, nor the new Little Entente succeeded in attaining their real aims of economic union. On the contrary, our efforts had an immediate reply. Italy hastened to make the economic triangle Rome-Vienna-Budapest, and Germany concluded an agreement with Austria which paralyses Austria's movements.

What do we see today in Central Europe? A region where two great autarchic Powers are engaged in a struggle for influence to such a degree that certain of the Danubian countries are not only rendered incapable of creating economic unity in Central Europe, on account of the engagements which bind them, but they have reached the stage where they fear that their political independence is in danger.

The example of Central Europe, which I have taken so as to express in a concrete form the first idea which I put forwards, is not unique and should in no way affect the efforts to achieve the economic unity of the Danubian Basin.

If one turns from Central Europe to Germany, from Germany to Italy, from Italy to Soviet Russia and Japan, the conclusion is forced upon one that what characterises the present situation, and what most menaces Peace, are the high economic barriers which so many States have erected in order to live in a state of complete isolation from their neighbours.

I shall now pass on to concrete examples to illustrate the second idea I submitted to you – the breaking up of the solidarity, brought forth by the War, and this just when Peace was signed.

Please do not misunderstand me. When I speak of solidarity, I make no distinction between victors and vanquished. Personally, I hate this distinction, all the more so, as in modern warfare all nations emerged from the vanquished, so strong are the links which bind them in time of Peace, links which one cannot break with impunity. But it is a fact that during the last War, there were two groups of hostile States. What existed at the basis of these two groups if not a solidarity of every kind of interests? What brought into the same camp Belgium, France, Great Britain, Russia, the United States of America, Yugoslavia, Romania, and so many other States, if not a community of interests and ideals? For my part, I maintain that if this community of interests was so strong, that each nation shed its blood in defence of it, it is inadmissible that, when these common interests triumphed, no struggle was made by pacific means, once the War was over, to defend these same interests. We fought for nothing, if the spiritual fruits

of the War are left to the mercy of the winds by the very peoples who created them by their sacrifice. And this is what happened. Far be it from me to establish who was responsible. A statement of the facts, without asking me who is guilty, is sufficient.

The breakdown of solidarity was first visible in the financial field. The currencies of the different countries, once the common support was removed, showed the most varied fluctuations. It was next visible in the settlement of the accounts of the same group – the War Debts. I believe that often the creditor for war debts showed himself more exacting than the creditor for reparations.

And speaking of reparations – what is this chapter of our international history but one of public discord between the former allies as regards Germany, finishing by a practical cancellation without compensation.

When we pass from the monetary and the financial fields to the political, the breakdown of solidarity is still more striking.

Great Britain took an active interest in the European zone which specially concerns her: the Rhine. Thanks to British initiative and effort, thanks also to the understanding of France, the Treaty of Locarno was signed. This Treaty represented a system of perfect solidarity comprising not only the four former allies – Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy – but also a former enemy: Germany. Two special protocols were drawn up to harmonise the Franco-Polish and Franco-Czechoslovak alliances with the Treaty of Locarno⁹.

When, however, the question arose of Peace in Eastern Europe, the only reply was that one could refer to the terms of the League Covenant.

The division of Europe into two zones from the point of view of security: the West, where war is virtually checked, and the East, where war is considered by the prism “Wait and See”, is one of the things which strikes me most from the point of view of international justice. It is true that at that time, one was dealing with the Germany of Stresemann, who had been able to impose his authority on all, by his moderation and his judgement, and that Soviet Russia was living in isolation as regards Western Europe and only began to cultivate friendly relations with the Reich after the Treaty of Rapallo¹⁰. But we, the States of Central Europe, and Poland, which has a special geographical situation, seemed not to interest the great makers of the Locarno Pact. For my part, more than once I had good cause to ponder the bitterness of the Roman saying: *de minimis non curat praetor*¹¹.

It must be recognised that France took a much greater interest in our affairs and that we, States of Central Europe, followed France always on the international scene. Some one asked me once “Why are the States of the Little Entente so disposed on every occasion to support French policy?” I replied “First of all, France speaks always the same language as we do, and then we have no choice. No one else offers herself to us to defend our interests as France has done. I do not say that if we had the option, we would necessarily orient our policy in

another direction. But at least our attitude would have the value of being the fruit of deliberate choice – a thing which we cannot say today.”

However, I shall not exaggerate the policy of France in Central Europe. If France is, in the veritable sense of the word, the ally of the two countries neighbours¹² of Germany – Czechoslovakia and Poland – she has only signed with Romania¹³ and Yugoslavia treaties of friendship and consultation. The structure of these treaties might provoke a smile.

Article 1. Romania will not attack France.

Article 2. France will not attack Romania.

Article 3. If one of the High Contracting Parties is attacked by a third Power, the two High Contracting Parties will consult together.

Article 4. None of the above provisions will violate the rights and duties deriving from the Covenant of the League of Nations (in other words, from the liberty of evasion which the Covenant grants its members).

To be just, I must add that in practice, the text of the treaties was greatly exceeded. In fact, France, Romania and Yugoslavia have always considered themselves and have always acted as allies.

Seeing the recent evolution of international life, the entry of Soviet Russia into the League of Nations, the Assistance Pact between France and the Soviets¹⁴,

I said to myself that the letter of the treaty which binds us to France should be adapted to the spirit of it and its practice. There are so many treaties which are not applied that, when a treaty is applied, without being in existence, one should at least draw it up formally and sign it, so as to give to practice the value of an international instrument, with obligatory juridical force. I worked in that direction.

Authorised in due form, I offered France in June 1936 a single pact with the Little Entente against any aggressor. I was working for this Pact still in August 1936. In November 1936, France declared herself ready, if the three States of the Little Entente bound themselves by a Pact of mutual assistance against any aggressor, to give them her help and assistance in every case where they would be victims of an aggression. That is not an offer made by France which certain States of the Little Entente refused. It is a possibility, to which the States of the Little Entente may have recourse, should they desire it.

If from France we pass to Italy, the situation changes completely, and is absolutely reversed. If for Great Britain, the solidarity which bound together the allies during the War, was reduced after the Peace, as regards surface, but strengthened as to substance, where Great Britain deemed it useful to affirm it again, if for France, the solidarity of the War days, after having suffered an eclipse, tends to be strengthened once again both as regards surface and substance, for Italy, once the War ended, the old solidarity broke and it has not been resurrected. Worse still, it has been replaced by a new solidarity, that which results from the rapprochement between Italy and her former enemies.

No one has better realised the advantages that could be drawn from the lack of solidarity between those who had signed the Peace Treaties¹⁵ as victors, than those who signed them as vanquished. There is in the actions of the latter, such continuity, such clearness of vision as to the objectives to be reached, such tenacity in effort, such promptitude in the necessary gesture to extract profit from the slightest error, such courage in speculating on the failure to react in presence of certain gesture, so strong a propaganda abroad, that I confess I examine this action, so destructive of our own interests and of Peace, with all the gravity commanded by such a situation, without, however, being able to refrain from a certain sentiment of admiration.

Let us recall, in this connection, the latest international events. The failure of the League in Asia in the Sino-Japanese¹⁶ conflict was the beginning of an era where the open violation of the law and the deification of force became the watchword of the States who seek the happiness of their peoples in the downfall of the state of things created by the Peace Treaties.

So long as the League could grant continual concessions to Germany, the latter remained a member of it. When Germany saw she had reached the limits of international kindness, she withdrew from Geneva. In March 1935, Germany repudiated unilaterally, the military clauses of the Peace Treaties in exchange for a big Zero sanctions. In the autumn of 1935, Italy, underestimating the Geneva institution, opened hostilities in Ethiopia¹⁷, without passing by the pacific procedure required by the Pact. She found herself up against such a wave of resistance from the almost unanimous League members. Article 16 was applied for the first time to one of the most sympathetic members of the League. If Italy was able to get out of the affair, it was due to the tardy establishment of real Anglo-French solidarity. The impunity shown to the violation of the Covenant could not but have consequences: On the 7th March 1936, Germany repudiated unilaterally¹⁸ the clauses of the Locarno Treaty.

The immediate reaction was not great. But this second German gesture brought precise declarations on Anglo-French relations and on the Anglo-French-Belgian relations. Unfortunately, as this reaction is more profound than visible, the international situation becomes worse.

Now, what we want is to avoid War, not to win is a second time. This being the case, what, in the light of the examples quoted, is the present international situation, and what are the practical means to prevent War breaking out?

I have purposely employed the method of showing by concrete cases the origin of the evil which ravages Europe, for it is only in this way that the solutions, which I venture to propose, will be justified.

At the present time, Europe appears to be a camp of fortified citadels, standing up one against the other. High customs barriers separate them completely. Inside each citadel, people are arming, everywhere under cover of the

interests of national defence, although one can clearly distinguish between those who are arming because they are threatened, and those who are not threatened, but who are arming all the same, with some objective in view assuredly, for, when it is a question of Peace, if only in words, they grant it to certain nations named, and keep a disquieting silence for those which do not figure on the list.

Outside these citadels there is active propaganda to obtain the domination of the countries which have lived until now in freedom. But here one must make a distinction: outside their frontiers, certain of these European citadels make no propaganda at all, contenting themselves by presenting modest replies to the gigantic blows struck by the propaganda of the others on national opinion. Certain citadels make such intensive propaganda, that one would say their principal mission is to conquer by words and by writing the countries they propose to subjugate by arms.

The danger, the great danger is that this propaganda succeeds. Those who dare to oppose it risk their lives or their positions. That does not prevent them from fulfilling their duty at the risk of dying for their country. But they die in isolation, for no one from outside, who shares their views, comes to their aid. The diplomatic mission changes face and signification according as it deals with one group or the other. If, for certain States, it continues to be what it has always been – intelligence and courtesy put at the service of good understanding between nations – for other States the diplomatic mission is confounded with espionage, with the most direct interference in internal affairs, with the seizure of posts of command, to such an extent, that the public functions, which determine the movements of a State on the international scene, are held only by men in the confidence of the chiefs of this dynamic diplomacy. This one is set aside; this other one put to work; that is the main objective pursued by such diplomacy.

If any person dared to assert that in such a state of things War will not shortly break out, one would be right in calling him: blind, unintelligent, or of bad faith.

What must be done, so that in spite of all these obstacles, War may be avoided?

According to me, three things:

a) Direct and immediate negotiations in both the political and economic fields with those who tomorrow may be our enemies. (Of course not excluding from these negotiations all the interested States.)

b) The international institutions destined to safeguard Peace must be strengthened.

c) A system must be immediately set up, that will inform an aggressor, beforehand, and in time, of the consequences that his violations of international law will not fail to produce.

There is only aggression when there is a certainty of impunity. To remove this certainty as quickly as possible means maintaining Peace the longest possible time.

Let me develop these three ideas:

First let us look at Germany. Far be it from me to attribute any bellicose intentions to Germany, but it would be impossible to exclude from a study of the possibilities of a future war, an examination of the possibility that Germany might make war on her neighbours in order to obtain free access to Soviet Russia. That this hostility is provoked by the difference in ideology between the two countries is of small importance. Should Germany emerge victorious from such a war, it is none the less true that she would have annexed a vast reservoir of raw materials, which she lacks, and that she would have assured herself the markets which she needs to place her own products.

But a victory of Germany in the East would change the balance of power in the West. And so there is no State in Eastern or Western Europe which would not, in its own interest, try to avoid a war between Germany and Soviet Russia. This being so, it is normal that Germany should be asked as soon as possible: What do you want, both from the political and economic standpoints? What are the guarantees you are ready to give should you obtain what you want?

It is of no consequence to consider the form in which such talks might take place. What are important are the conditions to which these talks should be subordinated. Otherwise, there is the risk of transforming the peaceful method of negotiations into an increase of prestige for the eventual aggressor. There is the risk of transforming the method to gain Peace into a moral weapon for the State seeking to start a war.

To my way of thinking, this excludes from the start, that only one State should enter into conversations with Germany. Were only one State to do so, it would appear to the rest of the world to be that the State in question was seeking a rapprochement with Germany, to the detriment of all the other countries not included in the talks.

No! The talks from the beginning must be among all the states concerned with the preservation of Peace and security of Western and of Eastern Europe.

I know that to this the reply may be made:

Germany will never agree to talks dealing with the security of her western frontiers at the same time as with the security of her eastern frontiers.

My reply is that it would be better to have no talks at all, than to repeat the mistake of 1925, giving the impression that the agreement has been reached on the western frontiers and that Germany has a free hand in the East.

I am well aware that no government of the Western States would think that. But we are dealing here not only with the substantial fact, but also with the impression given. But, on the other hand, let me say that if by false manoeuvres the impression is created that Eastern Europe has been left to its fate, I prophesy

not only the Germanisation of the whole of Central Europe, but also a Germano-Russian agreement.

Should the Soviets once get the conviction that in their resistance to Germany they had been deserted by the great Western Powers, they would be very poor politicians indeed not to try to come to a direct understanding with Germany.

Great Britain must realise that her fate is to write a play either in two acts or in one. In the first case, the play will be a tragedy. The first act will be War in the East and Peace in the West. In the second act, Great Britain and many other Powers will know defeat by a Germany whose power was increased by all the territorial possessions which she has annexed, or by all the economic resources she will get.

In the second case, Great Britain will write a play in one act, which is not a tragedy: she will enter the team of Powers interested in the maintenance of Peace in the East, and the peculiarity of this second play is, that once written, it will be never played. Germany will be the first to recognise that against such a group of States, she would lose a war. In 1914, Germany was deceived by Great Britain, when she saw Great Britain renounce her neutrality. If the right gesture makes a new deception impossible, Peace can be preserved for a long time.

I know Soviet diplomacy. It has shown itself to be far too clever for me to imagine for a single instant that the reply it would give to desertion by the States of Western Europe would not be an agreement with Berlin.

There is, moreover, an essential difference between private life and political life: In private life the disappearance of a friendship calls only for grief; in political life, the loss of a friendship demands the substitution of a new friendship to replace the old.

There are too, in spite of the difference of ideology which Chancellor Hitler¹⁹ continually emphasises, many points of contact between the Russians and the Germans. The mutual sympathy of the military chiefs of both countries and the long tradition of friendship between Germans and Russians are sufficient to prove this. Let us not forget the fact that the Russians only threw in their lot with the French in an accidental way.

Before the Great War, Germany made the mistake of not renewing the treaty of reassurance as Bismarck²⁰ had conceived and practiced it. This mistake led to the Franco-Russian alliance. After the War, it was only the attitude of Chancellor Hitler towards the Russians which led them to sign the Pact of Mutual Assistance with France in 1935.

In speaking of the necessity of having Soviet Russia on our side, I do so purely and simply from the international standpoint. As regards their doctrine, *communism*, I am the first to declare openly that I am its relentless enemy. And as certain parties have either, voluntarily or not, confused foreign policy with internal policy, I consider that we should all hold ourselves at an equal distance

from the extreme left as from the extreme right. We should practice a healthy democracy, which will conciliate the needs of liberty with the needs of authority.

This being so, I see, as a first means of preserving the present Peace, the necessity for very frank talks between Germany and all the other States, in which she would be told something like this:

“You consider that Communism is a danger for Germany. Your remedy against Communism is force. Our remedy consists in economic measures which would lead to the prosperity and security of our peoples.

We are ready to help you restore your economic life, either by granting you loans, or access to raw materials, on the same footing as our own nationals.

In return, we ask you to give us serious guarantees of Peace both in the West and in the East.”

Great Britain, on her side, might add all that she has done for the cancellation of reparations and all the financial advances granted by her to Germany to put her house in order, and which Germany employed for other purposes.

The most important thing is to establish beforehand the machinery of guarantees, should Germany violate the promises given. We would indeed be the laughingstock of the world, if we were to finance German revenge on the pretext of pacifying Europe.

Should Germany accept, Peace is assured. Should she refuse, the system of guarantees I propose would put a powerful brake to War.

The second method of preserving Peace is to strengthen the institutions destined to safeguard Peace. I mean by that the strengthening of the League of Nations. The League has been so much criticised that my sense of justice makes me say: *No*. It is not the Covenant that has failed. It is the men who have failed.

In what way? England, France and other States are free from all reproach when they act alone. And when they act together, under the covering of the League, is it the League alone which is at fault? It would be impossible to accept such an argument.

By strengthening the League of Nations, we have a method of preserving peace, which, in contradiction to the two other methods I propose, requires time for it to come into application. For this reason, I do not intend to deal with this method here, but reserve the development of my proposal for another occasion.

I shall only state here the conclusions I have reached:

1) It is not a question of reforming the Covenant either entirely or in part. We would find ourselves confronted with such difficulties that such task would be hopeless.

2) We must renounce the Wilsonian idea, which demanded that the whole world should go to war if an aggression were committed in any part of it. This plan must be replaced by a scheme of military regional agreements, supported by universal economic sanctions. For if one omits the universal character of the

economic sanctions, all the links which bind together the members of the League will be broken.

The League is not a moral academy. It is a political institution. Intended to prevent war, and in certain cases to repress it. Where would we be, were Article 16 of the Covenant to lose its universal character? In virtue of that Article, we are not obliged automatically to go to war, but we are automatically obliged to take economic sanctions against the aggressor.

The application of Article 16 failed in the Ethiopian conflict, because it was not completed by regional military sanctions, and because it was applied in a manner which can be greatly criticised.

Let us take Europe and divide it up in zones, from the point of view of security and military assistance.

For example, we have first of all the zone which interests Great Britain, the Rhine. There, military agreements are possible between Great Britain, France and, if she wishes, Germany.

Next we have Eastern Europe, where the action of Soviet Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Germany (if she wishes it) and France, who is engaged by her treaty with Czechoslovakia, her treaty with Poland, and her treaty with Soviet Russia, would appear as reasonable and effective.

In this second method of safeguarding Peace, I would inscribe the abolition of the directions given by the Assembly in 1921. These directions would have value if the amendments to the Covenant voted in 1921 had been accepted.

For my part I consider that the failure of the League in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict is due to the fact that we took advantage of these directions to apply the sanctions by stages, whilst the Pact requires them to be comprehensive and automatic. Therefore, I consider that so long as these directions are not abolished, the right of evading the obligations of the Covenant exists for each member and therefore the present Peace becomes very fragile.

I now arrive at the third method of safeguarding the present Peace. I confess that it is the most delicate part of my lecture.

It was currently said during the Great War and after: If Great Britain had spoken one week sooner, the war might have been avoided. Those who said so were right. The better proof of this is that when the Right Honourable Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eden²¹, stated clearly the cases in which Great Britain would take up arms, apart from those in which she would act under the Covenant, and said notably that an attack on France would be equal to an attack on Great Britain, the effect was immediate. Germany multiplied more and more her assurances of Peace to France and Belgium, but kept a disquieting silence regarding Central Europe and Eastern Europe.

Foreigners do not realise the importance of the evolution which has taken place in Great Britain, and of the political courage revealed by Mr. Eden's statement.

But take not: where Mr. Eden's words do not apply, the spectre of war has not disappeared. It exists and terrifies in Central and Eastern Europe. A few words from England would make it disappear.

I know you too well. I shall not ask you for the impossible.

I know that for you to declare at present that England would go to war for Central or Eastern Europe is an impossibility. The road you have already gone is very far.

A preventive engagement to intervene in the affairs of Central and Eastern Europe is an impossibility. But the absolute silence of Great Britain on this subject is also an impossibility. To preserve peace in Central Europe, France must be asked to interpret her engagements with Czechoslovakia in a wide sense, to consider the Anschluss²² *manu militari*²³ an attack on Czechoslovakia; and Great Britain must be asked to speak.

It is for you to find the formula, which, without engaging you beforehand in a war in these regions, will affirm your presence in such conflicts.

An England absent from Central and Eastern Europe means certain war in these regions.

In reality what do I ask you for?

Words! For us? No, gentlemen, for you, yourselves.

We have known so much suffering, that a little more or a little less will in no way change the course of our life. Michelet²⁴ has admirably resumed the history of my country thus: "Oh Romania, thou who hast known suffering, without having known glory!"

