The Economist, 8 mai

Archive 1945 : How *The Economist* reported on the final year of the second world war, week by week

Full text:

In January 1945, 80 years ago, the second world war was entering its seventh year. Fighting raged in Europe, as Allied armies liberated large parts of France and Belgium from Nazi control. The Red Army was pushing from the Soviet Union into Poland, squeezing German forces from the east. Meanwhile the Allies' campaign in the Pacific was gathering momentum, and America was planning for an invasion of Japan. The outcome of the war would transform the international balance of power, politics and the global economy in ways that still shape the world.

This project is republishing excerpts from *The Economist*'s archive, week by week as the war rolled to an end—a time capsule of how we reported on its final year. A new instalment will appear here every Friday until August. To be notified about new entries, sign up for The War Room, our weekly defence newsletter. Archive 1945 is also available in German.

January 3

Deadlock in Europe

By January 6th 1945, when we published our first issue of the year, the conflict in Europe was in its last stages. We wrote that, late in 1944, "it was not only ordinary men and women who said, 'It will all be over by Christmas.'" But the speed of the Allies' advance into Nazi-occupied parts of Europe had slowed. Germany's Rundstedt offensive (now better known as the Battle of the Bulge) had put the Allies on the back foot in Belgium and Luxembourg. The British were still fighting in Greece. Poland's communists, known as the Lublin Committee, were at loggerheads with the Polish government-in-exile in London over who would control the country.

The mood in Britain was grim. Although the Nazis were still being squeezed on both sides of the continent, *The Economist* declared "Deadlock in Europe":

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THE ECONOMIST, BRETTENHAM HOUSE, LANCASTER PLACE, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2. TELE: TEMPLE BAR 3316. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £3.

Deadlock in Europe

THE year 1945 is opening gloomily for the Allies. Fighting still goes on in Athens. The Lublin Committee has added another twist to the tangled knot of Polish politics by declaring itself the provisional Government of Poland. Across the Atlantic, American criticism of Britain and distrust of Russia show but little sign of abating. Militarily, too, the outlook is disappointing. The Rundstedt offensive has been checked, but that it should have succeeded at all grievously contradicts the high hopes of last summer. The Russians' encirclement of Budapest and advance on Austria are bright lights in an otherwise sombre picture, but they are at a standstill in Poland and in East Prussia.

The two chief factors in the Allied crisis—military deadlock and political disunity—naturally interact on each other. Now, as always, political differences are accentuated by military frustration. In turn, the political differences have helped to create the military situation by giving the Nazis a hope to fight for—the hope that the coalition against them will, after all, collapse. It is therefore rather arbitrary to try to disentangle the two problems. Nevertheless there is no doubt which at this moment is the more pressing. Political failure on the Allies' part would frustrate their victory. But military failure would prevent that victory from ever being won.

Of the military coalition, it can be said first of all that it is intact and strong. There is no sign of slackening on any front. There is no damaging war weariness, certainly not in bombed and war-scarred Britain. The aim of defeating Germany has in no way been modified, and so vast are the material resources marshalled behind the armies that there can be no question of losing the war. On the other hand, it is obvious that an enormous military opportunity has been lost. The German press now openly admits—and probably exaggerates—the crisis into which Germany was plunged after the break through at Avranches. They admit that their armies were routed and that the way to Germany was wide open. To-day, a firm front has been established along the Siegfried Line in the West and the Vistula in the East. In the West, the Germans have even launched a strong counter-attack. The reasons why they have been able to achieve so remarkable and unwelcome a degree of stabilisation ought to throw some light on the Allies' military deadlock.

It is always easy for the armchair strategist to look back over past campaigning and to point out that here the cardinal error was made or there the real opportunity lost. In detail such criticisms cannot be made without expert knowledge. But it requires no expert military knowledge to see that the opportunity of last autumn was missed either because there were insufficient military reserves in France to turn the German rout into a final

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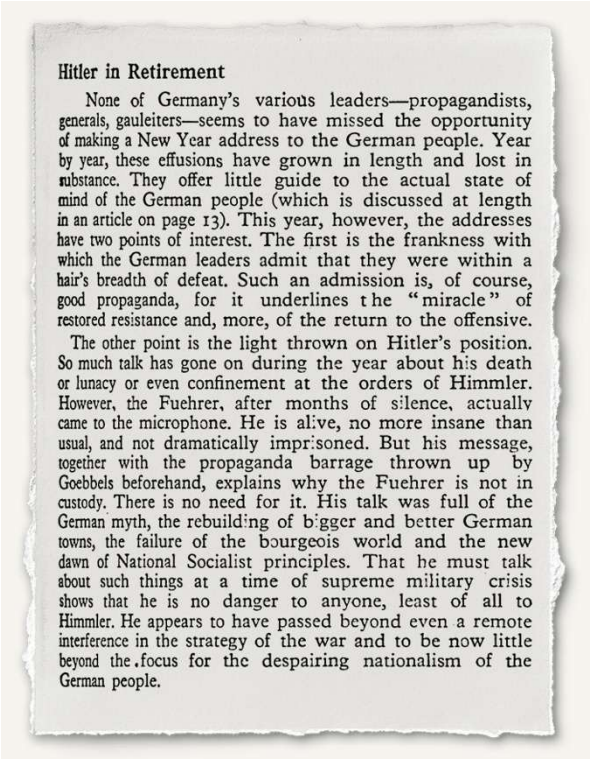
It was not that victory felt distant to Britons—in fact it looked all but assured. But "military deadlock and political disunity" had delayed the Nazis' defeat. Disagreements over how Germany would be treated after the war were a problem. The Nazis, we wrote, were hoping "that the coalition against them will, after all, collapse". And a proposal for post-war Germany to cede its industrial heartlands, advanced by France and the Soviet Union, was giving Germans a stronger will to fight on.

Britain had reason to feel glum beyond the battlefield, too. Running a war economy had taken a heavy toll on its people. *The Economist* had recently received one of the first big releases of statistical data since the beginning of the war (though we explained that "reasons of security still demand that some remain secret until the defeat of both Germany and Japan"). War had transformed the British economy. It wasn't just that the government had hiked taxes to pay for the war effort. Spending on consumer goods had plummeted, even if fuel and light sold well during the Blitz—as we illustrated in this chart:

"No motor-cars, refrigerators, pianos, vacuum cleaners, tennis or golf balls have been produced since 1942, and only very few radios, bicycles, watches and fountain pens."

Rumours had swirled in 1944 that Adolf Hitler had died, gone mad or been confined by Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS (the Nazis' main paramilitary group). But Hitler's New Year address, we wrote, showed that he was "alive, no more insane than usual, and not dramatically imprisoned":



Hitler in Retirement

None of Germany's various leaders—propagandists, generals, gauleiters—seems to have missed the opportunity of making a New Year address to the German people. Year by year, these effusions have grown in length and lost in substance. They offer little guide to the actual state of mind of the German people (which is discussed at length in an article on page 13). This year, however, the addresses have two points of interest. The first is the frankness with which the German leaders admit that they were within a hair's breadth of defeat. Such an admission is, of course, good propaganda, for it underlines the "miracle" of restored resistance and, more, of the return to the offensive.

The other point is the light thrown on Hitler's position. So much talk has gone on during the year about his death or lunacy or even confinement at the orders of Himmler. However, the Fuehrer, after months of silence, actually came to the microphone. He is alive, no more insane than usual, and not dramatically imprisoned. But his message, together with the propaganda barrage thrown up by Goebbels beforehand, explains why the Fuehrer is not in custody. There is no need for it. His talk was full of the German myth, the rebuilding of bigger and better German towns, the failure of the bourgeois world and the new dawn of National Socialist principles. That he must talk about such things at a time of supreme military crisis shows that he is no danger to anyone, least of all to Himmler. He appears to have passed beyond even a remote interference in the strategy of the war and to be now little beyond the focus for the despairing nationalism of the German people.