I have still in my memory the picture of the carriages in which my great-grandparents used to go to take refuge in the mountains when they heard that the old Turks had crossed the Danube. I have still in my ears the voices of my grandmothers, when they described to me the terror with which they got into these carriages as children, without ever knowing whether it would be they or the Turks who would arrive first in the Carpathians. Many of the members of my family for this reason were born in the mountains.

I never knew the old Turk invasions, but because I would not agree to the separate Peace with Germany in 1918, I knew the honour of exile with my chief Take Ionescu²⁵.

No, it is not of us I am thinking, but of you.

I have never known a more beautiful picture of peace than that represented by the English people at holidays times, lying on the grass, in gay clothes which make them resemble flowers.

It is impossible, should war break out in Central or Eastern Europe, that Great Britain would not be by an entanglement drawn into it.

And, therefore, it is for you English to convince yourselves. Silence may mean death for all those beings born for happiness. A word said beforehand may ward off the danger which lurks in wait for them.

What more eloquent proof of the greatness of your country, of the prestige of Great Britain, than to come to the conclusion that a word emanating from it can change the face of the world!

And it is impossible for me not to connect the end of my talks with the biblical words: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."²⁶.

**“MILLIONS OF MEN DIED IN THE GREAT WAR
SO THAT A NEW INTERNATIONAL LIFE MIGHT BE BORN”¹**

I think I can find no better way to thank you for your kindly welcome than by giving you a résumé of life since the War, than by drawing up a balance sheet of the good and of the evil that has happened.

The first fact to be noted is that the peace treaties were defective. They have been criticised from the point of view of the frontiers they fixed. I shall not deal with this question here. I want to keep on the terrain of the large international interests, and not to enter into local problems.

The Treaties dealt almost exclusively with the political aspect. They divided up, in the name of the principle of nationality, the large political units of before the War, but they did not join together on the economic terrain the new and much more homogenous political entities they had just created, to form large economic units based on the association interests.

The second fact to be noted is the breaking up of international solidarity with the last cannon shot.

Certain States adopted an autarchic policy, erecting high customs barriers, which allowed them to live in complete isolation from the rest of the world. Under the pretext of national defence, all economic needs are subordinated by certain States to their armament programme, and these armaments are so excessive that their offensive aims are only too clear.

If we turn to the political field, three bad facts stand out: the lack of a long view policy with regard to Germany; the abandoning of faith for a time in the League of Nations because of the League's successive failures; the intervention of Germany and Italy in Central Europe and the Balkans, in order to transform the territory of the peoples living there into political and economic Hinterland.

In regard to Germany, only two policies could be practiced: first, that of force – a policy which would show Germany that if she did certain things in order to achieve her particular aims, she would at once find herself confronted with so great a force that she would be immobilised.

As England and France could never reach an agreement to practice such a policy, the only alternative was to adopt a policy of conciliation – agreement

¹Lecture given in English at Oxford University ("The New College"), June 4, 1937.

reached in time, when the servitudes of the treaties were still trumps in the hands of so-called victors – to adopt the policy of the generous creditor, who, by a gesture creates the feeling of gratitude in the heart of the debtor. Briand wished to practice such a policy at Cannes. He was prevented from doing so. People said it was too soon! Experience has shown that everything we did afterwards was too late. We were dealing, it is true, with the Germany of Stresemann. I consider it a privilege that Stresemann granted me his friendship. We had long political talks together. He invited me to Berlin to give a lecture before the whole assembled Reichstag – a great honour for a foreigner and an ex-enemy. I have known well the international political figures of the last 20 years. Stresemann had an absolutely first class brain. He was in no way less imperialistic than his successors, only, he had the method. He knew that there are matters of which one always thinks, but of which one must never speak. It was one day, when I drew up for him the list of the things of which he thought but never spoke, that he gave me the title of Teufel – Devil – which ever after he kept for me in the most affectionate way. That was why Stresemann was much more dangerous than his successors – he made less noise, and did not cause the fear that noise creates.

When one thinks of the way in which the questions of military control, reparations, and the Saar disappeared without any kind of compensation, it is edifying to note the absence of any concerted policy in regard to Germany. Briand saw clearly in 1922. Those who did not build up a long view policy in regard to Germany will be responsible for the next war.

I know the whole history of reparations from beginning to end. I want to recall two incidents, when looking back on the Conferences at Spa²⁷ and at Lausanne²⁸. From Spa I have a two-fold memory. The first is that although I was Minister for Finance and representative of my country, I was not admitted to the Conference because my country was not a Great Power. One day, wanting at any price to enter the room where the debates were taking place, I asked Venizelos²⁹ to come with me. The building where the Conference was held was in the middle of a big park. At the gates were Belgian soldiers, gun on shoulder. “The Romanian Minister for Finance,” I said to the soldier. He shook his head. “The Prime Minister of Greece,” I said with authority, pushing Venizelos forward. The soldier deigned to speak to us. “Have you journalists’ cards?” he asked. The League of Nations had not yet launched on the world the wave of democracy. After Spa we were admitted everywhere, and we were none happier, for we were forced to make a choice at times when we did not always want to do so.

My second memory of Spa deals with the ridiculous percentage offered to my country, the famous one per cent: one per cent for all the devastations Romania had suffered, while Portugal got 0.75 per cent.

At Lausanne the British Delegation wanted with reason the complete cancellation of reparations against a political truce for ten years and concessions from Germany at the Disarmament Conference which was also in sitting then. I

was charged to speak in this sense to my friend Edouard Herriot³⁰. He would not hear of it. He declared that public opinion in France would not hear of such an arrangement. A few days later, Herriot told me, "I have won a great victory. I have obtained three milliard marks for France." "You will never see them," I answered rather angrily. "That is possible," said Herriot, "but we can talk about them, – that counts in politics!" Today no one sees these three milliard marks and no one speaks of them. In exchange we have neither political truce nor military agreement. More than two years ago, Germany took herself the rights she demanded and which might have been granted to her on the basis of a contract. And so international life entered a chaos of which no one can see the end.

Our last card was the Ruhr, which until the Plebiscite, was still valued by Germany. No one would agree to discuss the question of the Ruhr and when the time came for the Plebiscite, France took credit to herself for not interfering and Germany took the glory of having conquered a neutral France.

Once when I had the honour of having a talk with Chancellor Brüning³¹ at the German Embassy in Geneva, because he told me I could speak to him with the same frankness as I had done to Stresemann, I could not help saying to him: "What would be the *gift* we could make to Germany? Everything we give her, she takes as her right. Don't you think a country is in a very uncomfortable situation when no one can offer her anything as a gift, because she claims it all as already belonging to her?" The Chancellor contented himself by replying with a benevolent smile. He could have said something. But it would have in no way affected the legitimacy of my question.

The second political fact that we are sadly obliged to note is the League's loss of prestige. I cannot conceive political life without the League and I have worked for the League since its foundation. In the Sino-Japanese conflict, the League lost prestige because it failed to act. In the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, the League lost prestige because its action was ineffective. I do not intend to deal here and now with the causes of the League's failures and with the remedies to be taken.

I consider personally that the reform of the Covenant would be a serious mistake. The Covenant should be completed by military regional assistance pacts, which would be superimposed to the Covenant.

In the conflict of ideologies, of which Europe is the theatre today, internal politics are not the only ones concerned. There must be no interference in the internal politics of other countries, but the supporters of the League of Nations must defend it against its enemies. Hitlerism and Fascism are fighting against Communism and vice versa – the believers in democracy need not interfere in the dispute. But, when the League is attacked, everyone who believed in it must rally to its defence.

Millions of men did not die in the Great War merely for a piece of territory. They died so that a new international life might be born. They died so

that the countries of the world might be drawn together in the form of a League of Nations to prevent wars like those they had known. If we do not defend the League against the attacks made on it, by the so-called totalitarian States, it means that we are not defending the memory of the men who, by their death, allowed the realisation of that great international ideal – the League of Nations.

The third political fact we have to note is the confusion produced in Central Europe, in the very region where war is to be feared, by the intervention of Germany and Italy.

First Italy, by adopting the claims of Hungarian revisionism, won Hungary from the political point of view, whatever may be Hungary's links with Germany, and they are much stronger than one would suppose. This made agreement between the five Danubian States impossible.

Then Italy, by adopting the views of the Austrian patriots, won Austria politically, in spite of the strong links between Austria and Germany, posing as the defender of Austria against the Anschluss.

After the Ethiopian war, Italy suddenly changed her policy in Central Europe. She accepted the agreement of Austria with Germany, making such sacrifices to create, – or to give the impression she had created – the Berlin-Rome Axis³², and pushed Austria into the arms of Germany. As a result of this change of policy, Austria became seriously alarmed about her own independence and this uneasiness was shared by Hungary. Hungary understands that the Anschluss would make her a neighbour of Germany's and that the Anschluss could perhaps turn one day into an Austrian Hungarian Anschluss! She fears this all the more as Italy recently signed an agreement with Yugoslavia³³ which practically put an end to the Italian support of the Hungarian claims in regard to Yugoslavia. The previous agreement between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria³⁴ places Yugoslavia in quite a special situation in Central Europe.

Far be it from me to examine what Italy would do at the last minute in case of war. What is important is to take note that the engagements³⁵ which Austria and Hungary have signed with Italy prevent them from seeking their security elsewhere. And what is important is to combat the visible action which has been undertaken with a view to isolating Czechoslovakia. The important fact to note is that consciously or not, the Germanisation of Central Europe is being achieved with the help of Italy.

To this accumulation of facts, which must be noted with disfavour and sorrow, there are happily others to oppose which may balance them. The main thing is to know whether these others are of the same value as the first and, then, to take immediate steps so that the balance may swing in their favour.

The friendship between Great Britain and France is the first fact that strengthens Peace. This friendship has known many eclipses since the War, but since the demilitarised zone was occupied by Germany on the 7th of March, Anglo-French friendship has been finally sealed. England declared as a warning

that an aggression on France would be regarded by her as an aggression on Great Britain itself. The surface reaction of Great Britain and France to the German occupation of the 7th of March was not very great. But it was very deep.

The second fact which strengthens the existing peace is the Franco-Soviet alliance. The criticisms made by Germany against it have no foundation. Germany wishes the obligations of Article 15, paragraph 7, and especially those of Article 16 to disappear. If Germany is no longer a member³⁶ of the League, which is much to be regretted, that is no reason for her to destroy the obligations which bind us, the members of the League.

I know that it has been said of me that I acted in this affair as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France. That is too great an honour for me and it is an exaggeration! It was not I who invented the policy of an alliance between France and Russia. The Prime Ministers Herriot and Boncour were responsible for that. At a time when, under Mr. Laval³⁷, things were not going too well, I was asked by the Quai d'Orsay to maintain contact between it and the Soviet Embassy. I did so with pleasure and with satisfactory results. That is all. For France, the problem of the alliance with Soviet Russia presents itself in a very clear way:

a) This alliance does not put increased obligations on France, who is already bound to go to war in case of aggression by Germany under her treaty with Czechoslovakia; but this alliance brings her in exchange an increase of security which costs her nothing.

b) Were France not to become the ally of Soviet Russia, the later country would inevitably ally itself to Germany. Despite the conflict of ideologies, Germany well understands the political realities. And in the policy of Germany³⁸ towards Poland, we have the example that she can make ideas bow before facts.

The Franco-Soviet treaty was only signed after the governments of Great Britain and Italy had declared that it, in no way, contradicted the Treaty of Locarno.

Should France be obliged to go to war against Germany, in virtue of her treaty with Czechoslovakia or in virtue of her treaty with Soviet Russia, and if her action appeared as an execution of Article 15, paragraph 7, or of Article 16 of the Covenant, what would Great Britain *do*?

It is true that Great Britain is not obliged to go to war in such cases, but the essence of the Franco-British agreement would be destroyed if Great Britain did not proceed to blockade Germany and did not assure the lines of communication between France and her colonies.

These are not acts of war. Great Britain can remain in the background till the day of the great test. But neither the agreement with France, nor the obligations of the Covenant, would mean anything, if in case France went to war, in the circumstances outlined above, England did not undertake the blockade of Germany and the guard of the lines of communication with the French colonies.

I would prefer, to the abstention of Great Britain in such case, the policy of splendid isolation. It, at least, has the merit of being clear, and of not giving rise to dangerous illusions.

Two other facts which strengthen the existing Peace are the new Little Entente and the Balkan Entente, of which allow me to speak as a co-author, and tell you certain things which you will not find in books.

I say the new Little Entente of 1933, because the latter was different from that made in 1921 by Pasić³⁹, Take Ionescu and Beneš. The new Entente was not a mere military alliance. It is an association of States, open to Austria and Hungary, which put in common their foreign policy and their economic interests, to the point of constituting a superior and indivisible international unit, none of the three member States being able to make a political or economic agreement with important political consequences without the consent of the two others.

How came this new Little Entente to be born?

In the autumn of 1932, I had overthrown the Vaida⁴⁰ government, that had wanted Romania to sign a pact of non-aggression with the Soviets for a period of five years only, and with the acknowledgement of the existing dispute between the countries – the status of Bessarabia as Romanian territory. I met with a great success in the House of Deputies: unanimity of all the parties. But once the debate was closed, seeing that Poland signed⁴¹ with the Soviets without us, seeing that France signed⁴² with the Soviets without us, I reflected for a long time on the inexactitude of Ibsen's⁴³ saying – “Man is never greater than when he is alone” – from a political standpoint at least.

I would have to create or strengthen certain ties. I looked at the map: there only remained Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. I asked for a special meeting of the Little Entente at Belgrade in December 1932. I raised there the question of a new charter for the Little Entente, that would not allow one member to make a political agreement without the consent of the others. Yugoslavia accepted immediately – she was then on very bad terms with Italy. It was the time when the question of Traun was the object of violent polemics. But my friend Beneš asked me for precisions: “What precise case are you thinking of?” I had to tell him. “I did not want the two States of the Little Entente to recognise *de jure* Soviet Russia until Romania had obtained the satisfaction necessary to enable her to do so at the same time.” Beneš told me it was impossible, for there was pro-Russian party in his country and many Czech-Russian interests. But to help me, Beneš told me that he would not recognise the Soviets for two more years. A month passed. And then came into power Hitler.

This time it was Beneš who said that at any price the Little Entente must be strengthened. Now, he demanded that one of the three States could not make political agreements without the consent of the other two. Each of us, Beneš, Jevtić and I, we could each give a different version of the creation of the Little Entente. For me, it is clear that the new Little Entente is a three-stories edifice,

created by fear. The Romanian fear of the Russians; the Yugoslav fear of the Italians; the Czechoslovak fear of the Germans. It is no reason of shame. Is fear not often the beginning of wisdom?

As regards the Balkan Entente, I shall make you a revelation, which is quite confidential.

Italian policy wanted the division of the Balkans. To the Turco-Greek agreement, Italy wanted to superimpose a Turco-Bulgarian agreement. I was taking a cure at Gastein when the news reached me, that Bulgaria had made the mistake of refusing the Turkish offer. I felt, at once, that there was a place to be filled. I accepted immediately the invitation of the Bulgarian government to pay a visit to Bulgaria. And I had myself immediately invited to all the Balkan capitals. I passed in October 1933 from Sofia to Ankara, from Ankara to Athens, from Athens to Belgrade. At the end of October 1933, the Balkan Pact was initialled. In February 1934, we signed in Athens the texts which we had agreed on long before. I acknowledge that the Italo-Serbian agreement and the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement dealt a blow to the two instruments of organised Peace represented by the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente, although officially I say the contrary. But on close examination, if certain acts can be criticised, the community of interests of these two regional groups is so great, that I think it would be difficult for them to disappear from one day to the other.

Now to whichever side the balance swings, whether to that of the bad facts I have just quoted, or to that of the good, I am of the opinion that the balance will swing to the side of Peace, if England speaks at the proper moment, saying that she is as interested in Peace in the East as in Peace in the West.

Great Britain must realise that her fate is to write a play, either in two acts or in one. In the first case, the play will be a tragedy. Its first Act will be War in the East and Peace in the West. In the second Act, Great Britain and many other Powers will know defeat by Germany, whose power has increased by all the territorial possessions annexed, or by all the economic resources won.

In the second case, Great Britain will write a play in one act. It will not be a tragedy. In it Great Britain will deal with the subject of her entry into a team of Powers interested in the maintenance of Peace in the East. And the merit of this second play is that once written it will never be played. Germany will be the first to recognise that against such a group of States, she would lose a war. In 1914, Germany was deceived by Great Britain, when she saw Great Britain renounce her neutrality. If the right gesture makes a new deception impossible, Peace can be preserved for a long time.

What more eloquent proof of the greatness of your country, of the prestige of Great Britain than to come to the conclusion that a word coming from it at the proper time can change the face of the world!

**“SILENCE IS SYNONYMOUS WITH DEATH.
A WORD SPOKEN IN TIME
IS SYNONYMOUS WITH LIFE”¹**

Mr. Chairman,
Gentlemen,

I thank you very much for the kind words you have said about me. For my part, I should like to tell you that I feel very much at home in the atmosphere of the Left and the ideas you represent.

During the twenty years of my uninterrupted ministerial career, I have only been a Non Party Man since the death of my chief, Take Ionesco, that is since 1922. Before that, I was a member of his party, the Democratic Party, which was the most advanced in Romania as regards ideas. I became Minister for Finance in the National Cabinet that decided the entry of Romania into the war⁴⁴ in 1916, on the side of Great Britain.

When the war WAS ended, I tried to put into practice my Left ideals that I had never ceased to serve. And so, the idea came to me, to make the Capital Levy in Romania. Today, after sixteen years, I still believe that if we had followed this method, we would have a stronger and more stable currency. But public opinions in Romania judged otherwise. Because of the Capital Levy, I left the Ministry of Finance⁴⁵. King Ferdinand⁴⁶ called me to say: “You have not fallen, since Parliament approved your law. You are still standing. And so, I propose that you should go as Minister⁴⁷ to London and Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations.” I accepted, and so I became a diplomat. One day I met the late Lord Snowden⁴⁸, who was always very friendly with me. I told him, “You wrote a book on the Capital Levy, but you never put your ideas into practice. And people say of you that you have been a great Chancellor of the Exchequer. I did not write a book about it, but I tried to apply your ideas. And people say about me, that I was a bad Chancellor of the Exchequer!” Lord Snowden laughed!

As diplomat, for fifteen years I have been active without a break. I have been twice Minister in London and I have been in seven separate Cabinets Minister for Foreign Affairs. I do not know if I have been a good diplomat, but, if by chance, I have done something good in this direction, I owe it to Labour ideals. Without that, I would have continued my career inside the frontiers of Romania.

And now let me say, the time has come for the men in every country, who have the same ideas, to act together in harmony. It is only if this is done, that the dictatorships will not conquer the democracies. Europe is no longer a collection of States. Europe is one State divided up into separate parts by administrative measures, incorporated in the frontiers. That is why a single action is necessary.

¹ Speech made in English at the House of Commons, London, June 9, 1937.

Rome and Berlin saw this and they act in consequence. Let the democrats in other countries understand this and let them act together.

Let me tell you what I think might constitute the essential points in the orientation of this concerted action of European democracy.

First of all, we must make the League of Nations and collective security the basis of our international policy.

The League has been faced with failures we must admit. In the Sino-Japanese conflict, the League failed because it did not act. In the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, the League failed because its action was ineffective.

What are the reasons for the League's failures? There is only one reason: *the men* have failed who act in the name of the League. They have not fulfilled their international duty. As usually, men look for the guilty ones in those around them and not in themselves. They decided that the reform of the Covenant is necessary, and proceeded to have an examination made of the proposed reform. That is real hypocrisy. The Covenant is in no way defective. On the pretext of enforcing it, they are trying to weaken it. That is why I shall always be opposed to the reform of the Covenant, and in favour of its literal application by all the signatories.

But the Covenant should be completed by regional military agreements, which should function at the same time as the economic sanctions, that are and should remain universal. What is a region? That is a question for discussion. But it seems to me that English public opinion is greatly mistaken in imagining that in Europe there is any region in which England is not interested.

Let us remember, first of all, that Great Britain is bound by the Covenant to defend international law. Let us remember, too, that after Germany's action on the 7th March 1936, England became the ally in due form of France.

But of what France? Of a France pledged to five treaties of alliance, which give her great power on the Continent: the alliance with Poland, the alliance with Czechoslovakia, the alliance with Soviet Russia, the alliance with Romania, the alliance with Yugoslavia.

It is true that in form the two last treaties are treaties of friendship, but in practice they are alliances. There are so many signed treaties which are not applied, that I considered as we were practising an alliance with France, without having it, we should draw up the legal instrument in due form to consecrate it. From June 1936, I worked in this sense and France offered us a formal alliance in November 1936.

But even if we omit these two treaties from the five I have just mentioned, even if we reduce the international pledges of France to her treaties with Czechoslovakia and Soviet Russia, we have an observation to make and a question to put:

The observation is this, that France only signed her treaty with Soviet Russia, when Great Britain and Italy, after studying it, replied in writing that this treaty in no way contradicts the Treaty of Locarno.

The question I wish to put is the one that haunts the mind of all the true friends of Peace:

Suppose that Germany attacks Czechoslovakia, with the object, there is no possible doubt, of seizing the Romanian oilfields and to be able to continue her march against the territories of Soviet Russia, one of which, the Ukraine, that vast reservoir of raw materials, has been since before 1914, the object of the most audacious German plans.

Suppose that the Council of the League declares unanimously that Germany is an aggressor, or that its vote is split on this point: France prepares to go to war in virtue of Article 16 or of Article 15, paragraph 7, of the Covenant. In acting in this way, France fulfils an international duty. When France attempts to cross German territory, Germany attacks her.

Would France not be the victim of an aggression, if, when applying the sanctions of Article 16, she is attacked by Germany? Yes, certainly she would be. Article 16 of the Covenant says *expressis verbis*⁴⁹: Members of the League agree “they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the Covenant breaking State.”

What should Great Britain do in such a case? Give France immediately the help stipulated in her Treaty of Alliance, for the carrying out of an international duty by France could never be regarded as a provocation of Germany.

That is why I have always been surprised by the distinction that is made in this country between the security of the East and the security of the West.

It is not for the security of the East, that Great Britain will go to war. It is to defend international law and for the security of the West – that is to say, the security of France, when France is acting on behalf of the League of Nations, for the maintenance of peace in the different regions that her various treaties of alliance cover – that Great Britain will have to act.

Should Great Britain not act, I must confess that I greatly prefer to the policy that is being followed today, that of splendid isolation. That such a policy is no longer in conformity with the present interests of Great Britain is clear. But at least it has the merit of being honest, and it does not create dangerous illusions in other countries.

The second point of orientation for a common policy of European democracies is the necessity to say beforehand what each country will do in the case of an eventual aggression. Silence in this question is synonymous with death. A word spoken in time is synonymous with life. War only is possible there where there is a certainty of impunity. Remove this certainty as quickly as possible and we shall keep peace the longest possible time.

I have been struck by the difficulty people have here in realising truth. They say: "To commit ourselves beforehand is a thing that the man in the street will never understand." That is a thing I find inconceivable. If you say nothing, you bring England direct to war. By speaking beforehand, you maintain peace. I am sure that if one were to teach this to the man in the street, he would not hesitate a moment in allowing the government to speak openly and beforehand, instead of being led to death by its silence.

Great Britain is for me a Kodak film, which has already been exposed, but which has not yet been developed. I see the picture already. The man in the street will see it only when events will allow the development of the film.

I have not the slightest doubt what Great Britain will do if war breaks out. What I would wish is to see Great Britain act, so as to prevent war. I am sure we are all in agreement when I say: We want to avoid war, not to win it a second time.

Great Britain must realise that her fate is to write a play, either in two acts, or in one. In the first case the play will be a tragedy. Its first act will be War in the East and Peace in the West. In the second act, Great Britain and many other Powers in the West will know defeat by a Germany whose power has increased by all the territorial possessions annexed, or by all the economic resources won.

In the second case, Great Britain will write a play in one act. It will not be a tragedy. In it Great Britain will deal with the subject of her entry into a team of Powers interested in the maintenance of Peace in the East. And the merit of this second play is, that once written, it will never be played. Germany will be the first to recognise, that against such a group of States, she would lose the war. In 1914, Germany was deceived by Great Britain, when she saw Great Britain renounce her neutrality. If the right gesture makes a new deception impossible, Peace can be preserved for a long time.

The third point of orientation of European democracies is for them to hold themselves at an equal distance from the extreme Left as from the extreme Right, although in my opinion, when you analyse these two doctrines, you find them identical.

Someone asked me one day: "What is the difference between Communism and Hitlerism or Fascism?" I replied: "Suppose you have three cows. Communism takes them from you and you will never hear anything more of these cows. Hitlerism and Fascism will leave them with you on these terms: You will keep these cows but you will never again have the right to milk them. In addition you will pay all the costs of food and the upkeep of these cows."

I understand the necessity for democracies to hold themselves apart from the struggle of ideology. But when on the pretext of ideology, they destroy our interests, for instance as in the case of Spain and in the case of the League of Nations, abstention is inconceivable.

Again, are we to practice the policy of non-intervention in presence of the campaign to destroy the League, which is being conducted by the so-called totalitarian States? It must not be forgotten that the struggle of ideology has an aspect of interior policy, in which I would not interfere, and an aspect of foreign policy, and here duty commands us to resist and to fight in our turn. We must at all costs defend the League of Nations.

A fourth point of orientation of the policy of European democracies is that they should have, in the international field, relations of close friendship with Soviet Russia.

Communism, whose declared enemy I am, is one thing. Friendship with Soviet Russia, who is useful to us from every point of view, is quite another thing.

I have so keenly supported this policy, based on the discrimination I have just stated, that the propaganda of the International Right, to prevent me from acting in the sense of my views, attacked me as a communist! I replied quietly, "I have too many suits, too many shirts and too many ties, to be a communist. The bills of my English tailors, Hill Brothers, are the best certificate of my bourgeois mentality." And without hesitation, I went on with my policy.

May I be allowed to point out, that the policy followed here and in France is not of a kind to keep the Soviets definitely in our camp.

In England the Soviets are treated with hauteur. And the policy of rapprochement that certain Englishmen recommended with Germany, a policy with which certain facts concord, creates an impression, which makes the Soviets think "Great Britain is not a friend."

We should not forget that in time of war, Soviet Russia has a reservoir of one hundred and seventy million men, tremendous riches in raw material, and an air service capable of replacing any machines destroyed to an extent no other State can equal.

One should always show great friendship to those who will be asked to die for us in time of war.

In France things are still worse.

Mr. Laval, continuing the policy of Mr. Paul-Boncour⁵⁰, signed with the Soviets a Pact of Mutual Assistance in May 1935. Then, it was precisely the French signatory of the treaty who refused to ratify it. Very clever German propaganda made the whole French Right oppose this treaty. They could neither combat France, for they had signed a treaty of alliance, nor could they declare themselves frankly the friends of France, as the treaty had not been ratified. When on the 7th March 1936, Germany occupied the demilitarised zone, France ratified immediately the Assistance Pact with the Soviets.

President Millerand⁵¹ declared in the Senate that although he was against Soviet Russia, between Germany and Russia, he preferred the latter. That is all very well, but to recognise somebody as a friend, only because in case of danger

you will need his help, does not create the best quality of friendship, nor the most fruitful.

Today the Franco-Russian Assistance Pact is meeting with a new difficulty in regard to the conclusion of military agreements. The Russians want military agreements; the French government hesitates.

I consider it a big mistake not to conclude these agreements immediately. The military agreements would in no way amplify France's obligations for the cases in which she is obliged to go to war.

If France does not consider Soviet Russia to be the victim of an aggression, both the political agreement and the military agreements are dead letters.

But if France considers she should go to war and if no military agreements exist to co-ordinate in advance the Russian and French operations, France enters chaos and risks to lose the war, because of the lack of concerted action beforehand, between her and her ally, Soviet Russia.

That is very dangerous. And the situation makes me more uneasy when I realise that the Soviets may consider the refusal to conclude the military agreements as a tacit cancellation of the Mutual Assistance Pact with France, and therefore, they may be led to seek their security by an understanding with Germany.

We must not forget that Hitlerist propaganda is Germanising Central Europe. No contrary propaganda is made by the democratic States. Things have gone so far, that there are many people in Central Europe who admire, as bold and powerful acts, the cruelties that the totalitarian States inflict, because they hear no voice to blame.

We must also remember that, in spite of the struggle of ideology, there are many points of contact between the Germans and the Russians.

The friendship between the heads of the two armies and the intensity of the economic exchanges between the two countries are a proof of it. It must not be forgotten that the Russians and the Germans have traditional ties of friendship and that the Russians only accidentally became allies of France. Before the Great War, the Kaiser made the mistake of not renewing the treaty of reassurance with Russia promoted by Bismarck and this led the Russians to ally themselves with France. In recent years, it was the attacks made by Chancellor Hitler on Communism and his threats, which decided the Russians to sign the Pact of Mutual Assistance with France. And it must be added that the greatest advantage of the Franco-Soviet Treaty is of a negative order: the fact that Soviet Russia will not help the German army with her troops and her raw materials.

Should the Soviets feel that they had been abandoned by the Western States, they would be poor diplomats if they did not try to come to a direct understanding with Germany. And, in that case, France and Great Britain would find themselves alone, facing a Germany strengthened by having at her disposal

all the raw materials from Russia and by the neutrality of Central Europe. In such case, Germany would be stronger than if she had been victorious in a war in the East, in which the Western Powers had taken no part, for she would have made none of the sacrifices that war implies.

That is why I say: "Take care of the Soviets. If you do not have them with you, it means that you will have them against you."

To conclude the above remarks I would say: Europe is struggling now to achieve its unity. Europe will obtain unity, either by the victory of the parties of the Right, or by the victory of the parties of the Left.

In the first case, we shall witness a backward step in history for, for some time, the liberties of democracy, the fruit of long struggle and of bitter sacrifice, will be suspended.

In the second case, we shall see a scene of happiness: Europe will be living a healthy democracy that can conciliate the demands of liberty with those of authority. It is for English democracy to put itself at the head of the great struggle which is beginning to that end. It is English democracy which must save the dignity of the human being. It is for English democracy to dispel the anxiety caused by the fear that dictatorship may spread beyond its present frontiers, that it may install itself everywhere, in every country, to ravish from each one of us the principal reason for which we live: our Freedom.

**“IS THE REFORM OF THE COVENANT
OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS DESIRABLE?”¹**

My Lord Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with profound gratitude that I thank Lord Cecil⁵² for the kind words he has been good enough to say here. From my long collaboration with him at the League of Nations, Lord Cecil has made me feel three sentiments towards him: that of respect, that of admiration, and that of affection. He is the most disinterested servant of the Ideal that I have ever met. In my much more limited and much more modest domain, I too am a servant of the Ideal. That is what probably explains our common manner of thinking and feeling, which is at the basis of the precious links that bind me to him.

Among the great ideals that Humanity tried to serve, that of the League of Nations is in the foreground.

It must be acknowledged that the League of Nations has recently met with failures that have profoundly affected its prestige. If we can explain certain of these as due to the fact that the League did not act as in the case of the Sino-Japanese conflict, the latest failure, that in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict, was due to the ineffective action taken by the League.

We have a League of Nations. It must live, but it must also fulfil its mission. The League is not a moral academy, a brotherhood of technicians. It is a political institution, whose principal aim is to prevent war.

What are the causes of the League of Nations' failures? To my mind, there is no possible doubt. It is the men who incarnate the League, who have failed in the accomplishment of their international duty. Those people, who always look for the guilty ones around them, and never in themselves, think it is the Covenant that has been badly framed, and that the Covenant should be reformed. I do not share this opinion.

I have not come here today to indulge in oratory. I have chosen, voluntarily, a very arid subject, because under its technical aspects, is being engaged the greatest struggle of ideas of our days – the struggle between the old ways of thinking and the ideas born of the sufferings of the Great War – the struggle between selfish and blind isolationism and the generous and radiant internationalism.

I have chosen, voluntarily, this very subject, to be enabled to say that those who are fighting for the destruction of the League of Nations use the language of its most ardent supporters. “We want to change the Covenant, to make it better,” they say. Many of those who *say that*, would do well to make themselves better,

¹ Speech made in English at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, June 9, 1937.

instead of making the Covenant better. The *Bible should not be changed because men are sinners!*

When people talk of reforming the Covenant, three texts are specially aimed at – Articles 11, 16 and 19. Let me begin by the last one, so that your attention may be concentrated afterwards on Article 16, which is the vital point of the whole mechanism of the League.

In mentioning Article 19, I have no intention of opening here a debate on local interests. I wish to keep to the terrain of wide international questions. I shall simply content myself by observing:

- 1) When one considers that the British Empire, the United States of America, the States of South America, France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic States, the States of the Little Entente, the States of the Balkan Entente, Soviet Russia, whose present policy is based on the League of Nations and a rapprochement among States, do not ask for an alteration of frontiers, the conclusion is reached, that for the immense majority of countries, the revision of their frontier is not a problem.
- 2) If, on the other hand, we note that the present policy of Germany in regard to Poland and that Italy's policy in regard to Yugoslavia are not compatible with the revision of the Polish and Yugoslav frontiers, we reach the conclusion that the problem of the frontiers is not one of those which will cause war to break out. And as war cannot now be localised, it would be the greatest mistake to start a world war for local interests, which only concern certain States.

In regard to Central Europe, I shall only say:

- 1) It was not the interested parties who fixed the present frontiers, but the big English and American experts.
 - 2) These experts made a very detailed study in each case, before fixing the frontiers, and they did their work so well, that they said themselves that were alterations be made to frontiers today, to remedy injustices here or there, the result would be to create new injustices, far greater than those one tried to remove.
 - 3) In fixing a frontier, it is impossible not to create discontent. Today the cry comes from the State that has lost territory; tomorrow, it will be those from whom territory is taken, who will make the clamour. It is a long drawn out plaint, a kind of *motto perpetuo*⁵³, that cannot be easily silenced. What mean, more often than not, the so-called historic rights? Seizures of territory, which time has consecrated. At least the present
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frontiers, if they last, as I think they will, will have the virtue of being international verdicts, consecrated by time.

In order to revise a modest rent contract, the consent of the two interested parties is necessary. Therefore, in order to apply Article 19 of the Covenant, one could hardly take part of the territory from one State to give it to another, unless the first State gave its consent. And it is clear that States affected by revision would never agree to the modification of the conditions of application of Article 19, I ask: Is it wise to open a public discussion on Article 19, which will excite national passions, when we know beforehand that it will come to nothing?

To me, this is so true, for I consider the real solution of the evils created by frontiers is not revisionism, which means the transfer of these evils from one spot to another, but their destruction, by the removal of the obstacles to the passage of goods and men and by the constant and progressive spiritualisation of what a frontier represents.

If from Article 19, we pass to Article 16, there are irrefutable arguments in favour of the maintenance of the present text, which should be completed, as I shall demonstrate, by supplementary agreements, but not changed.

This text of the Covenant has such great clarity, it binds with such obligatory force all the members of the League, that, if applied literally, wars of aggression would always fail.

But, lest we be accused of exaggeration, let us examine more closely the provisions of Article 16.

It is important to note, first of all, that the word *sanction* is not used in the Covenant. To impose such sanctions means to punish or repress. From that, certain writers have deduced that Article 16 of the Covenant had less for object to curb the action of the State violator of the Covenant, than to prevent the violation by the threats it contains. *That is not my opinion.*

First of all, Article 16 contemplates the exclusion from the League of any Member who violates one of the engagements of the Covenant. That is a repression in due form.

Then the provisions of Article 16, whilst being indeed preventive, by the threat they constitute to an aggressor, are also repressive.

It is said that Article 16 provides police measures. I agree. But it is one thing the action of the policeman, who, to ensure order in the streets, says simply, "Move on there, please," and quite another thing when the same policeman, in certain cases, pulls out his revolver and shoots.

To sum up what I think: I believe that Article 16, whilst being preventive, by the threats it contains, constitutes a type of repression by the collectivity of nations, against the violation of international law by any one nation.

When I pass from paragraph 1 to paragraph 2 of Article 16, I must acknowledge that its wording is such, that its application may, to a large extent, be a matter of choice. Indeed, the Council has the duty to recommend to the members of the League, the military forces which they should contribute to the armed forces, destined to make the engagements of the League respected.

A recommendation from the Council is a very important thing, to which every government should give its most serious attention, but it is a recommendation, that is to say, it has no obligatory force. One cannot seriously maintain that League members are *obliged* to go to war, in virtue of paragraph 2 of Article 16. It is none the less true, that if the military sanctions are optional, it results from Article 16, that there are four engagements of a clearly obligatory character from a juridical standpoint.

First of all, there is the engagement to apply immediately the economic measures stipulated in paragraph 1 of Article 16.

Next, there is the obligation of the Members of the League, to give each other mutual support in the application of the economic and financial measures, so as to reduce to a minimum the losses and the inconveniences which may result from them.

Then, we have the engagement to lend one another mutual support to resist any special measure directed against any one member by a violator State.

And last, there is the engagement to take the necessary steps to facilitate the passage through their territory of the troops of any member of the League, who is taking part in a common action to make the engagements of the League respected.

This last engagement should retain our attention a little longer. It is around this point, that important negotiations have been recently taking place. Does it imply an automatic obligation? *Yes* and *no*.

A distinction must be made.

Each member of the League of Nations is entitled to decide, in full and complete sovereignty, which State is an aggressor in a conflict.

But once a State has freely named the aggressor, it seems to me that the obligation to give right of passage to troops is an automatic consequence.

To recognise that the State X is an aggressor, and to still reserve the right to accept or reject the passage of troops is for me impossible.

The obligation has already been accepted in the past by each State on signing the Covenant of the League of Nations.

It is true, one must consider the case of a State, which, on account of its geographical situation, risks becoming itself the victim of aggression, should it open its frontiers to foreign armies, who are attacking the aggressor.

It seems to me that the geographical situation of a State gives it the right to subordinate the passage of troops to the military assistance from the members of the League, for its own defence, but it cannot evade its formal obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant.

“In helping you, I run a risk,
therefore help me, so that I can help you”
appears to me to be the doctrine of the Covenant.

“I recognise that X is the aggressor
but I cannot help you, for I would be running a risk”
such language... appears to me to be the denial of the Covenant.

Now let us examine what the words *common action* mean; they appear in paragraph 3 of Article 16 *à propos* of the passage of troops. Must there be action by all *the members* of the League, for the obligation to grant passage to troops to exist? Certainly not. That would mean that the lack of a contingent, from say Paraguay, would prevent the States of Europe from giving each other assistance under Article 16. That was certainly not intended by the authors of the Covenant. *All or nothing may be a slogan in love, but not in politics.* “*Something is better than nothing*” seems to be the command of political wisdom.

But in what consists this *something*?

A man, who has a very high responsibility, and who spoke recently in the name of a country specially interested in the question of the passage of troops under Article 16, said that “common action” meant at least the action of neighbours. This man, in not demanding the participation of all the League members for the application of the last part of paragraph 3 of Article 16, gave proof of his great political intelligence, which moreover is unanimously recognised. But in asking for the action of neighbours, he spoke as a national of his own country. There are other countries expecting assistance, *not* from the neighbours, who are their enemies, but from the neighbours of the aggressor. How in this case, could one speak of the action of neighbours, to apply the provisions of Article 16?

It seems to me that the *something* to which the *common action* of Article 16 is reduced, in the eyes even of responsible men, who are the most interested, should be sought in the pacts of mutual assistance concluded in conformity with the Covenant.

There you have, Ladies and Gentlemen, commented with all desirable precision, the international law in force concerning sanctions.