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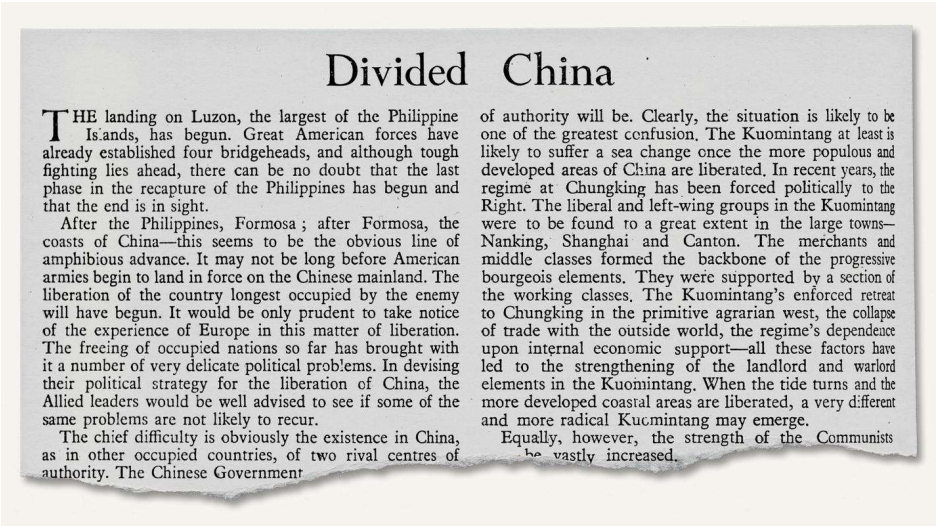
Still, with the Nazis being pressed by the Allies in the west and the Soviet Union in the east, the dictator's appeals to nationalism were ringing hollow. Rather, his message smacked of bluster and desperation.

January 10

Divided China

While the Allies squeezed the Nazis in Europe, American forces in the Pacific put pressure on Japan. It had bombed Pearl Harbour, a naval base in Hawaii, on December 7th 1941, killing nearly 2,500 people. The next day President Franklin Roosevelt went to war in Asia. As 1945 began, America had checked the expansion of Japan's empire and was making advances in the Philippines, which had been under Japanese occupation since 1941:



Divided China

THE landing on Luzon, the largest of the Philippine Islands, has begun. Great American forces have already established four bridgeheads, and although tough fighting lies ahead, there can be no doubt that the last phase in the recapture of the Philippines has begun and that the end is in sight.

After the Philippines, Formosa; after Formosa, the coasts of China—this seems to be the obvious line of amphibious advance. It may not be long before American armies begin to land in force on the Chinese mainland. The liberation of the country longest occupied by the enemy will have begun. It would be only prudent to take notice of the experience of Europe in this matter of liberation. The freeing of occupied nations so far has brought with it a number of very delicate political problems. In devising their political strategy for the liberation of China, the Allied leaders would be well advised to see if some of the same problems are not likely to recur.

The chief difficulty is obviously the existence in China, as in other occupied countries, of two rival centres of authority. The Chinese Government of authority will be. Clearly, the situation is likely to be one of the greatest confusion. The Kuomintang at least is likely to suffer a sea change once the more populous and developed areas of China are liberated. In recent years, the regime at Chungking has been forced politically to the Right. The liberal and left-wing groups in the Kuomintang were to be found to a great extent in the large towns—Nanking, Shanghai and Canton. The merchants and middle classes formed the backbone of the progressive bourgeois elements. They were supported by a section of the working classes. The Kuomintang's enforced retreat to Chungking in the primitive agrarian west, the collapse of trade with the outside world, the regime's dependence upon internal economic support—all these factors have led to the strengthening of the landlord and warlord elements in the Kuomintang. When the tide turns and the more developed coastal areas are liberated, a very different and more radical Kuomintang may emerge.

Equally, however, the strength of the Communists be vastly increased.

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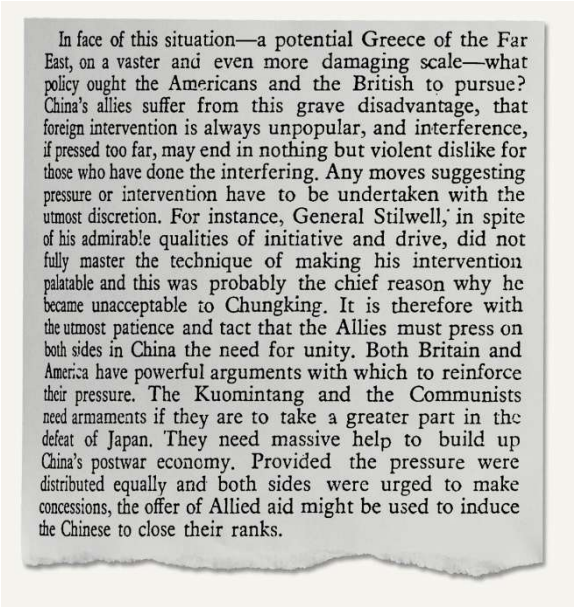
The Economist turned next to China. America had been supporting it against Japan since 1940 with loans and weapons. In 1941 it sent military advisers and established air bases on the mainland. It had a strong interest in helping China end Japan’s occupation—not only to weaken Japan, but to strengthen China as a major power that would help enforce peace in Asia after the war.

This was no easy task. China was then run by a patchwork of rival governments. Outside the areas under Japan’s control, some of the country was led by the Kuomintang, a nationalist group led by Chiang Kai-shek, with a base in Chongqing, in central China; another area was controlled by the Communists, led by Mao Zedong, with a stronghold in Yan’an, a city in the north. Japan’s defeat could cause a situation “of the greatest confusion” in China, we wrote. Though the country’s two rival powers had fought alongside each other against the Japanese, they had also “been for some years in a state of actual or latent civil war”.

The civil wars that had broken out in liberated countries in Europe seemed to augur ill for China:



In face of this situation—a potential Greece of the Far East, on a vaster and even more damaging scale—what policy ought the Americans and the British to pursue? China's allies suffer from this grave disadvantage, that foreign intervention is always unpopular, and interference, if pressed too far, may end in nothing but violent dislike for those who have done the interfering. Any moves suggesting pressure or intervention have to be undertaken with the utmost discretion. For instance, General Stilwell, in spite of his admirable qualities of initiative and drive, did not fully master the technique of making his intervention palatable and this was probably the chief reason why he became unacceptable to Chungking. It is therefore with the utmost patience and tact that the Allies must press on both sides in China the need for unity. Both Britain and America have powerful arguments with which to reinforce their pressure. The Kuomintang and the Communists need armaments if they are to take a greater part in the defeat of Japan. They need massive help to build up China's postwar economy. Provided the pressure were distributed equally and both sides were urged to make concessions, the offer of Allied aid might be used to induce the Chinese to close their ranks.