This international law has suffered blows, that may have damaged its prestige in the eyes of certain people, but they have in no way affected its obligatory force. It is not blows which can kill a law, for a law is in no way comparable to a human body. A law can only be abrogated in due form; or a new ruling may be substituted for the old law, which then disappears.

This leads me to speak to you of the famous amendments of 1921, which never knew the force of law.

On the 4th October 1921, the Assembly voted certain resolutions, entailing amendments to Article 16, and certain resolutions concerning the economic weapon, destined to serve as guides.

What *are* these amendments? What *are* these guiding rules? What are they *worth*, so long as the amendments have not come into force?

They are four in number. Only the last of them constitutes an important change of the text of Article 16. As we have seen, this article places all the states of the League on a footing of complete equality, as regards their obligations in the case of sanctions; this fourth amendment changes the structure of Article 16, making its application immediate for certain States and delayed for the others.

None of the amendments came into force. They are null and void.

But on the 4th October 1921, the Assembly voted a resolution that these proposed amendments constituted guides, which recommended provisionally to the Council until these amendments would be put into force in the form required by the Covenant.

Sixteen years have passed, and the amendments have not yet come into force.

If one were to admit that the Covenant could be in any way modified by amendments, which cannot come into force, adding, until they do so, they will be recognised provisionally as valid, the League could be destroyed by games which would appear childish.

It would be better to dissolve the League than to keep such a sword of Damocles⁵⁴ suspended over it.

I shall therefore say:

In the measure in which the amendments of 1921 complete the text of the Covenant, *without* contradicting it, they may constitute guides for the members of the League. In the measure that these amendments contradict the text of the Covenant they are null and void.

Why this system of sanctions was shown to be ineffective, when the attempt was recently made to put it into action?

Article 16 did not give the results expected for two reasons: First, the real solidarity between France and England was only slowly established. Secondly, Article 16 was applied *not* in accordance with the demands of the present international law, *but* as if the amendments of the 4th October 1921 were already in force.

And as I am speaking of Franco-British solidarity and as I was intimately associated with the admission of Ethiopia to the League of Nations, and with the question of sanctions⁵⁵, let me tell you a story, which has at least two merits: It is true and it is not sad. For how can we conquer the difficulties of life, if we do not have the courage to laugh from time to time?

In 1923, that is almost at the beginning of my diplomatic career, I was elected vice-president of the Sixth Commission. I was very proud of my title, although at Geneva, the rule seems to be that vice-presidents never preside. I was twice running elected President of the League Assembly, and each time I had to help me in my duties twelve vice-presidents. But never did one of them occupy the presidential chair, Geneva tradition demands this procedure.

So you can see the obscure fate that awaited me as vice-president of a simple commission. But, an accident was to withdraw me from the shadows into the light. Mr. Hymans, my president, had to leave Geneva suddenly and I had to take his place. Among the questions on the agenda was one which exceeded in importance of all the others – the question of the admission of Ethiopia into the League. Two States, Italy and France, fought ardently for its admission. Several States, headed by Great Britain, opposed this admission, particularly for a very grave reason – the existence of slavery in Ethiopia.

At once, my diplomatic beginnings met with the greatest difficulty – that of being between two Great Powers and of having to make a choice between them.

Like any self-respecting president, I appointed immediately a sub-committee, which at least had the merit of avoiding any publicity in a dispute between the Great Powers and of preparing an agreement.

I can still see the meetings of this sub-committee in the autumn of 1923 at Geneva. We were not numerous. A representative of the Nordic States, who at once rallied in support of the British point of view, and the two principal protagonists, Mr. Henry de Jouvenel, the French representative, and Mr. Wood, President of the Board of Education, later Lord Irwing, and today Lord Halifax⁵⁶, the British representative. I listened to those gentlemen and I did not say a word. My vote counted double as president. But to whom should I give it?

One evening about seven o'clock, Lord Halifax rather ironically put me the direct question: "What is our Chairman's opinion?" I made the excuse that it was too late to begin to speak and we made an appointment for the following morning. I went home feeling depressed. I did not know what to do. In the villa near Geneva, where I was staying, there was a fine library. Mechanically I took a book and I opened it at random. I fell on a passage that filled my heart with joy. I was saved. Next day I said to Lord Halifax, "Is Great Britain against the admission of Ethiopia to the League for the simple reason that slavery exists there?" – "Yes," said Lord Halifax. "Then I am in favour of the admission of Ethiopia," I replied, "for slavery is a natural institution, and to prove it, I shall quote not Aristotle⁵⁷, who first said so, but an author whom no Englishman would dare to dispute: *Darwin*⁵⁸. And I opened the book that I had found by chance the evening before and read what it said in substance: "Ants are accustomed to keep slaves. The ant slave brings food to the mistress ant. The latter is accustomed to being carried on the back of the ant slave. But a curious thing", remarks *Darwin*,

“there are only two kinds of ants which make slaves. There are the ants which belong to the two most liberal nations in the world, Switzerland and Great Britain.” “But”, adds Darwin, as a good Englishman, “*The English ants treat their slaves more kindly than do the Swiss ants.*” Everyone began to laugh. And so I passed rather skilfully the first headland in my diplomatic career. But Lord Halifax did not lay down his arms. He took from his case the agreement prohibiting the importation of arms into Ethiopia, and with documents in support, alleged that Ethiopia had violated it, adding, “And now, quote Darwin again, if you can!”

A few days later, agreement having been reached between France, Italy and Great Britain, I signed the letter by which I informed Ethiopia of her admission into the League.

If a lack of Franco-English solidarity characterised the beginning of the tragedy, which may be called: “Ethiopia and the League of Nations,” if one recognises, today especially, how legitimate was the English resistance, it is still the slowness in establishing real Franco-British solidarity that explains why the sanctions of Article 16 did not work as they should have done. France, from the outset, limited the application of Article 16 to economic sanctions. And still more, these sanctions, instead of being applied completely and automatically, were applied gradually, by stages, and partially.

When one reads the Minutes for 1935 and 1936, one is struck by the pettiness of the discussions and of the decisions taken. Eleven volumes were printed by the League on the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. They contain 1696 large pages of close print. And all for what? To reach interminable discussions on the drawing up of the list of goods prohibited for importation into Italy – armaments, horses, mules or camels, manganese...! There was much discussion about petrol. But its inclusion on the list was made subject, by certain States, to a previous offer of a partial division of the victim, if Italy would cease hostilities. One Minister lost office on that account. And the result was that Italy was able to buy petrol freely until the final conquest of Ethiopia by arms.

And yet, under these deceptive appearances, there is something good which strikes one. The first time that Article 16 was applied, there was such solidarity in the intentions, if not in the acts, of all the members of the League! This big defeat of the League, far from authorising discouragement, allows on the contrary high hopes for common international action in the future, that is, of course, if we are willing to draw the lessons from the past, which we should do.

What, indeed, should we do so that Article 16 may work satisfactorily in future? Three things, I believe:

- 1) We should abandon the resolutions and amendments of 1921, which have no legal force.
 - 2) We should complete Article 16 by military regional agreements.
-

3) We should develop the preventive system, which would permit either the application more and more rarely of Article 16, or else the employment of sanctions before a State has been considered as having violated the Covenant.

Let us be realists.

For Article 16 to work properly, there must be both universal economic sanctions, and military regional sanctions. Every member of the League is obliged to join in the economic sanctions, otherwise there would be no serious link between the States forming the League. On the other hand, certain members only are obliged to give military aid, and it is their binding duty to do so. These are the States in the region affected by the outbreak of war.

Indeed Europe should be divided up into regions from the point of view of security. Regional Pacts of Mutual Assistance will bind the States in anticipation of the application of Article 16, or of Article 15, paragraph 7, or in case the Council makes no recommendation at all. These pacts should be left open for the adhesion of all interested parties, so as to avoid any resemblance to the pre-war pacts. With such pacts, there is no need to reform the Covenant; they are agreements made in virtue of Article 21, and they are superimposed on the Covenant of the League.

But there is still a step to be taken to make sanctions really effective. There may be States who methodically prepare an act of aggression. Their economic policy, that subordinates the needs of the population to the rearmament programme, which far exceeds their needs for defence, the building up of reserves of raw materials, that would be unobtainable in war time, and that far exceeds their needs in time of peace – all these reveal to our eyes the preparation for war.

What can the League do, and what should the League do in such circumstances?

I examined this situation in a commission in 1926, together with Mr. Brouckère⁵⁹ and Lord Cecil. I remember that I had the flu at the time and that Lord Cecil made arrangements for the meetings to take place in my home, in the drawing room. The Foreign Office, therefore, installed a round table there, covered with a green cloth. It was great excitement for me to have in my home the official table around which debates take place. I confess, after eleven years, that several times during the night, I went to touch lovingly that green cloth! How can I explain that to you? The Conference table is to me what the grass track is to a racehorse!

Our Commission drew up a report, which was approved by the Council in 1927. We had to examine very closely the possibilities of applying sanctions as a preventive measure, and to graduate them according to the intensity of the danger of war.

To reach concrete results, Article 16 must be considered as the prolongation of Articles 11 and 10.

I think that an interpretation of Article 11 might be sufficient. But this text supposes for its application the vote of the two interested parties. I thus reach the conclusion that an amendment to Article 16 would be the most practical way. It is the only amendment I would accept.

But would we have the necessary unanimity for that scope? It is rather doubtful.

And so I ask: *Why reform the Covenant?* If we cannot strengthen it, in the sense of applying Article 16, as a preventive measure, *at least keep the Covenant as it is.*

Keep it and apply it literally.

Every demand of life based on justice and peace are satisfied by it.

A great moral crisis is dominating the world – *a new philosophy of life*, product of the twentieth century, or *catastrophe* may result from it.

This new philosophy can only be founded by consolidating the moral gains, won by the sufferings of the Great War, and by adding to them, all we have learnt by the lessons of the War.

Democracy, which we thought safe, is menaced by the doctrine of the totalitarian States.

To weaken the Covenant today would be the most deadly blow to democracy. It would mean a return to the isolation of pre-war days. It would mean the destruction of the beginning of the regular working of international life, that we have had since the signature of the peace treaties.

It is we, ourselves, who should be reformed, in order to become the men the Covenant intended us to be.

No, *it is not by weakening the Covenant*, in order to make possible the collaboration of the totalitarian States, that *we shall save Peace*. It is by inducing these States to enter that serious organisation – the present League of Nations represents – and by collaborating with it, that we shall reach our goal.

No. It is not by evading the obligations of the Covenant, on the pretext of reforming it, that we shall save Peace. It is by strengthening the Covenant and especially by applying completely and carefully and carefully the existing obligations that Peace can be saved.

No, it is not by looking outside ourselves for those on whom to fix the responsibility, it is by searching our own conscience and by obeying the moral laws that govern our inner life, that we shall best save Peace.

It is for English democracy to take the lead in the great struggle that is taking place.

It is for English democracy to dispel the anxiety, caused by the fear that dictatorships may spread beyond its present frontiers, that it may install itself everywhere, in every country, to ravish from each one of us, the principal reason for which we live: *our freedom*.

It is only on these terms that we shall have the reign of true Peace, which I have defined:

A state of mind as scope.

A legal organisation as instrument and a cry from the heart, as the way to fix in the conscience of the world its imperious commands.

**“BUT WAR IS A CALAMITY.
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT IT?”¹**

I thank Mr. Churchill⁶⁰ for having invited me to this luncheon and also for the very kind words he and my friend Steed⁶¹ have been good enough to say about me.

I thank him also for the charming thought, represented by Lady Chamberlain's presence among us today. With Lady Chamberlain, I feel myself at home, because I feel our dear Sir Austen⁶² is with us. But as I know his command would be – “Do not speak about me, but act as I want,” I shall obey his command.

As I do not know, whether what I am about to say would have his approval, I shall at least speak very openly to you, for I know that even should I be very wrong in what I say, in speaking openly, I at least follow the great rule of my conversations with him: Frankness. And I shall speak very shortly, so that you may put me questions afterwards.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the situation is very grave and unless one is quite blind, one must see that war may break out very soon.

What is the situation in view of such a prospect?

Great Britain cannot remain neutral, for she represents a body whose members extend over the whole world, but whose head is near the European frontier.

Great Britain will be obliged to take part in this war, in self-defence and for the maintenance of international law.

But war is a calamity. What can be done to prevent it?

For me it is very simple: Speak beforehand and in time, and put before the eyes of the eventual aggressor the picture of the forces that will be opposed to him, the day he decides to commit the crime.

I know what people say here: We cannot speak beforehand, because the man in the street does not understand. May I say, that you should start to educate him, and when once the man in the street realises that silence is synonymous with death and to speak out is synonymous with life, it is the man in the street, who

¹ Speech made in English at the Committee for Peace and Defence, London, June 14, 1937.

will urge the government to save life by saying beforehand that Great Britain will not remain passive.

I know also the distinction that is made here between the East and the West – the East, in which Great Britain cannot commit herself, and the West, where she has already taken obligations, in advance.

May I say, that this distinction has no solid foundation. Great Britain will never be called upon to shed her blood for the East of Europe. But Great Britain must always intervene for the security of the West, which is intimately bound up with security in the East.

Suppose in fact that Germany attacked Czechoslovakia and that France, in virtue of her Treaty of Alliance and in conformity with the resolutions of the Council of the League, crosses the German frontier, and that Germany in her turn attacks France, in consequence, France would then be the victim of a non-provoked aggression and the Treaty with Great Britain must come into action. In fact, the fulfilling of an international duty cannot be called a provocation. If the application of the Covenant instead of calling for the mutual assistance which it stipulates, against the special measures directed against a State which applies the sanctions against the aggressor, brings about the isolation of the State, faithful to the Covenant, it would be better to dissolve the League than to continue the hypocrisy of the game which is called Collective Security.

In the latter case, Great Britain has to face one of two realities.

Either war in the East and Peace in the West, followed by a war made on France and Great Britain by a Germany whose power will be greatly increased by the territorial gains acquired and by the raw materials won.

Or else there will be no war at all, but an agreement between Germany and Soviet Russia, which will put at Germany's disposal all the raw materials of the latter, and Central Europe will remain neutral, as it will be caught between the pincers of Germany and Russia.

In this case, France and Great Britain will have to face a war with a still stronger Germany, for she will have increased her powers, without having made any of the sacrifices that war implies.

I represent in my own country the Anglo-French ideals.

What can I say to my fellow-countrymen from you?

Nothing!

If I had given to Germany a tenth part of the work I have given to France and to Great Britain, I would have a great many things to say, that would help me in my task! But I shall not change my attitude.

France and Great Britain should not discourage the efforts that are being made in Central Europe for them, and they should not abandon those who are fighting there for your ideal: *peace and freedom*.

L'ORDRE DANS LA PENSÉE¹

Monsieur le Recteur,
Messieurs les Membres du Sénat,
Mesdames,
Messieurs,

C'est avec une profonde reconnaissance que je reçois aujourd'hui de vos mains, le titre de Docteur *honoris causa* de l'Université Komensky de Bratislava.

Il y a dans cette reconnaissance, grâce à votre geste et à la manière dont vous l'avez accompli, un mélange des sentiments les plus délicats que le cœur humain puisse être appelé à connaître.

Il y a d'abord le fait que vous avez bien voulu honorer mon activité scientifique et politique. D'ailleurs pour moi, elles se confondent, car la manière dont j'ai conduit mon activité politique m'a permis de ne jamais couper les liens qui l'attachaient à mon activité scientifique. En effet, dans le domaine politique j'ai toujours transposé les commandements de la science, et dans le domaine scientifique, j'ai toujours transposé les commandements de l'expérience, qu'à chaque pas de ma carrière politique la vie me révélait.

Il y a ensuite le fait que cet honneur m'incombe sur le territoire de la Slovaquie, prolongement de mon propre territoire national, au point que je les considère tous les deux comme un tout indivisible, de cette Slovaquie qui en 20 ans d'indépendance a réalisé tant de progrès dans le domaine matériel, scientifique, littéraire et artistique, que l'on a pu dire à juste titre, que la culture slovaque porte victorieusement sur ses ailes le génie national slovaque tout entier, vers un nouvel et magnifique avenir.

Il y a enfin le fait, que vous me décernez le titre de Docteur *honoris causa* la même année qu'à votre Président de la République, Son Excellence le Docteur Edvard Benès, et que de cette manière, mon nom sera associé au sien dans les annales de votre Faculté de Droit.

C'est là un symbole pour le passé et pour l'avenir. Pour le passé, ce symbole signifiera la mise en relief d'une amitié et d'une coopération politique de 18 ans sans interruption, basée sur la plus parfaite communauté d'idéal, de raisonnement et de méthodes.

Pour l'avenir, ce symbole doit signifier la consécration d'une nouvelle et solide intégration de la Tchécoslovaquie et de la Roumanie dans le système politique, dont elles font partie depuis 16 ans, et, si les deux nations veulent vivre, dont elles devront toujours continuer à faire partie, que certains le veuillent ou ne le veuillent pas, que cela leur fasse plaisir ou non, que cette coopération ressemble, comme dans le passé, au grand et large fleuve qui roule tranquillement

¹ Discours prononcé en français à l'Université Komensky, Bratislava, le 19 Juin 1937.

ses eaux, ou, qu'elle ressemble, comme dans certains moments récents, à un courant d'eau que le terrain oblige à suivre certaines sinuosités, et à sauter de pierre en pierre, sans toutefois que l'on puisse le détourner du but qu'il est appelé d'atteindre.

Nous vivons une époque de trouble sans précédent dans l'Histoire. On dit que nous voulons éviter la guerre, et pourtant nous l'avons, là, toute proche, mais nos yeux refusent de la voir. On dit que le monde manque d'une doctrine qui constitue son fil conducteur ; et pourtant, nous avons, sous nos yeux, deux doctrines, l'une plus restreinte, qui lutte pour faire l'unité de l'Europe sur la base de son idéologie, l'autre plus générale mais qui ne s'est pas encore rendu compte de la menace qui la guette, et qui, non seulement n'a commencé la lutte pour sa légitime défense, mais n'a pas encore pourvu à l'association des intérêts, qui doit précéder cette lutte. On dit que l'on veut vivre sous le règne de la loi internationale, et pourtant, on assiste impassible à sa violation répétée, et à la déification de ceux qui la réalisent, heureux si ces derniers consentent à accepter une conversation, les faits accomplis n'étant jamais remis en cause.

Le monde ressent aujourd'hui un besoin qui prime tous les autres : *L'ordre dans la pensée.*

Si cet ordre n'est pas rapidement rétabli, tout ce que l'on fera est inutile, et l'homme tombera plus bas qu'à l'époque des tribus primitifs, car du moins, à cette époque, le sort qui l'attendait était l'ascension, tandis que le sort attendrait, dans les circonstances actuelles, l'homme de demain, serait la douleur d'une chute des sommets dans la vallée.

Agir, c'est le mot d'ordre des temps que nous vivons.

Dans le magnifique discours que le Président de la République Tchécoslovaque faisait, à cette place même, il y aura bientôt deux mois, il disait :

« Il s'agit de créer un nouvel humanisme, un humanisme propre au XX^{ème} siècle, plus fort, plus solide, plus moderne, un nouvel humanisme qui ait sa nouvelle philosophie, sa nouvelle morale, son droit nouveau, qui adapteraient les anciennes conceptions de la démocratie libérale issue de la Révolution française, aux besoins d'une nouvelle démocratie nationale, sociale, économique et culturelle, avec l'aide de l'expérience des démocraties et des régimes autoritaires de l'Europe, qu'ils aient réussi ou non ».

« Vous juristes, vous cherchez dans des voies diverses, les formes justes de la synthèse, dont je viens de vous parler. C'est pourquoi je me tourne vers vous, pour que vous nous aidiez tous, mais surtout nous, les hommes politiques, à sortir du chaos idéologique de notre époque. C'est là votre mission, qui sert à la fois la nation, l'État et l'Humanité ».