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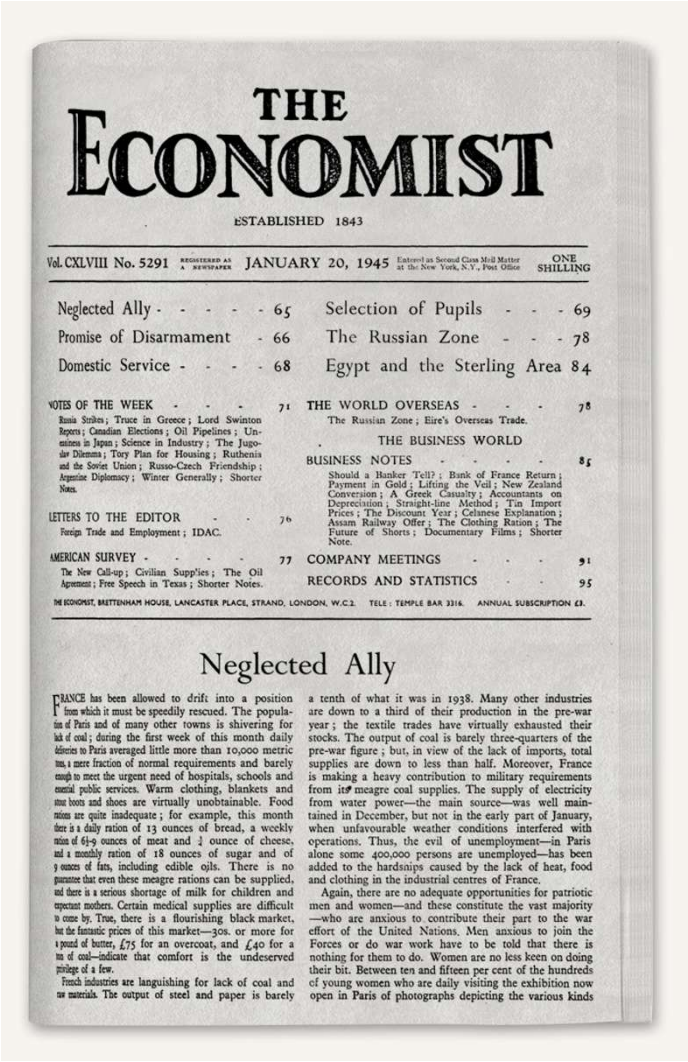
But unity, we noted, would be hard. Chiang seemed motivated “more by the desire to maintain and reinforce power than by any wish to share power in some new administration with the Communists”. The Communists were determined “to maintain power in their own areas and spread it where they can”. Though we argued that a government of national unity would be best for China, it was hard to see how it was to be “brought into being”.

January 17

The neglected ally

By the beginning of 1945 most of France had been liberated. The previous August, the Allies had wrested Paris from German control and Charles de Gaulle, who had led a provisional government in exile from London and Algiers, returned to the capital. Occupation had taken its toll. On January 20th 1945, *The Economist* wrote:



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Neglected Ally

FRANCE has been allowed to drift into a position from which it must be speedily rescued. The population of Paris and of many other towns is shivering for lack of coal; during the first week of this month daily deliveries to Paris averaged little more than 10,000 metric tons, a mere fraction of normal requirements and barely enough to meet the urgent need of hospitals, schools and essential public services. Warm clothing, blankets and stout boots and shoes are virtually unobtainable. Food rations are quite inadequate; for example, this month there is a daily ration of 13 ounces of bread, a weekly ration of 6½ ounces of meat and ¾ ounce of cheese, and a monthly ration of 18 ounces of sugar and of 9 ounces of fats, including edible oils. There is no guarantee that even these meagre rations can be supplied, and there is a serious shortage of milk for children and expectant mothers. Certain medical supplies are difficult to come by. True, there is a flourishing black market, but the fantastic prices of this market—30s. or more for a pound of butter, £75 for an overcoat, and £40 for a ton of coal—indicate that comfort is the undeserved privilege of a few.

French industries are languishing for lack of coal and raw materials. The output of steel and paper is barely a tenth of what it was in 1938. Many other industries are down to a third of their production in the pre-war year; the textile trades have virtually exhausted their stocks. The output of coal is barely three-quarters of the pre-war figure; but, in view of the lack of imports, total supplies are down to less than half. Moreover, France is making a heavy contribution to military requirements from its meagre coal supplies. The supply of electricity from water power—the main source—was well maintained in December, but not in the early part of January, when unfavourable weather conditions interfered with operations. Thus, the evil of unemployment—in Paris alone some 400,000 persons are unemployed—has been added to the hardships caused by the lack of heat, food and clothing in the industrial centres of France.

Again, there are no adequate opportunities for patriotic men and women—and these constitute the vast majority—who are anxious to contribute their part to the war effort of the United Nations. Men anxious to join the Forces or do war work have to be told that there is nothing for them to do. Women are no less keen on doing their bit. Between ten and fifteen per cent of the hundreds of young women who are daily visiting the exhibition now open in Paris of photographs depicting the various kinds

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Bread was rationed at 13 ounces (370g) a day, and cheese at 0.75 ounces (20g) a week. Even then, there was "no guarantee that even these meagre rations can be supplied".

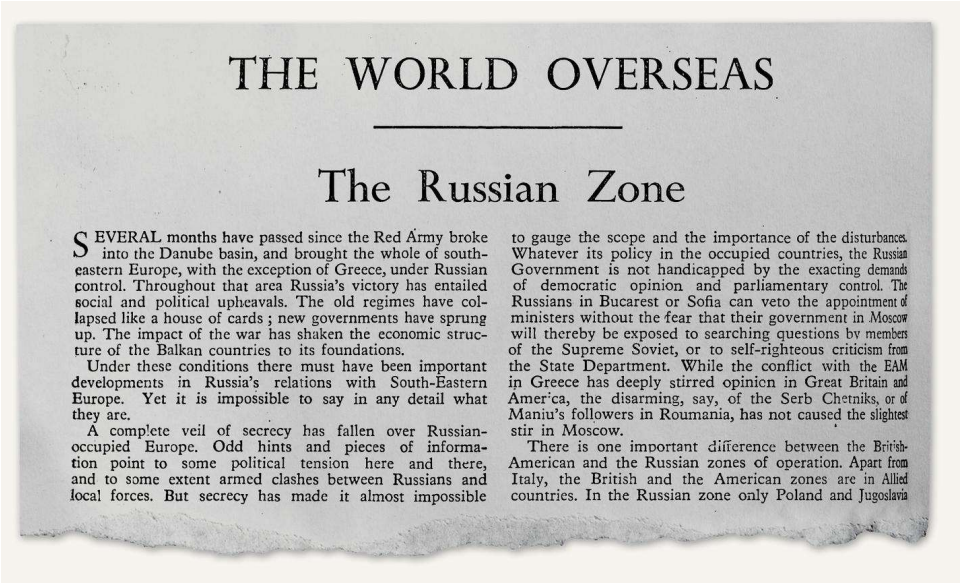
French industry was in a woeful state, too: "The evil of unemployment—in Paris alone some 400,000 persons are unemployed—has been added to the hardships caused by the lack of heat, food and clothing in the industrial centres of France." With that came fears of political instability. We warned that there would be "a limit to French patience. And that limit is in sight…Faced with a growing volume of discontent, the government's position might be weakened." It was in everyone's interest that "France should not become the neglected ally."

France's port cities had been battered. Boulogne lay in ruins, but Marseille was already sending supplies to the frontline. In Nantes, large crowds welcomed de Gaulle on January 14th.

Video: Getty Images

Britain and America, we argued, should treat France as an equal partner in the war effort, "not only in the formulation of strategy, but also in the allocation of resources". America, with its abundant natural resources, could boost supplies to France. But Britain should also play its part—even if it "can contribute only pence to America's pounds".

Meanwhile a very different picture of liberation was emerging in eastern Europe, where the Nazis had been pushed out by the Soviet Union:



THE WORLD OVERSEAS

The Russian Zone

SEVERAL months have passed since the Red Army broke into the Danube basin, and brought the whole of south-eastern Europe, with the exception of Greece, under Russian control. Throughout that area Russia's victory has entailed social and political upheavals. The old regimes have collapsed like a house of cards; new governments have sprung up. The impact of the war has shaken the economic structure of the Balkan countries to its foundations.