Qu'il me soit permis de me débarrasser un instant de ma qualité d'homme politique, et de répondre en juriste à l'appel de votre Président :

« Nous sommes prêts, nous juristes, à aider les hommes politiques, mais il faut aussi que les hommes politiques nous aident ».

Notre tâche est d'exprimer en formules claires les exigences que la vie sociale nous révèle à chaque instant. Le rôle du législateur est de confirmer sous forme de loi ce que, nous juristes, avons constaté comme étant depuis longtemps, aux yeux de la collectivité, la règle qui guide, la règle que l'on suit, parce que la justice et l'intérêt le commandent.

Mais que pouvons-nous, nous juristes, contre le fait que les hommes politiques, une fois la loi mise en vigueur, l'écarte à un moment donné ?

Pour nous juristes, le droit n'est pas comparable à un être vivant. Il ne saurait être abattu par les coups que l'on porte contre lui. Bien plus, le droit ressort encore plus étincelant, à la suite des voies de fait qui ont tenté de le détruire.

Pour nous juristes, le droit est impérissable, jusqu'à ce que l'abrogation en due forme ait proclamé sa mort. Pour nous juristes, pour sortir du chaos idéologique, il faut avant tout s'en tenir à la stricte application de la loi existante, il faut passer d'un stade de droit à un autre stade de droit, il ne faut pas que le désordre glisse entre deux stades de droit, sinon le chaos idéologique est un Labyrinthe dont nul fil d'Ariane ne saurait nous indiquer la sortie.

« Pour nous juristes, enfin, il n'y a pas de raison de changer la Bible parce que les hommes sont des pécheurs ».

Et laissez-moi maintenant reprendre ma qualité d'homme politique, pour me demander avec toute l'autorité désirable : qu'avons-nous fait, nous hommes politiques, avec le Droit International que la Grande Guerre nous a légué ? Car, au fond, si la Grande Guerre n'avait pas abouti à un Code international, qui lie tous les États avec force obligatoire, elle se réduirait à une série d'horreurs sans justification aucune.

Quel est ce droit ? Pourquoi l'a-t-on créé ?

Avant la guerre le monde était partagé en zones soumises au régime de la souveraineté nationale inflexible. Ces souverainetés réglaient elles-mêmes, en vertu de leur propre raison d'être, les difficultés qui se présentaient. Et, si pendant ce règlement, deux souverainetés s'entrechoquaient, le droit à la guerre était la mesure suprême pour résoudre le conflit. Comme le droit n'avait pas toujours à son appui la force, c'est, en dernière analyse, une question de force matérielle qui tranchait les conflits entre les nations.

Des millions d'hommes ont dû mourir pour que ce système fit place au règne de la loi.

La guerre n'est pas définitivement exclue, mais les nations s'engageaient :

- a) À ne plus se faire justice soi-même, mais à soumettre tous les litiges à l'examen du Conseil de la Société des Nations ou à l'arbitrage.
 - b) À se prêter un mutuel appui contre celui qui violait cet engagement et voudrait se faire justice soi-même.
 - c) À créer des organismes permanents, à fonctionnement régulier, pour mettre ces principes en pratique.
-

La souveraineté des nations continuait à exister, mais grevée d'une servitude internationale en faveur de la paix, à tel point que l'on a pu définir le droit intérieur comme étant le total des lacunes du droit international.

Ces règles furent codifiées.

Au début, nous avons tâché d'appliquer avec sincérité ce Code International qui est le Pacte de la Société des Nations.

Mais, déjà en 1921, l'atavisme a tâché de faire reprendre à la souveraineté nationale sa primauté sur la Charte Internationale que le monde s'était donnée. C'est le cas des fameux amendements qui affaiblissent l'Article 16 du Pacte, mais qui, heureusement pour l'organisation future de la paix, ne sont jamais entrés en vigueur.

Puis l'Idéal International se fortifia et connut son sommet en 1924, lors de l'adoption du Protocole. Mais le Protocole de 1924, pas plus que les amendements de 1921 ne fut pas adopté.

Le pas en arrière de 1921 comme le pas en avant de 1924, constituent des oscillations de la vie, qui laissent la Loi Internationale, à l'heure actuelle, au point où elle se trouvait au moment de sa naissance.

Puis des guerres éclatèrent, au mépris du Pacte de la Société des Nations.

Puis des répudiations unilatérales des lois existantes eurent lieu, contrairement à la loi internationale et à ses usages, sans que des sanctions fussent prises.

Le coupable, pour moi, n'est pas autant l'État qui viole la loi internationale, car d'abord cet État a agi avec sincérité, et ensuite, au moment où il l'a fait, il a pris sur lui des risques sérieux qui pouvaient se transformer en catastrophe. Ce n'est que la certitude d'impunité, acquise au cours de la première expérience, qui explique les récidives.

Les coupables sont pour moi les nations que la Charte Internationale obligeait d'agir et qui ne l'ont pas fait, et qui, par leur passivité, ont créé le sentiment d'impunité, en enlevant au règne de la loi internationale son pouvoir effectif.

Et, fait pénible, fait grave à enregistrer, tandis que le nombre d'États qui ont violé le Pacte par leur action est très réduit, le nombre d'États qui ont opposé à la violation du Pacte leur inaction se confond avec le Monde. C'est de ces derniers seuls que je m'occuperai, car ce sont les seuls qui m'intéressent, vu que le langage qu'ils tiennent est un langage de droit, ce qui rend leur conduite encore plus inexplicable.

J'ai toujours été franc.

Ce n'est pas en ce moment solennel que je courberai ma sincérité habituelle de pensée et d'action devant des raisons protocolaires, qui, au prix de cacher la vérité, manquent de raison d'être.

Je poserai donc, en réalité, et très nettement, une question : *Veut-on dissoudre la Société des Nations ?*

C'est en réaliste, et en homme qui connaît par sa propre expérience l'opinion de beaucoup de pays, que je répondrai : Personne ne veut une telle chose, et personne n'aurait le courage de le faire.

D'abord, la *France* a basé toute sa politique extérieure sur la Société des Nations. Tous ses traités, qu'ils soient d'alliance ou d'amitié, sont encadrés dans le Pacte de la Société des Nations. Si ce dernier était détruit, la sécurité actuelle de la France, basée sur des traités internationaux, encadrés dans le mécanisme du Pacte, serait détruite aussi.

Ensuite la *Grande-Bretagne* a besoin de la Société des Nations pour intervenir dans les affaires d'Europe. La Grande-Bretagne est un vaste empire, assimilable à un corps dont les membres s'étendent dans toutes les parties du monde, mais dont la tête est à quelques minutes de vol de la frontière européenne. Ceci exclus pour elle aujourd'hui toute politique d'isolement. Ses traités publics d'alliance avec la France et la Belgique le prouvent d'ailleurs.

Mais la Grande-Bretagne ne saurait agir sur le continent en vertu de la notion d'alliances. Son opinion publique ne le comprendrait pas. Il faut que son action soit basée sur la légitime défense de ses intérêts vitaux et sur la nécessité de combattre pour le maintien de la loi internationale. Genève est l'endroit où cette dernière est proclamée. La Grande-Bretagne a besoin de la Société des Nations pour faire de la politique en Europe.

Enfin, même les États-Unis, qui se trouvent à l'écart de la Société des Nations, verraient avec défaveur sa disparition. En effet, non seulement l'Amérique ne comprend pas que notre continent n'ait pas encore réalisé, sous forme des États-Unis de l'Europe, son unité, mais elle ne comprendrait jamais que l'on détruise les liens beaucoup plus faciles qui lient les États d'aujourd'hui et dont le but est de réaliser les idéals qui sont la raison même de vivre du peuple américain.

Quant aux nations appelées à intérêt limité, permettez-moi de dire que, si la Société des Nations disparaissait, elles en seraient les premières les victimes.

Il se peut que la justice de Genève ne soit pas parfaite ; il se peut que l'aide qu'elle apporte soit encore faible et inefficace ; il se peut que les échecs récents aient diminué le pouvoir d'attraction du Grand Idéals qu'était la Société des Nations.

Mais, du moins, l'injustice subie par un État, la Société des Nations existante, est une injustice que l'on peut proclamer aux yeux du monde, afin de provoquer les réactions qui commandent les réparations nécessaires. Sans la Société des Nations, tous les États dits secondaires, entreraient dans des boîtes ouatées, et les cris qu'ils y pousseraient comme victimes ne sauraient être entendus par personne.

Du moment que nous arrivons à la conclusion, que tout le monde veut que la Société des Nations vive, qu'il me soit permis de me demander avec la même

franchise : *Que doit-on faire pour que la Société des Nations accomplisse réellement sa mission ?*

La Société des Nations n'est pas une académie morale ; elle n'est pas une confrérie de techniciens ; elle est une institution politique, dont la principale mission est de prévenir la guerre.

La grande erreur de ceux qui veulent que la Société des Nations vive, est de ne rien entreprendre, ou bien de se contenter de procédure, insignifiantes en apparence, mais, qui, si l'on ne les surveille pas de près, peuvent amener un affaiblissement encore plus grand des liens qui unissent aujourd'hui avec force obligatoire les États entre eux.

Qu'il me soit permis d'exprimer ici les méthodes que l'on devrait suivre pour atteindre le but proposé. Elles sont au nombre de trois :

- a) le non changement du texte du Pacte de la Société des Nations ;
- b) la signature, à côté du Pacte de la Société des Nations, d'accords d'assistance mutuelle régionaux, en prévision de l'application de l'Article 16 du Pacte;
- c) la déclaration d'avance et en temps utile, de la politique que chaque État Membre de la Société des Nations suivra en cas d'une éventuelle agression.

Ces méthodes sont, en même temps, les meilleures recettes pour faire sortir le monde du chaos idéologique dans lequel il vit, car ces méthodes signifient, d'abord, la réaffirmation et la réorganisation avec fermeté de l'ordre légal, dont le chaos est sorti: ceci pour avoir un ordre ; et ensuite le maintien de la paix, condition indispensable pour la création de l'ordre légal nouveau vers lequel nous pousse notre tendance instinctive de remplacer le bien par le mieux.

Lorsqu'on parle d'un changement du Pacte de la Société des Nations, c'est surtout l'Article 11, l'Article 16 et l'Article 19 que l'on prend en considération.

Si l'on pouvait amender l'Article 11, dans le sens de l'application des sanctions de l'Article 16 à titre préventif, je serais le premier à m'inscrire en faveur de l'amendement de cet article.

En effet, il pourrait y avoir des États qui préparent méthodiquement l'agression, par le réarmement à un niveau qui dépasse de beaucoup les besoins de la défense nationale, par la concentration de matières premières et de devises, à un niveau qui dépasse de beaucoup les besoins de la Paix. À l'heure actuelle, tant que ces États n'ont pas fait un geste à l'extérieur, qui menace la Paix, ou tant qu'ils ne se sont pas livrés à une agression contre lui, on ne peut agir contre eux.

Sanctionner non pas seulement la guerre, mais encore sa préparation, serait rendre toute guerre d'agression impossible. Mais comment s'imaginer que l'on pourrait obtenir l'unanimité des États pour un amendement de ce genre ? Il y a des États-Membres de la Société des Nations qui ne permettraient jamais une immixtion de cette nature dans leurs affaires intérieures. Alors pourquoi toucher à l'Article 11, si son renforcement ne nous paraît pas possible ?

Il y va de même de l'Article 16. Certains Etats voudraient soit l'affaiblir, en y introduisant la graduation des sanctions, soit l'exclusion des obligations de l'Article 16 en ce qui les concerne. Jamais, un Etat qui voudra voir vivre la Société des Nations, n'accédera à une telle prétention. L'unanimité pour changer l'Article 16 ne serait être obtenu. Alors pourquoi parler de sa révision?

Ce qu'il faudra, c'est non seulement ne pas modifier l'Article 16, mais, au contraire, rendre clair aux yeux de tout le monde que, vu que les amendements de 1921 ne sont pas entrés en vigueur, les résolutions de l'Assemblée en date du 4 Octobre 1921 sont nulles et non avenues.

Reste l'Article 19, qui a trait à la révision des frontières.

Loin de moi l'idée d'ouvrir une discussion à ce sujet. C'est mon cœur que je veux ouvrir aux États ex-ennemis, et non pas une polémique avec eux.

Je me contenterai de certaines observations d'ordre général, que je suis obligé de faire, dans le but de prouver que la réforme du Pacte de la Société des Nations n'est pas nécessaire.

Si nous prenons en considérations que l'Empire Britannique, les États-Unis d'Amérique, les États de l'Amérique du Sud, la France, la Belgique, la Hollande, la Suisse, l'Espagne, le Portugal, les États Scandinaves, les États Baltes, les États de la Petite Entente, les États de l'Entente Balkanique, l'Union Soviétique, dont la politique actuelle est basée sur la Société des Nations, et le rapprochement entre les peuples, ne demandent pas le changement de leurs frontières, on arrive à la conclusion que pour l'immense majorité des pays de la Planète, la révision de leurs frontières ne constitue pas un problème.

Si, d'autre part, nous ferons observer que la politique actuelle de l'Allemagne à l'égard de la Pologne, et la politique de l'Italie à l'égard de la Yougoslavie ne sont pas compatibles avec la révision des frontières polonaises et yougoslaves, on arrive à la conclusion qu'à l'heure actuelle, pour ces États la question de leurs frontières n'est pas non plus, de leur propre aveu, un problème. D'ailleurs, ce serait la plus grave erreur que de commencer une guerre, qui finirait par se généraliser, pour une question locale qui ne concerne que certains États.

En ce qui concerne l'Europe Centrale, je dirai seulement :

D'abord ce ne sont pas les pays intéressés mais de grands experts américains et anglais qui ont tracé ces frontières.

Ensuite, ces experts ont fait des études tellement détaillées dans chaque cas, qu'ils n'hésitent pas de dire que, s'il s'agissait de changer une frontière pour réparer une injustice, le résultat serait que l'on aurait créé une injustice plus grande que celle que l'on aurait voulu réparer.

Enfin, en fixant une frontière, il est impossible de ne pas créer des mécontentements.

Aujourd'hui c'est celui qui a perdu un territoire qui se lamente ; demain ce sera le tour de celui auquel on aura pris son territoire, que de se lamenter. Il y a, en

matière de frontières, une musique à longue durée, une espèce de *moto perpetuo*, que l'on doit nécessairement enregistrer, et auquel il n'est pas facile de mettre fin.

Qu'est-ce en effet que le soi-disant droit historique ? C'est un rapt consacré par le temps. Les frontières actuelles, si elles vont durer, comme je le pense, auront au moins le mérite d'être des sentences internationales consacrées par le Temps.

Pour réviser un modeste contrat de location, le consentement des deux parties intéressées est nécessaire. En conséquence, il serait difficile d'appliquer l'Article 19 du Pacte, si l'État intéressé ne donnait pas son consentement à ce que son territoire soit réduit. Et comme il est clair, que les États visés par la révision ne donneront jamais leur consentement à ce que soient changées les conditions d'application de l'Article 19, je demande : Est-il sage d'ouvrir une discussion publique sur l'Article 19, qui excitera les passions nationales, alors qu'on sait d'avance, que l'on arrivera à aucun résultat ?

Ceci est pour moi d'autant plus vrai, que je considère que la solution des maux, que crée la frontière, n'est pas la révision qui, somme toute, signifie le déplacement du mal, que la frontière représente, d'un endroit à un autre, mais la destruction de toutes les entraves que la frontière représente, par sa spiritualisation constante et progressive.

Combien plus humain, plus pratique et plus sain est le plan du Président Hodža⁶³ de réunir les États Danubiens dans une entité économique distincte, que de les laisser s'adonner à des querelles, qui ne conduisent à aucun résultat, mais qui remplissent d'amertume l'âme de ceux qui se disputent.

Si le Pacte de la Société des Nations ne doit pas être changé, il doit être complété par des pactes régionaux d'assistance mutuelle. L'Europe devra être partagée en zones au point de vue de la sécurité. Qu'est-ce qu'une zone ? C'est une question sujette à discussion. Ce qui importe c'est que dans l'avenir, les sanctions économiques doivent rester universelles et doivent être appliquées concomitamment avec des sanctions militaires au moins régionales.

Je sais qu'il y a, à l'heure actuelle, une vogue dans le domaine international : c'est la politique de neutralité. Rien de plus naturel que le besoin auquel correspond une telle conception. Rien de plus naturel que de ne pas vouloir y participer. Mais s'imaginer que l'on peut pratiquer la politique de neutralité par une affirmation pure et simple, c'est vraiment par trop enfantin.

Pour être neutre, il faut d'abord être d'accord avec tous ses voisins. Il faut ensuite être prêt à se défendre militairement, si les voisins ne tiennent pas parole. Il faut ensuite, si les forces propres ne suffisent pas, pour vaincre un voisin trop puissant, devenir l'allié de ceux des États qui ont le même intérêt que vous.

La politique de neutralité ne peut constituer qu'une résultante. Elle ne saurait jamais constituer une méthode.

La neutralité est le fruit des pactes d'assistance mutuelle, faits dans le cadre de la Société des Nations, conformément à la doctrine de la sécurité

collective, qui, elle seule, par l'immensité des forces qu'elle peut dresser contre l'agresseur, paralysera à tout jamais l'action criminelle de ce dernier.

Y a-t-il un seul État de la Petite Entente qui puisse pratiquer la politique de neutralité ? Non.

La Tchécoslovaquie est non seulement l'alliée de la Roumanie et de la Yougoslavie, mais encore de la France et de l'URSS.

La Yougoslavie est l'alliée de la Tchécoslovaquie et de la Roumanie contre la Hongrie ou la Bulgarie agissant seules ou en collaboration avec d'autres États, grands ou petits.

Quant à la Roumanie, en plus de ses obligations, en vertu de la Petite Entente et de l'Entente Balkanique, elle est à l'Est l'alliée de la Pologne, qui à son tour est, à l'Ouest, l'allié de la France contre l'Allemagne.

Dans ces conditions, pour les États de la Petite Entente, le mot neutralité est synonyme du non accomplissement d'obligations existantes, c'est-à-dire synonyme du mot déshonneur.

C'est pourquoi les États de la Petite Entente ont tout l'intérêt à voir s'établir sur la base du Pacte de la Société des Nations un système de pactes régionaux militaires, qui seuls peuvent leur assurer la sécurité.

Quand au système des pactes bilatéraux, qu'il me soit permis d'observer qu'ils ressemblent étrangement aux vieux traités d'alliance d'avant-guerre qui constituent des systèmes clos.

Le Pacte régional reste toujours ouvert à l'adhésion de tous les intéressés, c'est pourquoi il est compatible avec le Pacte de la Société des Nations. Il n'est que la mise en vigueur anticipée de l'Article 16 du Pacte. Et s'il est partiel, à ses débuts, c'est-à-dire s'il n'a obtenu que quelques signatures pour commencer, rien ne s'oppose à ce que le nombre de signatures augmente et qu'il devienne général à la fin.

Quant à l'idée que l'on pourrait isoler un pacte bilatéral d'un autre, à tel point que l'on puisse faire la guerre en vertu du premier et à demander légalement la neutralité en vertu du second, je me contenterai de dire que l'humanité a trop souffert pour qu'elle ne réalise pas qu'elle ne peut accepter comme recette de paix la paralysie d'une région combinée avec le système des mains libres dans un autre. Un tel système ne mérite pas même la critique : un sourire suffit.

Enfin, pour sortir du chaos idéologique il faut maintenir la paix. C'est le seul moyen qui permet de sortir du stade de droit actuel et d'arriver à un stade de droit nouveau, qui sera le compromis entre tous les idéals existants et que nous ne pourrons atteindre que par l'élan du cœur, joint aux exigences de la raison et vérifié par l'expérience du Temps.

Il n'y a pas de moyens plus efficaces pour préserver la paix actuelle que celui qui consiste, pour chaque État, de déclarer ce qu'il fera d'avance en présence d'une agression éventuelle.

Ce sera toujours l'honneur des États de la Petite Entente et de l'Entente Balkanique que d'avoir dit, en temps utile, qu'elle sera leur action en présence d'une agression prévue par les traités qui les lient.

Aussi, si nous avons connu l'angoisse de la guerre entre les autres, dont pourrait sortir une guerre qui nous concerne, du moins, sur le territoire international que couvre le Traité de la Petite Entente et celui de l'Entente Balkanique, à aucun moment, ni dans le passé, ni dans le présent, nous n'avons perdu le sentiment de la sécurité.

C'est que, dans les deux accords dont je parle, on a toujours considéré l'équivoque comme l'ennemi, la clarté comme la meilleure méthode et la fermeté comme un devoir.

Si tous les États agissaient comme nous, si l'on pouvait dresser dès aujourd'hui le tableau des forces de ceux qui s'opposeraient demain à l'agression, cette dernière n'aurait jamais lieu.

On sait qu'en Occident il y a une tendance à faire une distinction entre l'Est et l'Ouest au point de vue de la sécurité. Cette distinction ne repose sur aucun fondement.

D'abord, le Pacte de la Société des Nations est général et exprime de façon claire la notion de la paix indivisible.

Ensuite, la Grande-Bretagne n'a jamais dit et ne dira jamais qu'elle se désintéresse de la paix en Europe Centrale et Orientale. Elle fait simplement cette distinction : pour l'Ouest mes intérêts m'apparaissent, dès aujourd'hui, tellement clairs que je me prononce à l'avance. Pour l'Est, je me prononcerai le jour où l'agression aura lieu.

Enfin n'oublions pas que l'indivisibilité de la paix résulte du fait que la France a des traités d'alliance en règle avec la Tchécoslovaquie et l'URSS d'une part et avec la Grande-Bretagne de l'autre.

Le jour où la France agirait en vertu de ses traités d'alliance et en conformité avec les recommandations du Conseil de la Société des Nations pour l'application de l'Article 16 ou de l'Article 15 par. 7 du Pacte et où elle se verrait attaquée à son tour, elle sera la victime d'une agression non provoquée.

L'accomplissement d'un devoir international ne pourra jamais être assimilé à une provocation, car alors tous les traités d'alliance qui lient les Puissances de l'Ouest et le Pacte de la Société des Nations lui-même, seraient de véritables leurres.

La France aura ce jour-là le droit au mutuel appui dont parle le par. 3 de l'Article 16, tel que la Grande-Bretagne l'a demandé aux Puissances méditerranéennes pendant l'application des sanctions dans le conflit italo-éthiopien et, en plus, à l'aide que stipulent ses traités d'alliance en cas d'une agression non provoquée.

On sait, d'autre part, ce que l'on dit encore en Occident, en France aussi bien qu'en Grande-Bretagne : la pratique d'une politique qui consiste à proclamer

dès aujourd'hui en mots, l'action que nous ferons demain, effraie l'homme de la rue.

Oh, pauvre homme de la rue ! Qu'il me soit permis de prendre ta défense, au moins ici, à l'Université du Grand Comenius⁶⁴, au nom des principes qui sont à la base de sa philosophie : « L'école doit être une usine d'humanité, et les hommes, sans égard à leurs classe ou à leur sexe, doivent être éduqués sur tout sujet qui leur est nécessaire pour vivre et pour atteindre la Grâce ».

Pour sûr, l'homme de la rue, qui ne connaît pas les détails et les difficultés de la politique, a une tendance toute naturelle à éviter la guerre tant que lui ou son pays ne sont pas directement attaqués.

Mais il est facile, par une éducation adaptée, de faire comprendre à l'homme de la rue que la solidarité entre nations est tellement étroite que l'on ne peut toucher impunément à l'une sans nuire à l'autre. Il est encore plus facile de lui faire comprendre que proclamer d'avance la nécessité de faire la guerre est le moyen le plus sûr de l'éviter.

Pour moi, la situation des opinions publiques en Occident ressemble étrangement à un film Kodak déjà exposé, mais pas encore développé. Quand à moi, je vois déjà l'image. L'homme de la rue ne la verra que le jour où les événements auront permis le développement du film. Mais alors il sera trop tard : la guerre sera inévitable et l'homme de la rue devra la faire.

Or, le but que nous devons poursuivre est de maintenir la paix et non pas de la gagner une seconde fois.

Que savait l'homme de la rue de Glasgow des raisons qui en 1914 déterminèrent la Grande-Bretagne de prendre les armes ? Il n'en savait rien. Et pourtant, il mourut en héros.

Quand l'homme de la rue est capable de donner sa vie sans savoir pourquoi, au moins montrons - lui le respect qu'on lui doit en lui expliquant avec franchise quel est le devoir international de son pays, et par là quel est son propre intérêt.

Lorsqu'il réalisera que le silence peut le conduire à la mort et qu'un mot en temps utile peut lui sauver la vie, c'est lui qui poussera les gouvernements de partout à parler et à dire les paroles nécessaires qui feront plier les épées et taire les canons.

Non, je n'ai pas peur que l'homme de la rue empêche les gouvernements de déclarer leur politique d'avance. J'ai plutôt peur du manque du courage qu'il faut pour rompre avec la tradition et pour tenir ouvertement un langage, qui peut temporairement provoquer une hostilité internationale. Mais que l'homme politique réalise que cette hostilité n'est pas éternelle, et qu'elle peut lui apporter à la fin un bien rare, un bien précieux: le respect de l'adversaire pour son caractère et son courage.

Voici, Mesdames et Messieurs, un vaste programme de solutions concrètes, dressé par un homme politique qui est en même temps un juriste, en

réponse à l'appel du Président Benès en vue de sortir du chaos idéologique actuel, par la mise du droit au service de la politique, à tel point qu'on arrive à la conclusion qu'il s'agit de deux aspects d'une vérité unique.

Ce n'est que le jour où la politique se confondra avec le droit, où l'on n'opposera plus l'esprit politique à l'esprit juridique, ce n'est que le jour où l'on réalisera que le véritable esprit juridique se confond avec l'esprit politique le plus aiguisé, parce qu'il consiste à harmoniser les contradictions de l'heure, au service du maître qui s'appelle la loi, parce qu'il sait, que si ce dernier ne mérite plus d'être le maître, il faut le remplacer par un maître nouveau, adapté aux exigences nouvelles, qui s'appellent encore la loi, mais la loi nouvelle ; ce n'est que le jour où le droit rayonnera comme un soleil levant dans l'âme de tous les hommes, comme une directive qui guide, comme un impératif catégorique qui s'impose, comme une auto-obéissance, qui se confond avec la liberté organisée, que l'humanité aura été sauvée, parce que, dans la paix que crée l'ordre juridique, l'homme pourra accomplir sa destinée conformément au commandement de l'Idéal Créateur.

L'Idéal Créateur veut que l'empire du ciel qui est en nous, se réalise autour de nous, dans le monde visible de la matière.

L'Idéal Créateur ne se contente pas de semer dans l'âme humaine le germe de la foi dans une vie future, où la sagesse deviendra l'allié de la bonté ; il exige surtout les efforts nécessaires, quelques grands qu'ils soient, pour intégrer dans la matière toutes les poussées instinctives de l'âme humaine vers le beau et vers le bien, qu'il ne suffit pas d'entrevoir, qu'il s'agit de créer.

L'Idéal Créateur ne distingue pas entre l'esprit et la matière. Il considère le premier comme le génie du sculpteur et le second comme le marbre qui se laisse façonner, à fin qu'apparaisse en pleine lumière, le beau qui se cachait auparavant dans l'âme humaine, comme dans une ténèbre.

La paix dans l'ordre, le droit en perpétuel devenir, pour suivre le cours changeant de la vie, l'âme humaine en continu travail pour se réaliser elle-même en formes concrètes d'une pensée et d'une générosité en constante ascension, voilà les conditions qu'exige la sortie du chaos et la vie organisée à laquelle tous les êtres humains aspirent.

C'est par le droit, comme méthode, c'est pour l'empire du droit, comme objectif, c'est par le fonctionnement du droit au service de l'amélioration du droit, comme règle de conduite, que nous réaliserons les exigences de l'Idéal Créateur, que nous cesserons d'être des humbles qui se courbent devant les difficultés de l'existence, que nous deviendrons les maîtres de la vie, dont, par ignorance, nous nous croyons les esclaves, que nous sentirons, enfin, que Dieu est véritablement en nous.

Pour m'avoir donné l'occasion d'exprimer ces vérités, qui sont la substance même de ma vie, et pour m'avoir proclamé Docteur *honoris causa* de votre université, laissez-moi, Monsieur le Recteur, et vous tous, Messieurs les

Professeurs, vous remercier pour ce trésor de richesses spirituelles que j'emporte de Bratislava et qui s'appelle la gratitude.

**« ON NE PEUT PAS SAUVEGARDER LA PAIX,
QU'EN LUTTANT POUR LE DROIT »¹**

Monsieur le Président,
Mesdames,
Messieurs,

C'est un très grand honneur pour moi que de parler devant vous, à côté de l'Honorable Sénateur Monsieur M. Portman⁶⁵, et de mon éminent ami, Monsieur Chastenet⁶⁶.

Je suis de ceux qui savent qu'en France, c'est la province qui gouverne. Je ne dirai pas que c'en est la raison, mais le fait est que je n'ai pas encore parlé jusqu'à aujourd'hui en public à Paris.

D'ailleurs, je n'ai parlé en France, devant de larges audiences, que deux fois dans ma vie. La première fois, ce fut à Marseille, il y a 19 ans, où, au début de ma carrière politique, exilé de Roumanie⁶⁷ pour avoir été un de ceux qui refusèrent de signer avec l'Allemagne un Traité de Paix séparé, le fameux Traité de Bucarest⁶⁸, qui restera un modèle à consulter pour le cas où l'Allemagne sortirait victorieuse d'une guerre future, j'exposai la situation de mon pays gisant sous la botte étrangère. Et depuis, il y a à peu près 19 ans, j'ai gardé le silence en France, et je parle aujourd'hui à Bordeaux.

Que d'événements se sont passés dans cet intervalle !

Je les résumerai tous en disant : il y a 19 ans, le sang coulait chez nous, mais nous étions tous possédés par la foi, par la foi dans un Monde Nouveau qui devait naître et où régnerait la justice, où l'Idéal pourrait montrer avec fierté ses exigences, où l'homme serait plus frère de l'homme qu'il ne l'avait été dans le passé.

Aujourd'hui le sang ne coule pas chez nous, mais on craint, à chaque instant, qu'on ne lui demande un nouveau sacrifice et, en plus, une vague de lassitude s'est emparée de nos esprits, à tel point que demain n'est plus pour nous une promesse, mais une échéance dont nous serions les débiteurs.

C'est contre cet état d'esprit, n'importe où je le trouve, que je me suis proposé de lutter. Je veux analyser ses causes ; je veux vous prouver que cet état d'esprit est spécifique aux nations dites victorieuses ; je veux vous démontrer que la foi a actuellement changé de domicile, et qu'elle loge dans le cœur de ceux qui ont perdu la guerre, qui n'ont ni colonies, ni richesses, ni matières premières, mais qui considèrent demain comme le grand jour, où tout leur sera octroyé.

¹ Conférence prononcée en français au Congrès du Groupement des Officiers Mutilés et Anciens Combattants, Bordeaux, le 27 Juin 1937.

D'où provient notre état d'esprit actuel ; que devons nous faire pour qu'il disparaisse ?

Pour moi, il n'y a pas de doute : la dépression assez généralisée que j'ai rencontrée dans divers pays du monde, a trois causes : la passivité en présence de la lutte d'idéologie qui se poursuit partout et qui, vu qu'aucune des deux thèses ne saurait nous convaincre, affaiblit notre foi dans la doctrine démocratique, en nous faisant croire qu'elle ne saurait sortir victorieuse d'un combat avec les deux doctrines extrêmes, alliées, lorsqu'il s'agit d'entreprendre une conquête ; c'est ensuite la violation répétée de la Loi internationale, sans sanction aucune, ce qui fait dire que la Loi internationale et l'illusion se confondent généralement ; c'est enfin la destruction de la confiance dans la Société des Nations, comme point d'appui et instrument afin de maintenir la Paix internationale.

Le remède contre cet état d'esprit est simple et consiste dans un fait unique : Parlons dès aujourd'hui en maîtres ; cessons dès aujourd'hui d'être les humbles qui se courbent devant les exigences de la vie ; évitons la guerre en parlant de la guerre, car ce n'est qu'en montrant qu'on n'a pas peur de la guerre, que l'on peut s'imposer à ceux qui voudraient la déclencher.

Que la lutte d'idéologie ne soit à la base de notre psychologie actuelle, il n'y a aucun doute.

L'Europe cherche son unité. On essaye de la faire soit par la victoire de l'extrême droite, soit par la victoire de l'extrême gauche. Aucune de ces doctrines ne peut nous convenir, à nous qui sommes élevés à l'école des idées de la Révolution Française. Il ne s'agit pas pour nous, seulement d'opposer le veto à toutes les doctrines extrémistes, il s'agit pour nous de lutter pour que l'unité de l'Europe soit faite au nom de notre démocratie à nous, telle qu'elle est pratiquée par l'immense majorité des États du Monde : la France, l'Empire Britannique, les États-Unis, l'Amérique du Sud, la Suisse, la Hollande, les États Scandinaves.

Comment ? Parce que les pays dits totalitaires se sont donné des maîtres qui incarnent la loi, au point qu'un changement d'humeur équivaut à un changement de loi, nous aurions perdu nous, les démocrates, la notion de la loi telle que nous l'avons toujours conçue et telle qu'elle est et doit rester, c'est-à-dire l'expression de la volonté du peuple ?

Il est vrai qu'à l'intérieur des États dits totalitaires, il y a une discipline qui impressionne.

Mais nul besoin de troquer notre liberté d'esprit et d'action contre cette discipline.

Nous pouvons avoir et l'une et l'autre. Regardez du côté de la Grande-Bretagne. Je ne connais pas un pays à liberté plus illimitées que celui-là. Mais, il y a côté d'elle une discipline que crée l'auto-obéissance qui se confond avec la liberté organisée.

Jamais les Français ne sauraient adopter la doctrine des États dits totalitaires. Et la raison en est simple. En quoi réside, en dernière analyse, cette

doctrine? Au point de vue psychologique, cette doctrine réside dans la perte du droit de juger soi-même les situations qui se présentent, dans la délégation de ce droit de juger à un tiers qui juge pour vous, dans l'obligation qu'on assume de faire ce que ce tiers dira, en parlant aussi bien en son nom qu'au vôtre.

Au point de vue économique, ces doctrines résident dans la main mise de la collectivité sur la propriété privée, soit de façon totale, soit de façon partielle, mais, dans ce dernier cas, dans une mesure limitée en permanente extension, jusqu'au point que ces doctrines finissent par se confondre.

Quelqu'un me demandait un jour quelle est la différence entre le communisme d'une part et les autres doctrines totalitaires de l'autre?

Je lui répondis: aucune.

Supposez que vous ayez six vaches. Le communisme vous les prendra toutes et vous n'entendrez plus jamais parler d'elles. Les autres États totalitaires vous les laisseront, mais sous ces conditions: Vous n'aurez plus jamais le droit de les traire et, en plus, vous aurez l'obligation de payer le coût de leur entretien.

Et, chose curieuse à observer, comme la vie n'est que changement, si la prise de la propriété a été totale au début, l'évolution consiste à le rendre bribe par bribe, parcelle par parcelle, à ceux qui l'ont perdue. Si, au contraire, la prise de la propriété privée a consisté dans une main mise partielle, au début, l'évolution consiste à prendre par étapes ce qui est resté, pour que l'on arrive à la fin au néant objectif, accompagné, subjectivement, de la mentalité de bourgeois du propriétaire exproprié qui a cru et se croira toujours propriétaire, grâce aux formules que l'on aura trouvées pour apaiser ses susceptibilités durant l'opération.

En un mot, l'avenir du communisme est la bourgeoisie, l'avenir des autres doctrines totalitaires est le communisme.

Peu importe si ce que je dis plaît ou ne plaît pas. Je dirai toujours, sans hostilité ni provocation, ce que je pense et ce que l'évolution des faits m'enseignera comme devant être une vérité.

Mais je m'empresserai d'ajouter: Nous, Latins, à régime démocratique, nous ne voulons d'aucune de ces deux doctrines. Nous entendons ne pas nous immiscer dans la soi-disant lutte idéologique, pour autant qu'elle se développe au-delà de nos frontières. Mais nous n'accepterons jamais que, sous prétexte de la liberté des idées, il s'installe dans nos foyers une habile propagande, qui fasse vaciller nos esprits; nous n'accepterons jamais de déléguer à d'autres le droit de juger pour nous-mêmes; nous n'accepterons jamais de renoncer à la propriété privée qui, étant le fruit du travail de nos ancêtres ou de notre propre travail, est considérée par nous comme sacrée.

Mais pour que les faits répondent à nos désirs, il faut être actifs. Que faisons-nous pour que la démocratie vive? Quels sont les efforts que nous pratiquons auprès de notre jeunesse pour que cette dernière voit dans la démocratie un idéal, dans le respect de la dignité humaine, le bien le plus précieux, dans la liberté, la plus grande richesse? Qui pense encore aux sacrifices

que nos ancêtres ont dû faire, au sang qui a dû couler pour que la vie à laquelle nous nous sommes habitués ait pu s'établir?

Et c'est cette passivité que nous opposons à la Radio étrangère qui chante les louanges du Paradis Nouveau, qui n'est que le masque de l'esclavage ; à la propagande qui, spéculant sur certains désordres, nés de la liberté mal comprise, incite les esprits à accepter les régimes autoritaires, dont la porte d'entrée est facile à trouver, mais dont la porte de sortie s'appelle toujours la révolution, c'est cette passivité que nous opposons aux actes de provocation à la guerre, basés uniquement sur la croyance, créée par l'expérience du passé, que leur impunité est assurée et qu'ils ne feront que courber davantage les drapeaux des démocraties devant ceux des États totalitaires?

Avouons que ce n'est pas là un moyen de préserver la Paix, mais un moyen de provoquer, par une erreur de psychologie, dont nous sommes les auteurs, la guerre à court terme.

Mesdames et Messieurs, l'heure actuelle est à la franchise.

Par cette passivité des opinions publiques, comparée à l'activité ininterrompue des États totalitaires, la France est en train d'affaiblir ses positions en Europe Centrale et en Europe Orientale. Dans ces régions, on est tenté de considérer comme maîtres ceux qui savent parler avec énergie, ceux qui apprennent les canons pendant qu'ils causent, ceux qui considèrent le droit de se faire justice soi-même comme un postulat de l'honneur national.

Certes, c'est là une erreur. C'est affreux. Mais pardonnez aux masses qui jugent ainsi, car, de par la propre inaction des intéressés, elles sont poussées à penser ainsi.

Ceux qui comme moi vous connaissent, savent bien que cette lenteur à déclencher l'action est le propre des forts, qui ne veulent pas être dérangés de leur confort spirituel à propos de tout.

Je sais d'avance ce que la France fera. Que vous me disiez le contraire et je me croirai moi-même et non pas ceux qui me parlent. C'est que la France est beaucoup le film non développé. En ce qui me concerne, je vois déjà l'image. Quant aux autres, ils ne la verront que le jour où les événements permettront de le développer. Mais alors ce sera trop tard: la guerre sera à nos portes.

Ce que je veux, ce que nous voulons tous, ce n'est pas de gagner la guerre une seconde fois, c'est de l'éviter pour toujours.

Or, ce n'est pas par l'inaction, ce n'est pas par le repliement sur soi-même, ce n'est pas par l'horreur de parler de la guerre que cette dernière sera évitée. Il faut que tout le monde travaille pour qu'un tel fléau soit évité à l'humanité.

La France a besoin de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale, comme ces dernières ont besoin de la France.

Supposez une guerre entre la France et l'Allemagne. En le disant, je mets les deux États sur pied d'égalité au point de vue de leur esprit pacifique.