Under these conditions there must have been important developments in Russia's relations with South-Eastern Europe. Yet it is impossible to say in any detail what they are.

A complete veil of secrecy has fallen over Russian-occupied Europe. Odd hints and pieces of information point to some political tension here and there, and to some extent armed clashes between Russians and local forces. But secrecy has made it almost impossible to gauge the scope and the importance of the disturbances. Whatever its policy in the occupied countries, the Russian Government is not handicapped by the exacting demands of democratic opinion and parliamentary control. The Russians in Bucarest or Sofia can veto the appointment of ministers without the fear that their government in Moscow will thereby be exposed to searching questions by members of the Supreme Soviet, or to self-righteous criticism from the State Department. While the conflict with the EAM in Greece has deeply stirred opinion in Great Britain and America, the disarming, say, of the Serb Chetniks, or of Maniu's followers in Roumania, has not caused the slightest stir in Moscow.

There is one important difference between the British-American and the Russian zones of operation. Apart from Italy, the British and the American zones are in Allied countries. In the Russian zone only Poland and Jugoslavia

"A complete veil of secrecy has fallen over Russian-occupied Europe. Odd hints and pieces of information point to some political tension here and there, and to some extent armed clashes between Russians and local forces. But secrecy has made it almost impossible to gauge the scope and importance of these disturbances. Whatever its policy in the occupied territories, the Russian Government is not handicapped by the exacting demands of democratic opinion and parliamentary control."

There did seem to be differences between the governments that formed under Soviet influence. In some countries the communists were in fact not intent on destroying all that remained of the old order. Bulgaria did not depose its king after the communists took power in September 1944; King Michael of Romania even received praise from the country's communists, who wanted to show moderation (though both countries later became republics: Bulgaria in 1946, and Romania in 1947). In Poland, however, political divisions were much sharper. The Soviet-backed Lublin government wanted to abolish Poland's 1935 constitution (they would eventually succeed), and fighting broke out between partisans and Russian soldiers.

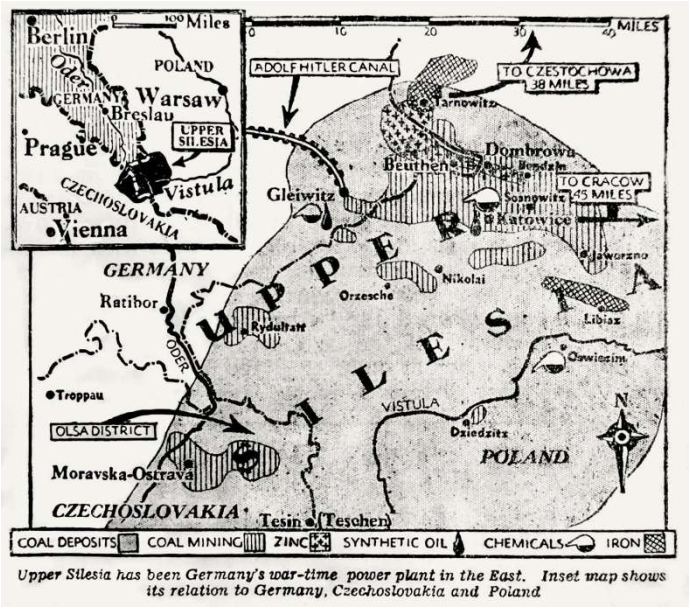
What policy, we debated, would the Soviet Union choose to pursue in the territories it had helped liberate? On one hand, it might "decide to exercise control in such a manner that the national sovereignty of each small state is seriously impaired". That would mean "ideological *Gleichschaltung*"—a term the Nazis used to describe taking total control of society. On the other hand, it might choose to exercise its influence in the region indirectly. In January 1945, it was hard to say which direction the Soviet Union would go in.

January 24

Germany's war machine

By late January, the Red Army was pushing through central Europe and advancing steadily towards Berlin, Germany's capital. Ukraine, which the Nazis had seized in 1941 in order to control its wealth of natural resources, including wheat and iron ore, had been retaken by the Soviet Union in 1944. Meanwhile, in Poland, the Red Army had pushed into the cities of Warsaw and Krakow.

The German-controlled areas farther south were coming under attack, too. One such region was Upper Silesia, now situated mostly in southern Poland. An industrial heartland rich in coal and other commodities, it had become one of the main engines of Germany's war economy (see the map below that we published in our January 27th issue). It was also the site of some of the Nazis' largest forced-labour and concentration camps, including those that made up Auschwitz.



Upper Silesia has been Germany's war-time power plant in the East. Inset map shows its relation to Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland

Since the beginning of the 20th century, parts of Upper Silesia had been held by imperial Germany, Austria-Hungary, Tsarist Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia. These came under full German control after the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939. The region stretched across 8,000 square miles (21,000 square km) and was home to 4.5m people. "Within this region," we wrote, "there are the richest coal deposits of the whole Continent". Upper Silesia's zinc deposits were also thought to be "the largest in the world". The region's coal made it vital for the production of chemicals, as well as electricity: "A dense gas and electricity grid, reaching as far as Breslau, depends on Upper Silesian coal."

Upper Silesia was an industrial laggard compared with the Ruhr, a region in western Germany best known for producing coal and steel. Upper Silesia's steel production was small by comparison, partly because it had too few local mines for iron ore. Yet this region had become central to the Nazi war machine, especially after the Allies began bombing the Ruhr heavily in 1943:

"It cannot be doubted, therefore, that during the last two years Upper Silesia has developed numerous new industries. Apart from new chemical plants, large factories for all kinds of war material have sprung up all over the area, usually being situated away from inhabited places and well camouflaged by forests and hills."

After Allied bombing intensified, the Nazis relocated some of their heavy industry from the Ruhr to Upper Silesia. "There is no doubt," we wrote, "that the most vital war factories have been built underground." Everything from cement and fertiliser to trains and railway tracks were being produced there. By 1945, the railways of eastern Germany were dependent on the region's coal. And so the loss of Upper Silesia, *The Economist* wrote, "would be a very severe blow to Germany's war industry".

It would also mean liberation for thousands of prisoners. On January 27th, the same day as *The Economist*'s article on Upper Silesia went to press, the Red Army seized control of Auschwitz from the Nazis. This was the Nazis' biggest concentration camp; more than 1m Jews, Poles, Roma and others were killed there during the Holocaust. As the Red Army's advance continued, the extent of the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis in occupied Poland and elsewhere would become clearer still.

January 31

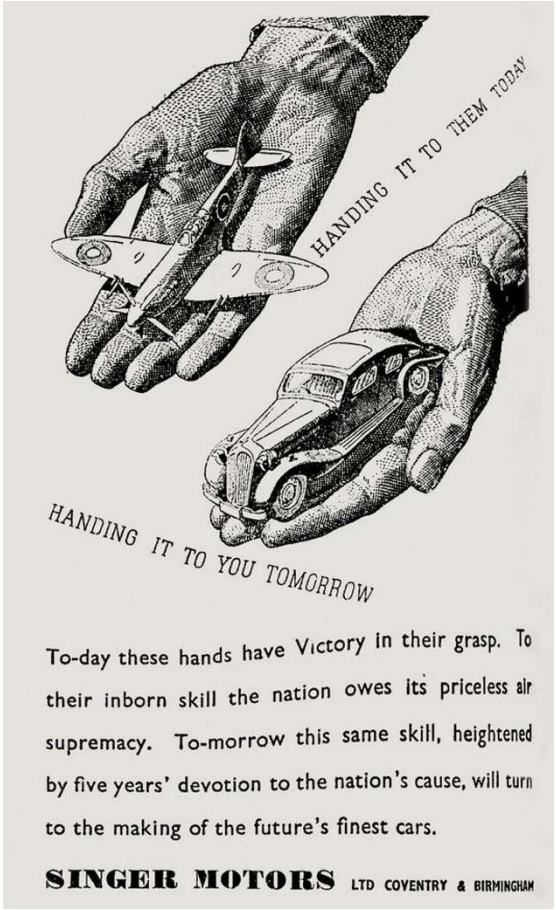
Ads in a time of war

The second world war was tough on Britain's firms. Many of the goods they had sold before the war were no longer being produced, as the country redirected resources to supporting the armed forces. Admen felt this keenly. "Brand goodwill," wrote the Advertising Association in 1940, "is a capital asset of almost unlimited value: difficult to build; only too easy to lose." "Let us guard our brand names during this economic upheaval," it exhorted companies.

Not only did they have fewer products to hawk; they were also up against a vigorous campaign against profligacy. The Squander Bug, a cartoon menace dreamed up by the government who lured shoppers into wasting money rather than investing in war bonds, appeared repeatedly in propaganda. The bug was described as “Hitler’s pal”.

And yet, throughout the war, British brands managed to keep themselves at the front of consumers’ minds. Leafing through the ads we printed early in 1945 reveals a lot about life on the home front. The makers of Bovril, a meat-extract paste that can be brewed into a beefy drink, touted the “warmth and cheeriness” it could offer Britons in the dead of winter. Crookes, a drug company, marketed halibut oil as “an essential of wartime diet”, especially “during this sixth winter of war”.

Ads for the finer stuff appeared in our pages, too—with a twist. Whisky production had collapsed in the early 1940s, as grain supplies were funnelled towards food, before slowly starting up again in 1944. White Horse, a distiller, tried to capitalise on that shift by advertising its stock of “pre-war whisky”, which had been “growing old when this war was young”. An ad for Black Magic (a brand still sold today, now owned by Nestlé) promised that chocolates which had long been out of production would soon be back on sale: “Come Peace, come Black Magic.”



Other firms used their ads to demonstrate their role in the war effort. Daimler and Singer, two carmakers, sought to win over *The Economist*’s readers by showing off the kit they had provided to secure Britain’s power in the air, on land and by sea. Daimler built armoured vehicles for infantry; both firms made aircraft parts. Kodak, an American company, made cameras for Allied soldiers and bomber teams, who used them to record their position over an enemy target when a bomb was released.

Companies had used ad space in this way since the beginning of the war. But by January 1945, they were looking ahead to its end. Singer promised that the skill of its engineers, “heightened by five years’ devotion to the nation’s cause”, would “turn to the making of the future’s finest cars”. So did Lanchester, another carmaker. “The post-war Lanchester,” it promised, really would turn out to be a car “well worth waiting for”.

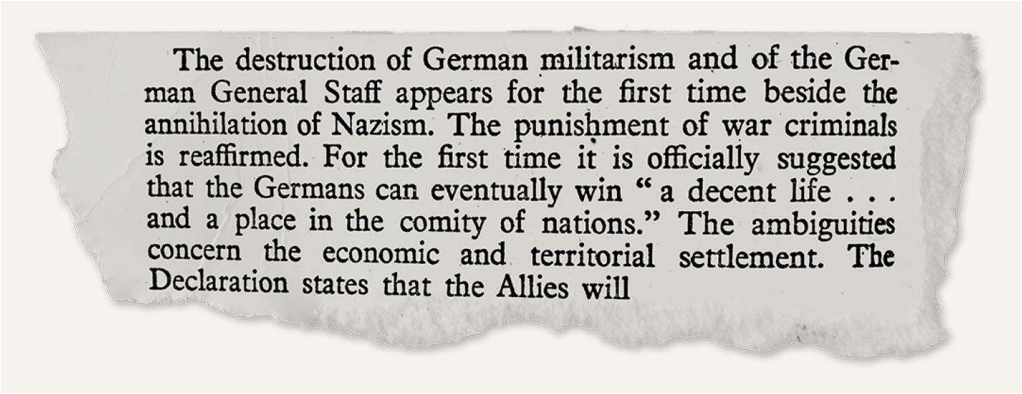
February 7

Conference in the Crimea

Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Josef Stalin had last met in Tehran, Iran's capital, in late 1943. There they had agreed that Britain and America would open a second front against the Nazis in western Europe while the Soviet Union attacked from the east. Now, with German defences crumbling, the leaders of Britain, America and the Soviet Union convened again—in Yalta, a resort town in Crimea. "The world's triumvirate," we wrote on February 3rd 1945, "will again meet face to face to determine the last stages of the war and the first steps of the peace."

Held from February 4th to 11th, the Yalta conference sought to thrash out a plan for how the Allies would govern Europe after the Nazis' defeat. In Tehran the three powers had settled on having "zones of influence": Russia would dominate central and eastern Europe and the Balkans, and Britain and America would hold sway in the Mediterranean. But the agreement reached at Yalta, we reported after the conference's end, revised those plans. The three instead committed themselves to "the right…to all peoples, to choose their own form of government".

As the aggressor, Germany would be subject to occupation by the Allies in order to prevent the resurgence of Nazism and to ensure the country's eventual transition to democracy. Control would be split four ways between the three powers and France (although the boundaries of these "zones of occupation" were not finalised: the front lines were still moving, in the east and the west, at the time of the Yalta conference). Germany would also be demilitarised:


The destruction of German militarism and of the German General Staff appears for the first time beside the annihilation of Nazism. The punishment of war criminals is reaffirmed. For the first time it is officially suggested that the Germans can eventually win " a decent life . . . and a place in the comity of nations." The ambiguities concern the economic and territorial settlement. The Declaration states that the Allies will

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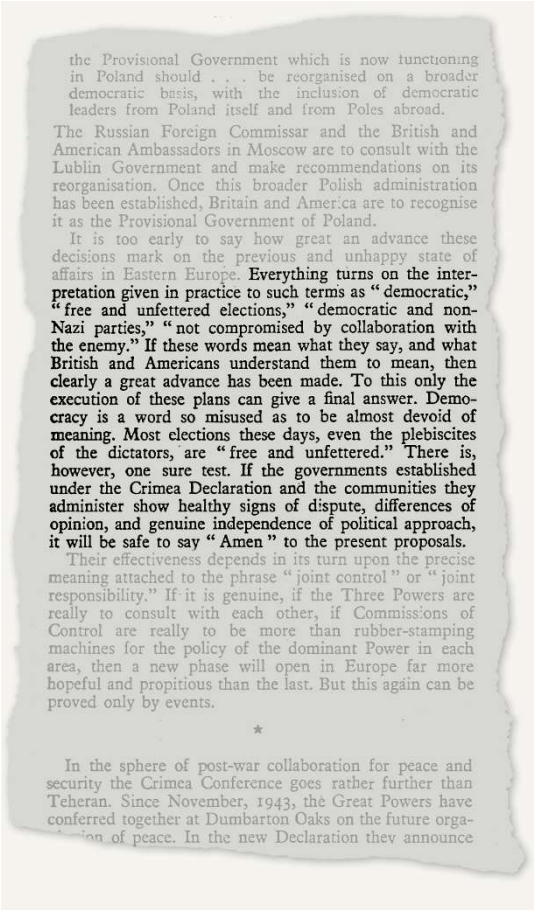
But much about the implementation of this plan remained fuzzy, beginning with the demand for Germany to demilitarise. "Interpreted harshly, this could mean the total destruction of German heavy industry," we wrote. "Leniently understood, it could mean a measure of Allied supervision—admittedly difficult—over a functioning German industrial system." It was also unclear whether a demand for the country to pay reparations could override "a minimum standard of life for the Germans". We worried that the declaration could even be used by the occupying powers to justify subjecting Germans to forced labour as a form of restitution.