En faisant cette hypothèse, loin de moi l'idée d'attribuer à l'Allemagne des idées belliqueuses. Ce serait offenser un pays, chose que je veux à tout prix éviter. Mais lorsqu'on fait une étude théorique, il est tout aussi inadmissible d'attribuer à un pays l'intention de faire la guerre, comme de l'exclure de sa qualité de belligérant dans une guerre éventuelle. Ce n'est que sous la réserve que je viens de faire que l'on devra interpréter mes paroles.

Faisons donc l'hypothèse d'une guerre entre la France et l'Allemagne.

Si les États de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale ne sont pas en guerre à côté de la France, si l'Allemagne n'a plus à faire face à deux fronts, mais à un seul, le front français aura à faire des efforts supplémentaires et l'issue de la guerre sera moins certaine.

J'entends déjà l'objection : pourquoi, s'il s'agit d'une guerre sur un seul front, voulez-vous qu'il s'agisse du front français ? Ce sera le front oriental, et la France restera tranquille, non attaquée par personne. C'est là que réside la plus grande erreur politique que l'opinion française pourrait commettre : s'imaginer qu'elle a moins à craindre d'une Allemagne dont les forces se sont accrues par une victoire à l'Est, que de l'Allemagne actuelle, s'imaginer qu'en donnant satisfaction à un État sur le dos des autres, le tour de l'État qui a permis une telle politique ne viendra jamais.

Si une Nation a l'impérialisme dans son âme, la première conquête en appelle une seconde et la lutte ne cessera que le jour où le nouvel impérialisme aura détruit l'impérialisme existant.

N'oublions pas que si les Anglais sont tellement pondérés, tellement conservateurs, c'est qu'ils ont fait pendant trois siècles de l'impérialisme, il est vrai, dans des régions peu avancées, là où leurs conquêtes pouvaient se justifier par la nécessité de répandre les bienfaits de notre civilisation, si bienfaits il y a.

N'oublions pas non plus que les Anglais n'ont fait cet impérialisme colonial qu'une fois que leur essai de faire de l'impérialisme à domicile a échoué, à la suite de la guerre de Cents ans.

Aujourd'hui, les Anglais sont les sages du monde; ils ont réussi à transformer leur intérêt national en fonction internationale.

Ne laissons pas commencer la lutte dont le but est l'expropriation des possédants d'aujourd'hui par les velléitaires qui veulent ravir le bien des autres au nom d'une mission divine qu'eux seuls ont découverte.

Ceci m'amène à dire ce que j'ai été appelé à dire à mes amis britanniques.

Le sort de la France est d'écrire une pièce, soit en deux actes, soit en un seul.

Dans le premier cas, la pièce sera une tragédie. Son premier acte sera la guerre à l'Est et la Paix à l'Ouest. Le second acte sera une guerre entre la France et l'Angleterre, d'une part, et l'Allemagne de l'autre, mais une Allemagne dont les forces seront énormément accrues par toutes les annexions territoriales qu'elle

aura réalisées et toutes les matières premières qu'elle puisa dans les réservoirs illimités qui s'appellent l'Union Soviétique et l'Europe Centrale.

Dans le second cas, la France écrit une pièce en un seul acte. Et cette pièce ne sera pas une tragédie. Son sujet est le maintien de la Paix, partout, quelle que soit la zone de l'Europe où la guerre pourrait éclater. Et le mérite de cette pièce est, qu'une fois écrite, elle ne sera jamais jouée. Ce qui a déterminé l'Allemagne à faire la guerre en 1914, ce fut son illusion dangereuse sur la neutralité britannique. Si l'on faisait dès aujourd'hui, avec netteté, le tableau des forces qui se dresseront le jour où une agression aurait lieu n'importe dans quelle région d'Europe, personne n'aurait le courage de se livrer à une guerre, tous les États tâcheront d'obtenir, par voie d'accord, ce qui leur est nécessaire.

Si l'on recourt à cette seconde méthode, et si l'on donne les garanties de paix nécessaires, il faut être généreux : autant nous devons être actifs et inexorables lorsqu'il s'agit de combattre la guerre, autant nous devons être compréhensifs et tolérants lorsqu'il s'agit de consolider la Paix.

Mais pour ceci, que finisse à jamais l'ère des répudiations unilatérales et non sanctionnées de la loi internationale, source qui alimente constamment l'esprit de défaitisme qui s'est emparé de nous.

Rien n'a plus nui à la France et à ses amis que les événements du 7 Mars 1936. Il est vrai que pour n'avoir pas été étendue en surface, la réaction contre le coup du 7 Mars a été grande en profondeur. Ce que l'Angleterre n'aurait jamais dit auparavant en paroles, elle l'a stipulé par écrit: Elle donnera son aide et assistance toutes les fois que la France sera victime d'une agression non provoquée. Ne sous-estimez pas cet engagement, en le restreignant par votre propre interprétation seulement au cas où le sol de la France serait envahi par des troupes ennemies. Il y a bien plus dans ce texte. Réalisez-le et agissez en conséquence.

Supposez que la guerre éclate en Europe Centrale. La France, conformément à ses Traités d'alliance et aux résolutions du Conseil de la Société des Nations, traverse la frontière d'un pays voisin. Elle se voit à son tour contre-attaquée. La France, par l'application de sanctions, a rempli un devoir international. Jamais l'accomplissement d'un devoir international ne peut être assimilé à une provocation. La France a le devoir de réaliser cette vérité. La France ne doit demander à personne le consentement pour appliquer ses Traités, qui la lient à l'Europe Centrale et Orientale, une fois que le Conseil de la Société des Nations s'est prononcé.

La Grande-Bretagne, en 1935, pour n'avoir appliqué que des sanctions économiques, a rappelé à tous les États méditerranéens l'obligation de mutuel appui que prévoit le Pacte de la Société des Nations, pour le cas où l'Italie l'attaquerait. Elle a obtenu toutes les assurances nécessaires.

Ce que la Grande-Bretagne a obtenu pour les sanctions économiques, et qui n'était que son droit, la France l'obtiendra sûrement pour des sanctions

militaires. C'est son droit aussi. Et en plus, la France a le droit de faire jouer dans tous ces cas le Traité d'Alliance avec la Grande-Bretagne, qui vise l'agression non provoquée.

Mais pour cela, il faut que la France soit consciente de son droit, qu'elle réalise à la lettre et non pas de façon rétrécie, qu'elle se rappelle que Calais est sur le territoire français et que, partant, le devoir de la France est plutôt d'agir et d'entraîner que de questionner et de demander avis.

Si la Grande-Bretagne a déclaré que sa frontière est sur le Rhin, nul doute que la frontière de la France ne soit en Tchécoslovaquie et nul doute que la frontière de cette dernière est sur le Dniester qui sépare la Roumanie de l'Union Soviétique.

Quel exemple plus admirable de la solidarité entre Nations, que le fait de constater que chacune d'elle considère que sa frontière est celle de l'État voisin.

C'est en parlant ouvertement de ces choses-là, c'est en disant que l'on fera la guerre si le voisin est touché, que l'on aura vraiment travaillé pour éviter la guerre et pour consolider la paix existante.

Ce travail doit être général et organisé. Il a à son service un grand instrument international qui s'appelle la Société des Nations.

Je sais que les échecs de la Société des Nations, dus à son inaction, comme dans le conflit sino-japonais, ou à son action, comme dans le conflit italo-éthiopien, ont diminué son prestige et la confiance de l'opinion publique internationale en elle.

Mais soyons justes: qu'est-ce la Société des Nations, sinon un rassemblement de Gouvernements? Comment la Société des Nations ferait-elle faillite et l'honneur des Gouvernements qui travaillent sous son couvert resterait-il indemne? Non, ce n'est pas la Société des Nations qui a fait faillite, ce sont les hommes qui ont travaillé sous son drapeau, au nom des pays qui, par leur force, imposent les directives de la Société des Nations, qui sont les grands coupables.

Soyons aussi réalistes: Veut-on dissoudre la Société des Nations?

C'est en homme qui connaît, par sa propre expérience, l'opinion de beaucoup de pays, que je répondrai: une pareille chose est impossible.

D'abord, la France a basé toute sa politique extérieure sur la Société des Nations. Tous ces Traités, qu'ils soient d'alliance ou d'amitié, sont encadrés dans le Pacte de la Société des Nations. Si ce dernier était détruit, la sécurité actuelle de la France, basée sur des Traités internationaux, encadrés dans le mécanisme du Pacte, serait détruite aussi.

Ensuite la Grande-Bretagne a besoin de la Société des Nations pour intervenir dans les affaires de l'Europe. La Grande-Bretagne est un vaste Empire, assimilable à un corps dont les membres s'étendent dans toutes les parties du monde, mais dont la tête est à quelques minutes de vol de la frontière européenne. Ceci exclue pour elle aujourd'hui toute politique d'isolement. Ses Traités publics d'alliance avec la France et la Belgique, le prouvent d'ailleurs.

Mais la Grande-Bretagne ne saurait agir sur le continent en vertu de la notion d'alliances. Son opinion publique ne le comprendrait pas. Il faut que son action soit basée sur la légitime défense de ses intérêts vitaux et sur la nécessité de combattre pour le maintien de la loi internationale. Genève est l'endroit où cette dernière est proclamée. La Grande-Bretagne a besoin de la Société des Nations pour faire de la politique en Europe.

Enfin, même les États-Unis, qui se tiennent à l'écart de la Société des Nations, verraient avec défaveur sa disparition. En effet, non seulement l'Amérique ne comprend pas que notre continent n'ait pas encore réalisé, sous forme des États-Unis de l'Europe, son unité, mais elle ne comprendrait jamais que l'on détruise les liens beaucoup plus faibles qui lient les États d'aujourd'hui et dont le but est de réaliser les idéals qui sont la raison même de vivre du peuple américain.

Quant aux nations appelées à intérêt limité, permettez-moi de dire que si la Société des Nations disparaissait, elles en seraient les premières les victimes.

Il se peut que la justice de Genève ne soit pas parfaite; il se peut que l'aide qu'elle apporte soit encore faible et inefficace; il se peut que les échecs récents aient diminué le pouvoir d'attraction du grand Idéal qu'était la Société des Nations.

Mais, du moins, l'injustice subie par un État, la Société des Nations existante, est une injustice que l'on peut proclamer aux yeux du monde, afin de provoquer les réactions qui commandent les réparations nécessaires. Sans la Société des Nations, tous les États dits secondaires, entreraient dans des boîtes ouatées, et les cris qu'ils pousseraient comme victimes ne sauraient être entendus par personne.

Du moment que nous arrivions à la conclusion que tout le monde veut que la Société des Nations vive, qu'il me soit permis de me demander avec la même franchise : *que doit-on faire pour que la Société des Nations accomplisse réellement sa mission ?*

La Société des Nations n'est pas une académie morale ; elle n'est pas une confrérie de techniciens, elle est une institution politique, dont la principale mission est de prévenir la guerre. La grande erreur de ceux qui veulent que la Société des Nations vive, est de ne rien entreprendre, ou bien de se contenter de procédures, insignifiantes en apparence ; mais, qui, si l'on ne les surveille pas de près, peuvent amener un affaiblissement encore plus grand des liens qui unissent aujourd'hui avec force obligatoire les États entre eux.

Qu'il me soit permis d'exprimer ici les méthodes que l'on devrait suivre pour atteindre le but proposé. Elles sont au nombre de trois:

- a) Le non changement du texte du Pacte de la Société des Nations;
 - b) La signature, à côté du Pacte de la Société des Nations, d'accords d'assistance mutuelle régionaux, en prévision de l'application de l'article 16 du Pacte;
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- c) La déclaration d'avance et en temps utile, de la politique que chaque État-membre de la Société des Nations suivra en cas d'une éventuelle agression.

Ces méthodes sont, en même temps, les meilleures recettes pour faire sortir le monde du chaos idéologique dans lequel il vit, car ces méthodes signifient, d'abord, la réaffirmation et la réorganisation avec fermeté de l'ordre légal, dont le chaos est sorti : ceci pour avoir un ordre ; et ensuite le maintien de la paix, condition indispensable pour la création de l'ordre légal nouveau vers lequel nous pousse notre tendance instinctive de remplacer le bien par le mieux.

Si le Pacte de la Société des Nations ne doit pas être changé, il doit être complété par des pactes régionaux d'assistance mutuelle. L'Europe devra être partagée en zones au point de vue de la sécurité. Qu'est-ce qu'une zone ? C'est une question sujette à discussion. Ce qui importe c'est que dans l'avenir, les sanctions économiques doivent rester universelles et doivent être appliquées concomitamment avec des sanctions militaires au moins régionales.

Je sais qu'il y a, à l'heure actuelle, une vogue dans le domaine international : c'est la politique de neutralité. Rien de plus naturel que le besoin auquel correspond une telle conception. Rien de plus naturel que de ne pas vouloir la guerre, et, si elle éclate, que de ne pas vouloir y participer. Mais s'imaginer que l'on peut pratiquer la politique de neutralité par une affirmation pure et simple, c'est vraiment par trop enfantin.

Pour être neutre, il faut d'abord être d'accord avec tous ses voisins. Il faut ensuite être prêt à se défendre militairement, si les voisins ne tiennent pas parole. Il faut ensuite, si les forces propres ne suffisent pas, pour vaincre un voisin trop puissant, devenir l'allié de ceux des États qui ont le même intérêt que vous.

La politique de neutralité ne peut constituer qu'une résultante. Elle ne saurait jamais être une méthode.

La neutralité est le fruit des pactes d'assistance mutuelle, faits dans le cadre de la Société des Nations, conformément à la doctrine de la sécurité collective, qui, elle seule, par l'immensité des forces qu'elle peut dresser contre l'agresseur, paralysera à tout jamais l'action criminelle de ce dernier.

Y a-t-il un seul État de la Petite Entente qui puisse pratiquer la politique de neutralité ? *Non*.

La Tchécoslovaquie est non seulement l'allié de la Roumanie et de la Yougoslavie, mais encore de la France et de l'URSS.

La Yougoslavie est l'alliée de la Tchécoslovaquie et de la Roumanie contre certains États agissant seuls ou en collaboration avec d'autres États, grands ou petits.

Quant à la Roumanie, en plus de ses obligations en vertu de la Petite Entente et de l'Entente Balkanique, elle est à l'Est l'alliée de la Pologne, qui à son tour est, à l'Ouest, l'alliée de la France contre l'Allemagne.

Dans ces conditions, pour les États de la Petite Entente, le mot neutralité est synonyme du non accomplissement d'obligations existantes, c'est-à-dire synonyme du mot déshonneur.

C'est pourquoi les États de la Petite Entente ont tout intérêt à voir s'établir, sur la base du Pacte de la Société des Nations, un système de pactes régionaux militaires, qui seuls peuvent leur assurer la sécurité.

Quant au système de pactes bilatéraux, qu'il me soit permis d'observer qu'ils ressemblent étrangement aux vieux traités d'alliance d'avant-guerre qui constituent des systèmes clos.

Le pacte régional reste toujours ouvert à l'adhésion de tous les intéressés, c'est pourquoi il est compatible avec le Pacte de la Société des Nations. Il n'est que la mise en vigueur anticipée de l'article 16 du Pacte. Et s'il est partiel, à ses débuts, c'est-à-dire s'il n'a obtenu que quelques signatures pour commencer, rien ne s'oppose à ce que le nombre de signatures augmente et qu'il devienne général à la fin.

Quant à l'idée que l'on pourrait isoler un pacte bilatéral d'un autre, à tel point que l'on puisse faire la guerre en vertu du premier et à demander légalement la neutralité en vertu du second, je me contenterai de dire que l'humanité a trop souffert pour qu'elle ne réalise pas qu'elle ne peut accepter comme recette de paix la paralysie d'une région combinée avec le système des mains libres dans une autre.

Un tel système ne mérite pas même la critique: un sourire suffit.

Nous voulons la Paix. Il n'y a que la Paix qui puisse permettre aux Nations d'accomplir leur destinée. Il n'y a que la Paix qui puisse permettre la libre circulation des biens, source de la prospérité qui à son tour est la garantie unique contre le désordre dans la pensée, qui peut se transformer en désordre de la vie d'État.

Je suis venu à Bordeaux pour dire que l'on ne peut sauvegarder la Paix qu'en luttant pour le droit, que l'on ne peut éviter la guerre qu'en ne craignant pas d'en parler.

Loin de moi l'idée d'attirer la France dans des aventures, pour les intérêts des autres.

C'est de vos propres intérêts qu'il s'agit. Partant, il faut que les français aient la juste conception de leurs intérêts et qu'ils réalisent qu'ils les défendent beaucoup plus aisément en disant qu'ils sont prêts à recourir aux armes, qu'en créant l'illusion dangereuse qu'ici tout est à prendre, car la France est décidée à tout abandonner.

J'ai vu la gloire de la France en temps de guerre. Je sais le prix que cette gloire lui a coûté. Nous sommes en droit, après ces sacrifices, de voir la gloire d'une France en temps de paix.

C'est à nous de lutter pour le maintien de la Paix et à démontrer que l'image de la France pacifique ne cède en rien à l'image de la France guerrière. La

France est une grande lumière. Gare à ceux qui s'approchent trop près d'elle dans des buts malfaisants: elle les brûle. Heureux ceux qui l'aiment en se tenant à une respectueuse distance: elle les éclaire.

Sentir la France en soi, se sentir en harmonie avec ce perpétuel devenir qu'est la France, sentir que sa force immense est pour nous un appui et non pas un obstacle, c'est sentir vraiment que l'Empire de Dieu est en nous.

All these documents are to be found in the Archives of the Titulescu European Foundation.

NOTES

¹James Ramsay MacDonald (1866–1937). Homme d'État britannique. Chef du Parti Labouriste (1912–1914). Premier Ministre (22 Janvier–4 Novembre 1924; 8 Juin 1929–7 Juin 1935).

²Nikolaos Politis (1872–1942). Juriste, diplomate et homme d'État grec. Ministre des Affaires étrangères à plusieurs reprises. Délégué auprès de la Société des Nations. Vice-président de la Conférence du désarmement (1932). Envoyé extraordinaire et ministre plénipotentiaire à Paris (1924–1925; 1927–1939).

³André Tardieu (1876–1945). French statesman. Several times premier (1929; 1930; 1932).

⁴The idea of Danubian Confederation was born in France, immediately after the Peace of Versailles. Romania, like other nations-states in Central Europe, opposed the project, which caused its failure. In March 1932, French premier André Tardieu – with a view to counteracting Germany's expansionist plan in Central Europe and to strengthening the French influence in that region – mapped out a plan for the creation of the Danubian Economic Union, which provided that the Danubian riparian states had to give up the most favoured nations clause and set preferential tariffs in their trade relations. The Little Entente States accepted, as a matter of principle, such a plan, but expressed numerous reserves. Nevertheless, on political and economic grounds, they sought some ways to getting to an understanding with Austria and Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia expressed the following claims; negotiations should be conducted directly between the Danubian countries, without the immixture of the Great Powers; the economic union should be based on preferential agreements on a contingent fee basis, without the creation of a customs union; the economic union should not be directed against Germany or Italy; liberty to sell to third parties the commodities the Danubian Economic Union cannot absorb; mutual respect of the interests of the Little Entente. The Tardieu Plan, which reiterated the French Plan for a Danubian Confederation (1920), was discussed in a larger framework, at the Lausanne Conference (July 16–19, 1932). The Italian and the German governments opposed such a plan, and so did Austria and Hungary; Britain waited in expectation, wishing to ensure for herself an arbitration role. Practically, the Conference of Lausanne marks the failure of the Tardieu Plan.

⁵The Pact of Organisation of the Little Entente was signed at Geneva, on February 16, 1933, by the foreign ministers of Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia: Nicolae Titulescu, Edvard Beneš, Bogoljub Jevtić.

⁶Edvard Beneš (1884–1948). Czechoslovak statesman and diplomat. An adept of T.G. Masaryk's political and social line. In the 1915–1919 interval he was particularly active in Paris, promoting the cause of Czechoslovakia's independence. Foreign Minister (1918–1935). Prime Minister (1921–1922). Member of the League of Nations Council (1923–1927). President of the Sixteenth Session of the League of Nations Assembly. Frequent participant in international conferences and gatherings (Paris Peace Conference – 1919–1920; Locarno – 1925; The Hague – 1930; Paris – 1930; Lausanne – 1932). He signed the Treaty of Alliance with France – 1924; the Treaty of Arbitration with Poland – 1925; the Treaty of Arbitration

with Austria – 1925; the Non-Aggression Pact with the USSR – 1933; the Treaty of Mutual Assistance with the USSR – 1935. Co-founder of the Little Entente. President of Czechoslovakia (1935–1938); Head of a Czechoslovak provisional government in exile in London, between July 21, 1940 and April 4, 1945. President of Czechoslovakia (1945–1948).

⁷ Bogoljub (Bosko) Jevtić (1886–1960). Serbian (Yugoslav) diplomat and statesman. He filled various diplomatic offices (London, Paris, Brussels). Envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Tirana (1928); Vienna (1928). Foreign Minister (1932–1935). Prime Minister (1934–1935).

⁸ The Convention of Defensive Alliance between Romania and Czechoslovakia, signed in Bucharest, on April 23, 1921. The Convention of Defensive Alliance between Romania and Yugoslavia, signed in Belgrade, on June 7, 1921. The Convention of Defensive Alliance between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia was concluded in Belgrade, on August 14, 1920. The package of these conventions – rounding off the creation of the Little Entente – expressed the decision of the three states to oppose any revisionist claims, to defend the territorial status quo, established under the Peace Treaties of Trianon (June 4, 1920) and Neuilly-sur-Seine (November 27, 1919).

⁹ Over October 5–16, Switzerland hosted the proceedings of the Locarno Conference. The Locarno Agreements, namely a Final Act a series of annexes, were initialled on October 16, 1925, these documents seeking to substitute the Versailles system with freely consented understandings on the recognition of the territorial status quo in Western Europe as a basis of collective security in Europe. Thus, the Locarno Agreements were composed of: The Treaty between Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain and Italy, called also the Rhenish Guarantees Pact, under which the signatories guaranteed the inviolability of the frontiers between France and Belgium, on the one hand, and Germany on the other. Subsequently, the Final Act contained: the Arbitration Conventions between Germany and Belgium, between Germany and France; the Arbitration Treaties between Germany and Poland, between Germany and Czechoslovakia; the Treaties of Guarantees between France and Poland, between France and Czechoslovakia. The Locarno system of agreements issued in the division of Europe into countries with guaranteed and unguaranteed frontiers, because Germany, supported by Great Britain, refused to grant Czechoslovakia and Poland the same guarantees given to its western neighbours, France and Belgium, signing with them only arbitration treaties. The Locarno Agreements made it possible for Germany to invade Poland and Czechoslovakia. On December 1, 1925, the Locarno Agreements were signed in London. Romania welcomed the Locarno Agreements, but did not fail to point out their deficiencies.

¹⁰ The Russian-German Treaty of Rapallo (April 16, 1922), concluded when the Conference of Genoa was still in session, aimed mainly at solving the issues resulting from the state of war between Russia and Germany. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Rapallo, the two states mutually cancelled all war debts and renounced repayment of all expenditures made for the upkeep of prisoners of war.

¹¹ *De minimis non curat praetor* – The praetor does not attend to minor affairs (lat.).

¹² The Treaty of February 19, 1929, signed between France and Poland. The Treaty signed on January 25, 1924 by France and Czechoslovakia. On October 16, 1925, the French–Polish and French–Czechoslovak Treaties were completed with pacts of real mutual assistance, under which Czechoslovakia, Poland and Germany assumed obligations of non-aggression guaranteed by France.

¹³ On June 10, 1926, the Treaty of Friendship between Romania and France was signed in Paris. It was ratified by Romania on September 30, 1926 and by France on September 11, 1926. On June 10, 1926, the Convention on the Pacific Settlement of Differences between Romania and France was signed in Paris and it came into force on November 8, 1926.

¹⁴ France signed in Paris, on May 2, 1935, the Pact of Mutual Assistance with the USSR. On May 16, 1935, Czechoslovakia signed with the USSR a similar pact.

¹⁵ The Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand, and Germany on the other, was signed at Versailles on June 28, 1919. On September 10, 1919, the Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand, Austria on the other, was signed at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. The Peace Treaty of Neuilly was signed on November 10, 1919 by The Allied and Associated Powers with Bulgaria. The Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand, and Hungary on the other, was signed at Trianon, on June 4, 1920. The Treaty of Trianon recognizes internationally the union of Transylvania, the Banat, Crişana and Maramureş with Romania, of Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Ukraine with Czechoslovakia, of Croatia, Slovenia and Western Banat with Serbia etc. It came into force on July 26, 1921. The Peace Treaty between the Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand, and Turkey on the other, was signed at Sèvres, on August 10, 1920.

¹⁶ The Sino-Japanese war (1931–1932), launched by the Japanese forces (“Mukden Incident”), was put an end to by the Tanga Capitulation Agreement (May 31, 1933).

¹⁷ The Italo-Ethiopian war (October 3, 1935–May 5, 1936). Ethiopia is occupied and turned into an Italian colony.

¹⁸ On March 7, 1936, Germany denounced the Locarno Treaty and sent her troops into the demilitarized Rhineland. Berlin set forth an incompatibility between the Locarno Agreements and the French-Soviet Treaty, conclude don March 2, 1935. This act did not stir a commensurate reaction of the other signatories of the Rhineland Pact. The Council of the League of Nations, gathered in London, in its 91st session (March 14–19, 1936), confined itself to note the fact, but did not take any step likely to compel the German Government to withdraw its troops from the demilitarized Rhineland. The London Agreements, reached after consultations and negotiations with Belgium, France, Italy and Great Britain, were submitted for debate to the Council of the League of Nations, which – due to Italy’s obstruction and indecision shown by Great Britain and France – failed to adopt any resolution with palpable effects. The Permanent Councils of the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente took a firm stand, expressing, on March 11, 1936, their decision to defend by all possible means the existing treaties, inclusive of the Locarno Agreements.

¹⁹ Adolf Hitler (1889–1945). German Nazi politician. Chancellor (since January 1933). Führer (leader) of the German State (1934–1945).

²⁰ Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck (1815–1898). German diplomat and statesman. Ambassador to St. Petersburg (1859–1862). Chancellor (1871–1890). He was the initiator of the Three Emperors’ League (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia), concluded in 1873, and renewed in 1881 and 1884. In 1887, Bismarck signed with Russia the so-called Treaty of Reassurances. Considering a war with Russia might be harmful for Germany, he opposed the German military circles, who supported the idea of a preventive war against Russia.

²¹ Sir Robert Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon (1897–1977). British statesman and diplomat. Undersecretary, Foreign Office (1931–1933). Lord Privy Seal (1934–1935). Minister without portfolio for League of Nations Affairs (1935). Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1935–1938).

²² Anschluss. A policy of overrunning and liquidating Austria as a state, promoted by German imperialism after World War I. One of the first official attempts at implementing this policy was the launching, on March 25, 1931, of the projected Austro-German customs union, presented as an economic arrangement, but, actually, a first step towards Anschluss and aimed at the creation of a German Hinterland in the Danubian Basin. Hitler's advent to power in Germany (January 1933) spurred the German and Austrian reactionary circles' efforts for the achievement of the Anschluss. On the night of March 11/12, 1938, the German army occupied Austria, which was destroyed as a state.

²³ *Manu militari* – By armed force (lat.).

²⁴ Jules Michelet (1798–1874). French historian and writer. He advocated and promoted in the French press the cause of the 1848 Revolution in the Romanian Countries and the Union of the Principalities (1859).

²⁵ Dumitru (Take) Ionescu (1858–1922). Romanian statesman, leader of the Conservative Democratic Party, of the Nationalist Conservative Party, of the Unionist Democratic Conservative Party. Several times member of the Cabinet and Prime Minister (1921–1922). An adept of Romania's joining the war on the side of the Entente. As Foreign Minister (1920–1921), he was one of the initiators and founders of the Little Entente. Take Ionescu patronized Nicolae Titulescu's entry into the political life and took him twice in his Cabinet as Minister of Finance, assigning him important missions abroad in 1920–1921 (Nicolae Titulescu represented Romania at the Paris Peace Conference as chief delegate; he signed together with Ioan Cantacuzino the Peace Treaty of Trianon between the Allied and Associated Powers on the one hand and Hungary on the other; he was appointed Romania's delegate at the League of Nations and envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at the Court of St. James, a.o.).

²⁶ The Gospel according to John, I.1.

²⁷ On July 16, 1920, the Agreement on reparations payments due by Germany to the victors in World War I was signed at Spa. Romania was granted only 1 per cent of the total German reparations and 10.55 per cent of the Oriental ones (from Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria). The percentage offered at Spa was neither materially nor morally up to Romania's war efforts.

²⁸ On July 24, 1923, an International Convention was signed at Lausanne between Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, the USSR, Yugoslavia and Turkey, regarding the regime of the Straits, which provided for the demilitarization of the zone and for freedom of navigation to all ships, commercial or men of war, belonging to all states, both in peacetime and in time of war.

²⁹ Eleutherios Venizelos (1864–1936). Greek statesman. Prime Minister (1910–1915; 1917–1920; 1924; 1928–1932; 1933). He played a determining part in bringing Greece into the Second Balkan War and in World War I on the side of the Allies. He participated in the Paris Peace Conference (1919).

³⁰ Edouard Herriot (1872–1957). French politician. Leader of the Radical Socialist Party (1919–1957). Senator, deputy and minister several times. Prime Minister (1924–1925; 1926; 1932). Over 1924–1925, he was also Foreign Minister.

³¹ Heinrich Brüning (1885–1961). German statesman. Chancellor (March 30, 1930–May 30, 1932) and Foreign Minister (1931–1932).

³² The German-Italian Treaty of Cooperation, which laid the bases of the Berlin-Rome Axis, was signed on October 25, 1936.

³³ The Yugoslav-Italian Treaty of Friendship was signed on March 25, 1937 and proved nefarious for the solidarity of the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente.

³⁴ On January 24, 1937, Milan Stojadinović, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia and Georgi Kjosseivanov, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, signed in Belgrade, the Yugoslav–Bulgarian Treaty of Friendship. This act marked Yugoslavia’s moving away from the Balkan Entente.

³⁵ An Italian–Hungarian–Austrian secret protocol was signed in Vienna, stipulating that in case of war the three signatories would keep a benevolent neutrality among themselves.

³⁶ On October 14, 1933, Germany announces her decision to withdraw from the League of Nations.

³⁷ Pierre Laval (1883–1945). French lawyer, politician and statesman. Deputy (1914–1926). Senator (1927–1940). Several times member of the Cabinet. Prime Minister (1931–1932; 1935–1936). Foreign Minister (1932; 1934–1935; 1935–1936). Delegate at the League of Nations Assemblies (1934–1935). He negotiated the Rome agreements (January 7, 1935) between France and Italy; the Treaty of Mutual Assistance between France and the USSR (May 2, 1935).

³⁸ On August 23, 1939, a Treaty of Non-Aggression is signed in Moscow between the USSR and Germany (“Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact”), by which the two countries reach an agreement on the creation of a new political-territorial order between the Baltic Sea and the Danube, with major effects on worsening Romania’s international situation. In June 1940, following two Soviet ultimatums, Romania was obliged to cede Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Herza Land.

³⁹ Nikola Pašić (1845–1926). Serbian (Yugoslav) politician and statesman. Prime Minister of Serbia (1891–1892; 1904–1905; 1909–1911; 1912–1918). Prime Minister of Yugoslavia (1918; 1921–1924; 1924–1926). He played a major role in the creation and organization of Yugoslavia. Owing to his political and diplomatic virtues he was dubbed “the old fox of the Balkans”.

⁴⁰ Alexandru Vaida-Voevod (1872–1950). Romanian lawyer and politician. One of the leaders of the Romanian National Party in Transylvania and of the Peasant National Party. Member of the Directing Council of Transylvania (1918–1920). Several times member of the Cabinet and Prime Minister (1919–1920; 1932; 1933). The mentioned resignation became effective on October 20, 1932.

⁴¹ The Soviet-Polish Treaty of Non-Aggression was signed in Moscow, on July 25, 1932.

⁴² The Non-Aggression Pact between France and the USSR was signed in Paris, on November 29, 1932.

⁴³ Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906). Norwegian dramatist.

⁴⁴ On August 17, 1916, the Treaty of Alliance between Romania on the one hand and France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy on the other is signed in Bucharest. One of the conditions of Romania's joining the war on the side of the Entente is fulfilment of the desire for union with Romania of the territories of Austria-Hungary inhabited by Romanians. On August 27, 1916, Romanian declares war upon Austria-Hungary.

⁴⁵ Minister of Finance (July 10, 1917–January 28, 1918). Minister of Finance again (June 13, 1920–December 16, 1921).

⁴⁶ Ferdinand I (1865–1927). King of Romania (1914–1927).

⁴⁷ He was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of Romania at the Court of St. James on December 16, 1921.

⁴⁸ Philip Snowden, 1st Viscount Snowden (1864–1937). British statesman. Chancellor of the Exchequer (1924; 1929).

⁴⁹ *Expresis verbis* – Explicitly (lat.).

⁵⁰ Joseph Paul-Boncour (1873–1972). French politician and statesman. Deputy (1909–1914; 1919–1931). Senator (1931–1940). Several times member of the Cabinet. Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (1933–1934). Member of the French delegation at the League of Nations (1924–1929). Permanent delegate at the League of Nations (1932–1936). He participated in the Conference of Disarmament (1932–1934). Minister for the Questions of the League of Nations (1936).

⁵¹ Alexandre Millerand (1859–1943). French statesman. Several times member of the Cabinet. Prime Minister (January 20–September 23, 1920). President of the French Republic (September 23, 1920–June 11, 1924).

⁵² Edgar Algernon Cecil of Chelwood (1864–1958). British politician. M.P. (1906–1923). Served in several Cabinets. He participated in the drafting of the League of Nations Covenant. Member of the first and second Stanley Baldwin Cabinets. Delegate at the sessions of the League of Nations Assembly and Council. Founder of the British Association for the League of Nations. 1937 Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

⁵³ *Motto perpetuo* – Permanently reiterated phrase (lat.).

⁵⁴ Damocles. Courtier at the court of Dionysius I (“the Elder”) (405–367 B.C.), the tyrant of Syracuse, to whom he praised his wealth. According to Cicero, the tyrant, in order to show the precariousness of rank and power, gave a banquet and had a sword suspended above the head of Damocles by a single hair. Hence the expression “the sword of Damocles”, to mean an ever-present peril and the frailty of happiness.

⁵⁵ On December 7, 1935, the League of Nations Council, debating Italy's aggression against Ethiopia, approved the conclusions of the Report presented by the Committee of Six, according to which the Italian Government resorted to war, despite the commitment provided by Article 12 of the League of Nations Covenant, and decided, according to Article 16 of the Covenant, to apply the sanctions stipulated for such cases.

The League of Nations Assembly approved on October 10, 1935, the decision to apply sanctions against Italy, which attacked Ethiopia, by adopting a resolution on the creation of a new Committee for the coordination of the application of sanctions stipulated under Article 16 of the Covenant.

The Romanian Government proceeded, on October 21, 1935, to the application of sanctions against Italy, as decided by the League of Nations, due to Italy's attack on Ethiopia.

On November 26, 1935, upon consultation with the governments of the Little Entente and Balkan Entente member-states, Romania's Government replies to the Italian note of protest of November 11, 1935, showing that Romania participates in the measures adopted by the League of Nations, prompted by her faithfulness to the Covenant and out of respect for the decisions of the League of Nations Assembly and Council.

⁵⁶ Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1st Earl of Halifax (1881–1959). British statesman and diplomat. Several times minister. Governor General of India (1926–1931); Foreign Secretary (1938); Ambassador to the United States of America (1941). Created Baron Irwin in 1925, he succeeded his father as Viscount Halifax in 1934 and was created as 1st Earl of Halifax in 1944.

⁵⁷ Aristotle (384–322 B.C.). Greek philosopher.

⁵⁸ Charles Robert Darwin (1809–1882). English naturalist. Founder of the theory on the evolution of plant and animal species by natural selection.

⁵⁹ Louis de Brouckère (1870–1952). Belgian politician. Delegate to the League of Nations. Member of the International Diplomatic Academy.

⁶⁰ Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874–1965). British statesman. President of the Board of Trade (1908–1910); Home Secretary (1910–1911); First Lord of the Admiralty (1911–1915); Minister of Munitions (1917); Secretary for War and Air (1919–1921); for Colonies (1921–1922); Chancellor of the Exchequer (1924–1929); Prime Minister (1940–1945; 1951–1955). Nobel Prize for Literature (1953).

⁶¹ Henry Wickham Steed (1871–1956). British journalist. Foreign correspondent of London Times at Rome (1897–1902); editor of the Times (1919–1922); owner and editor of Review of Reviews (1923–1930).

⁶² Sir Joseph Austen Chamberlain (1863–1937). British statesman. First Lord of the Admiralty (1895–1900); Chancellor of the Exchequer (1903–1906; 1919–1921). Conservative Leader in the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal (1921–1923). Foreign Secretary (1924–1929). He shared with Charles G. Dawes the 1925 Nobel Peace Prize. He participated in all the sessions of the League of Nations Assembly and Council. He facilitated Germany's entry into the League of Nations, supported the conclusion of the Briand-Kellogg Pact, opposed the Four-Power Pact and opposed actively the revision of the Treaty of Versailles.

⁶³ Milan Hodža (1878–1944). Journaliste, historien, diplomate, homme politique et homme d'État tchécoslovaque. Chef du Parti Agrarien. Ministre de l'Agriculture (1925–1926); de l'Instruction publique (1926–1929). Ministre des Affaires étrangères (1935–1936). Premier ministre (1935–1938). Il milita, mais sans succès, en faveur d'une Fédération de l'Europe Centrale, qui devait réunir l'Autriche, la Hongrie, la Tchécoslovaquie, la Pologne, la Roumanie, la Yougoslavie, la Bulgarie et la Grèce.

⁶⁴ Comenius (Jan Amos Komensky) (1592–1670). Humaniste et pédagogue tchèque.

⁶⁵ Sénateur de Gironde, président d'honneur du Groupement des Officiers Mutilés et Anciens Combattants (GOMAC).

⁶⁶ Jacques Chastenet de Castaing (1893–?). Journaliste et historien français. Secrétaire général de la Haute commission interalliée des territoires rhénans. Secrétaire de la Conférence des ambassadeurs. Codirecteur du journal « Le Temps » de Paris (1932–1942). Membre de l'Académie française (1956).

⁶⁷ Le 6 septembre 1918 fut créé à Paris le Conseil National de l'Unité Roumaine, ayant pour président Take Ionescu et pour vice-présidents Vasile Lucaciu, Octavian Goga, le dr. Constantin Angelescu et Ioan Th. Florescu. Nicolae Titulescu en faisait également partie. Le Conseil fut aussitôt reconnu comme représentant les intérêts du peuple roumain par les gouvernements français (12 Octobre), américain (5 Novembre), britannique (11 Novembre), italien (22 Novembre). En tant que membre de ce Conseil, Nicolae Titulescu fit une propagande vigoureuse en faveur de la cause roumaine, de l'unité nationale, par le biais de conférences publiques – qui ne se sont malheureusement pas conservées ou n'ont pas été retrouvées –, d'articles de presse et d'entretiens avec des personnalités politiques de première importance.

⁶⁸ Le Traité de paix de Bucarest conclu entre la Roumanie, d'une part, et l'Allemagne, l'Autriche-Hongrie, la Bulgarie et la Turquie, de l'autre, fut signé le 7 mai 1918 à Bucarest. La Roumanie se vit contrainte à céder la Dobroudja, à accepter des rectifications de ses frontières sur la ligne des Carpates et à conclure des conventions économiques astreignantes.