And so *The Economist* reserved judgment on what had been achieved at Yalta: "No verdict can be passed on the terms as they stand. The interpretation is all." In the end, America and Britain, which favoured a more lenient policy, would come to blows with the Soviet Union over its heavy-handed expropriation of German factories, and its refusal to send food from the country's east to its more populous west. Tensions over the handling of occupied Germany would go on to shape the early years of the cold war.

In the years after Yalta, the West would also end up sharply divided with the Soviet Union over how to treat eastern Europe. The declaration did not spell this out. The Allies agreed that Poland would "be reorganised on a broader democratic basis, with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad". After years of war, that seemed a fair outcome for Poland—if only it could be realised:



the Provisional Government which is now functioning in Poland should . . . be reorganised on a broader democratic basis, with the inclusion of democratic leaders from Poland itself and from Poles abroad.

The Russian Foreign Commissar and the British and American Ambassadors in Moscow are to consult with the Lublin Government and make recommendations on its reorganisation. Once this broader Polish administration has been established, Britain and America are to recognise it as the Provisional Government of Poland.

It is too early to say how great an advance these decisions mark on the previous and unhappy state of affairs in Eastern Europe. **Everything turns on the interpretation given in practice to such terms as "democratic," "free and unfettered elections," "democratic and non-Nazi parties," "not compromised by collaboration with the enemy." If these words mean what they say, and what British and Americans understand them to mean, then clearly a great advance has been made. To this only the execution of these plans can give a final answer. Democracy is a word so misused as to be almost devoid of meaning. Most elections these days, even the plebiscites of the dictators, are "free and unfettered." There is, however, one sure test. If the governments established under the Crimea Declaration and the communities they administer show healthy signs of dispute, differences of opinion, and genuine independence of political approach, it will be safe to say "Amen" to the present proposals.**

Their effectiveness depends in its turn upon the precise meaning attached to the phrase "joint control" or "joint responsibility." If it is genuine, if the Three Powers are really to consult with each other, if Commissions of Control are really to be more than rubber-stamping machines for the policy of the dominant Power in each area, then a new phase will open in Europe far more hopeful and propitious than the last. But this again can be proved only by events.

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In the sphere of post-war collaboration for peace and security the Crimea Conference goes rather further than Teheran. Since November, 1943, the Great Powers have conferred together at Dumbarton Oaks on the future orga- ...ion of peace. In the new Declaration they announce

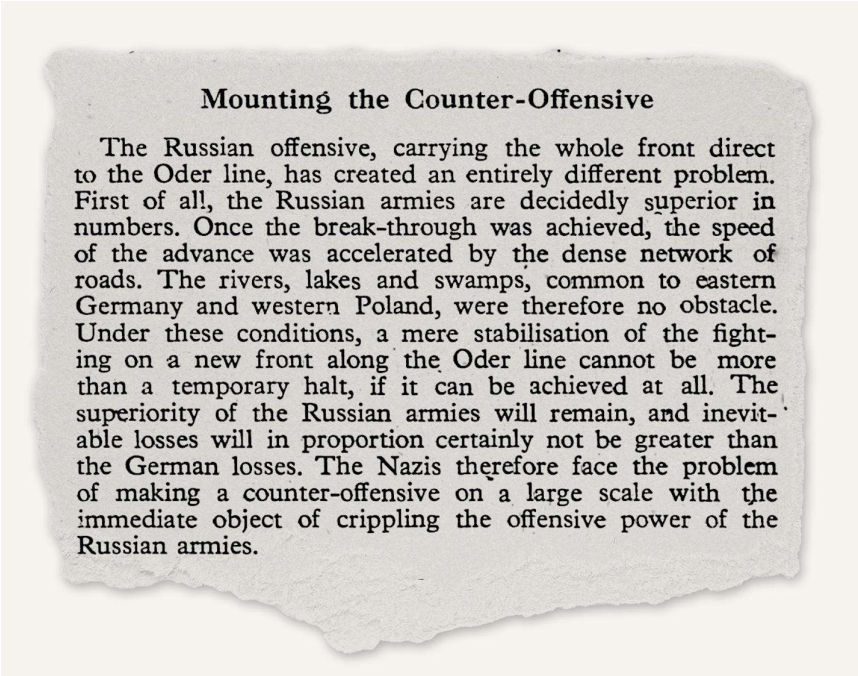
"Everything turns on the interpretation given in practice to such terms as 'democratic,' 'free and unfettered elections,' 'democratic and non-Nazi parties,' 'not compromised by collaboration with the enemy.' If these words mean what they say, and what British and Americans understand them to mean, then clearly a great advance has been made. To this only the execution of these plans can give a final answer…There is, however, one sure test. If the governments established under the Crimea Declaration and the communities they administer show healthy signs of dispute, differences of opinion, and genuine independence of political approach, it will be safe to say 'Amen' to the present proposals."

The Yalta declaration would miserably fail to meet *The Economist*'s test. Stalin did not keep his promise to allow free elections in central and eastern Europe; with the Red Army controlling much of the region, there was little America and Britain could do to force him. In Poland, even as the leaders met in Yalta, Soviet forces began to crush opposition to communist rule.

February 14

The German rump

While Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin were huddled at Yalta, the Soviet Union's offensive in eastern Europe was moving at breakneck speed. On January 12th the Red Army had begun its charge through Poland towards Germany. By the middle of February, the Allies had "reduced Germany to its heartland between the Rhine and the Oder", two rivers in the west and east. Whereas the Nazis had been able to slow the Allies in the west, the Red Army was much harder to stop. We explained:



Mounting the Counter-Offensive

The Russian offensive, carrying the whole front direct to the Oder line, has created an entirely different problem. First of all, the Russian armies are decidedly superior in numbers. Once the break-through was achieved, the speed of the advance was accelerated by the dense network of roads. The rivers, lakes and swamps, common to eastern Germany and western Poland, were therefore no obstacle. Under these conditions, a mere stabilisation of the fighting on a new front along the Oder line cannot be more than a temporary halt, if it can be achieved at all. The superiority of the Russian armies will remain, and inevitable losses will in proportion certainly not be greater than the German losses. The Nazis therefore face the problem of making a counter-offensive on a large scale with the immediate object of crippling the offensive power of the Russian armies.

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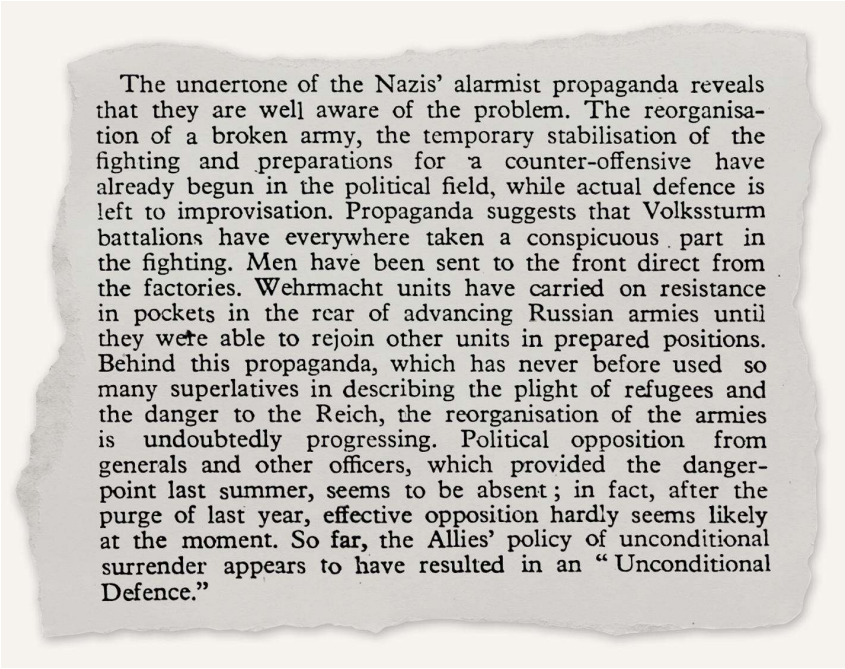
In other words, ever more of Germany, we predicted, would soon succumb to Soviet occupation. The area that remained under Nazi control was still big, stretching from the north-west Balkans and northern Italy to Norway, where a collaborationist regime was still in power. But, crucially, the Soviet offensive had dealt a heavy blow to the supply chains that kept Germany fighting.

By mid-February the Red Army controlled nearly all of Upper Silesia, an industrial region that was critical for Germany's supply of coal and metals. Over the previous few weeks that loss had hit the Nazis' war industry, and especially their armament factories. "Compared with production in Great Britain and the United States," we reported, "Germany's present output seems small and totally inadequate for replacing the losses and for equipping huge armies." That did not necessarily doom the Nazis; as we noted, Germany had never kept up with Britain and America in the number of bomber planes it could manufacture, for example. But now it was building hardly any ships, apart from submarines and small boats.

With the loss of Poland, the Nazis had also relinquished farmland that produced huge amounts of staple foods. Some supplies were abandoned during the retreat. "Large stocks of potatoes must have been left behind," we wrote. Efficient distribution networks were "thrown out of gear" as German towns received "a sudden influx of evacuees" and railways became "overburdened with military transport". As a result, rationing was tightened: "The food cards, originally issued for the eight weeks' period from February 5th to April 1st, will have to last for nine weeks, which means a reduction [in rations] of roughly 10 per cent."

Nazi propaganda was growing increasingly desperate. The *Volkssturm*, a militia formed by Hitler in late 1944 to mount a final defence of Germany, featured heavily in the regime's messaging. But morale among the group's 1m men was miserable. Poorly equipped and mostly untrained, few were moved by appeals to Nazi fanaticism. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the German army was scrambling to regroup after being driven from France and Poland:



The undertone of the Nazis' alarmist propaganda reveals that they are well aware of the problem. The reorganisation of a broken army, the temporary stabilisation of the fighting and preparations for a counter-offensive have already begun in the political field, while actual defence is left to improvisation. Propaganda suggests that Volkssturm battalions have everywhere taken a conspicuous part in the fighting. Men have been sent to the front direct from the factories. Wehrmacht units have carried on resistance in pockets in the rear of advancing Russian armies until they were able to rejoin other units in prepared positions. Behind this propaganda, which has never before used so many superlatives in describing the plight of refugees and the danger to the Reich, the reorganisation of the armies is undoubtedly progressing. Political opposition from generals and other officers, which provided the danger-point last summer, seems to be absent; in fact, after the purge of last year, effective opposition hardly seems likely at the moment. So far, the Allies' policy of unconditional surrender appears to have resulted in an "Unconditional Defence."

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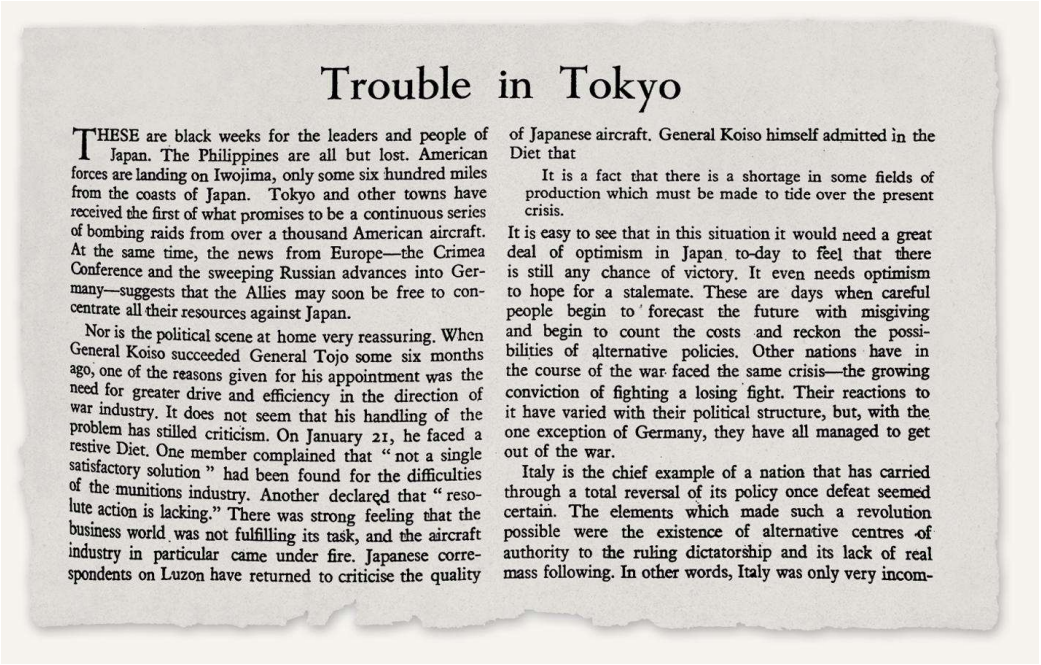
And "Unconditional Defence", as *The Economist* put it, was enforced brutally by the Nazis. Germans who showed signs of defeatism were punished harshly; large numbers of deserters were shot. For many Germans, it had been clear for months that the war was lost.

February 21

Trouble in Tokyo

In the Pacific, by mid-February, the tide was turning in favour of America. "Manila, capital of the Philippines, has fallen within four weeks of the first American landings on the Lingayen beaches," we wrote on February 10th. Before long, America would defeat the remaining Japanese forces on the islands, which they had occupied since 1941. Admiral Chester Nimitz, who led the American fleet in the Pacific, planned to use Manila as the main base for further naval operations against Japan. "We shall continue to move in the direction of Japan," he said, "and we are optimistic of our ability to do this." And indeed, by February 24th, Japan was in disarray:



Trouble in Tokyo

THESE are black weeks for the leaders and people of Japan. The Philippines are all but lost. American forces are landing on Iwojima, only some six hundred miles from the coasts of Japan. Tokyo and other towns have received the first of what promises to be a continuous series of bombing raids from over a thousand American aircraft. At the same time, the news from Europe—the Crimea Conference and the sweeping Russian advances into Germany—suggests that the Allies may soon be free to concentrate all their resources against Japan.

Nor is the political scene at home very reassuring. When General Koiso succeeded General Tojo some six months ago, one of the reasons given for his appointment was the need for greater drive and efficiency in the direction of war industry. It does not seem that his handling of the problem has stilled criticism. On January 21, he faced a restive Diet. One member complained that "not a single satisfactory solution" had been found for the difficulties of the munitions industry. Another declared that "resolute action is lacking." There was strong feeling that the business world was not fulfilling its task, and the aircraft industry in particular came under fire. Japanese correspondents on Luzon have returned to criticise the quality of Japanese aircraft. General Koiso himself admitted in the Diet that

> It is a fact that there is a shortage in some fields of production which must be made to tide over the present crisis.

It is easy to see that in this situation it would need a great deal of optimism in Japan to-day to feel that there is still any chance of victory. It even needs optimism to hope for a stalemate. These are days when careful people begin to forecast the future with misgiving and begin to count the costs and reckon the possibilities of alternative policies. Other nations have in the course of the war faced the same crisis—the growing conviction of fighting a losing fight. Their reactions to it have varied with their political structure, but, with the one exception of Germany, they have all managed to get out of the war.

Italy is the chief example of a nation that has carried through a total reversal of its policy once defeat seemed certain. The elements which made such a revolution possible were the existence of alternative centres of authority to the ruling dictatorship and its lack of real mass following. In other words, Italy was only very incom-

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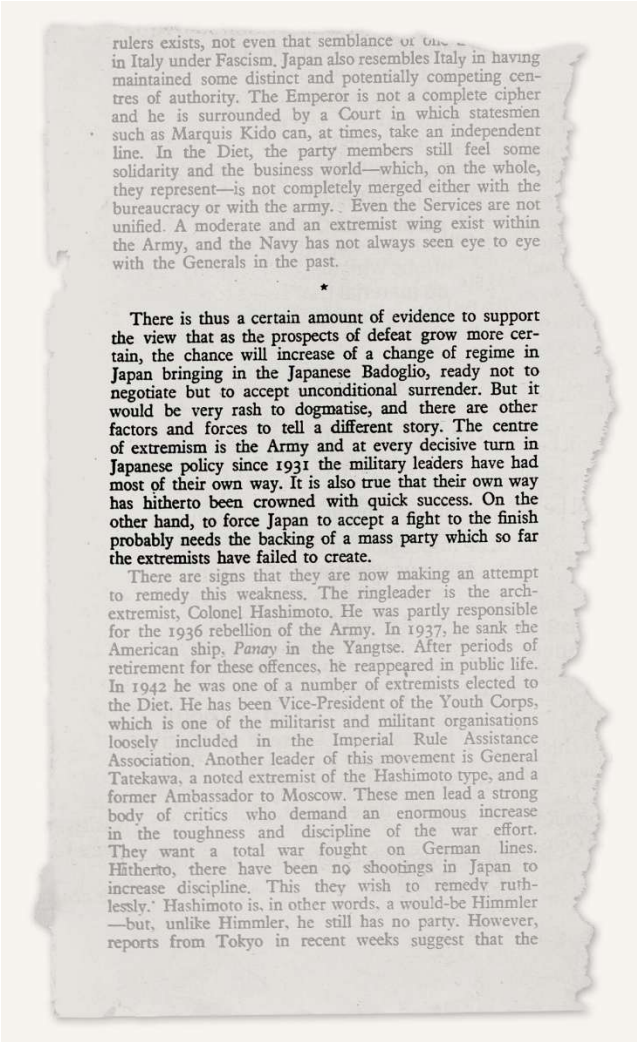
The assault on Iwo Jima (pictured), a strategically vital island that America would use to support bombing raids on the Japanese mainland, was only the latest in a series of American advances. Over the past two and a half years, America's victories in the Pacific had precipitated high political drama in Japan. In the summer of 1944 General Tojo Hideki had been forced to resign as prime minister, after a string of defeats. His successor, General Koiso Kuniaki, was also struggling to improve Japan's military fortunes. Though the Japanese press had aired serious complaints about the poor quality of the country's aircraft, Koiso had failed to boost its war machine (within weeks of Manila's fall, he too would resign, as America invaded Okinawa in April 1945).

The loss of the Philippines had laid bare Japan's weaknesses. We noted that industrial shortages (probably including rubber and oil from South-East Asia) had become a big problem. "It is easy to see," we wrote, "that in this situation it would need a great deal of optimism in Japan to-day to feel that there is still any chance of victory."

Would the country lay down its arms or choose to fight to the end, as Germany was doing? A comparison to Italy seemed apt. There, a strong monarchy and relatively weak popular support for fascism meant that Italy surrendered soon after it began suffering big military defeats: the newly installed prime minister, Pietro Badoglio, did so in September 1943. (The king, Victor Emmanuel, had arrested Benito Mussolini, the country's fascist dictator who was Badoglio's predecessor, earlier that year.) The same factors were present in Japan: with the emperor still in charge and no mass movement in support of fascism, Japan might similarly be expected to give up. To force the country to accept "a fight to the finish," we reasoned, "probably needs the backing of a mass party which so far the extremists have failed to create." But there was a hitch:



rulers exists, not even that semblance of [illegible] in Italy under Fascism. Japan also resembles Italy in having maintained some distinct and potentially competing centres of authority. The Emperor is not a complete cipher and he is surrounded by a Court in which statesmen such as Marquis Kido can, at times, take an independent line. In the Diet, the party members still feel some solidarity and the business world—which, on the whole, they represent—is not completely merged either with the bureaucracy or with the army. Even the Services are not unified. A moderate and an extremist wing exist within the Army, and the Navy has not always seen eye to eye with the Generals in the past.

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There is thus a certain amount of evidence to support the view that as the prospects of defeat grow more certain, the chance will increase of a change of regime in Japan bringing in the Japanese Badoglio, ready not to negotiate but to accept unconditional surrender. But it would be very rash to dogmatise, and there are other factors and forces to tell a different story. The centre of extremism is the Army and at every decisive turn in Japanese policy since 1931 the military leaders have had most of their own way. It is also true that their own way has hitherto been crowned with quick success. On the other hand, to force Japan to accept a fight to the finish probably needs the backing of a mass party which so far the extremists have failed to create.

There are signs that they are now making an attempt to remedy this weakness. The ringleader is the arch-extremist, Colonel Hashimoto. He was partly responsible for the 1936 rebellion of the Army. In 1937, he sank the American ship, *Panay* in the Yangtse. After periods of retirement for these offences, he reappeared in public life. In 1942 he was one of a number of extremists elected to the Diet. He has been Vice-President of the Youth Corps, which is one of the militarist and militant organisations loosely included in the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. Another leader of this movement is General Tatekawa, a noted extremist of the Hashimoto type, and a former Ambassador to Moscow. These men lead a strong body of critics who demand an enormous increase in the toughness and discipline of the war effort. They want a total war fought on German lines. Hitherto, there have been no shootings in Japan to increase discipline. This they wish to remedy ruthlessly. Hashimoto is, in other words, a would-be Himmler—but, unlike Himmler, he still has no party. However, reports from Tokyo in recent weeks suggest that the

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Faced with the possibility of a full-blown American assault, it seemed possible that Japan's army would try to radicalise the country's young nationalists and purge the moderates that remained in the government and at the Emperor's court. "On such a base," *The Economist* feared, "they could, perhaps, emulate the Nazis and build a regime tough enough to fight to the bitter end."

Whether they would succeed in convincing Japan was not clear; some moderates, we wrote, still seemed to have the upper hand. Still, the thought of "a fight to the finish on the soil of Japan itself" was a chilling prospect: after all, the battle for Iwo Jima remains one of the bloodiest ever fought by America's marines. As they became bogged down in vicious fighting on the heavily fortified island, Iwo Jima would show how catastrophic a ground invasion of the Japanese mainland could be.

February 28

Oh I would like to be beside the seaside!

While some of the bloodiest battles between America and Japan in the Pacific were only just beginning, for Britons victory in Europe felt close enough that *The Economist* allowed itself to look ahead to the end of the war. Life would not return to normal quickly. Britain's economy had been pummelled, forcing the government

to keep some rationing in place until as late as 1954. But it was obvious that, once the fighting stopped, pent-up desire for rest and relaxation would be strong:

Post-War Holidays

NO one now believes that the "last all clear" will herald an immediate resumption of pre-war life with its abundance of good things. The continuance of rationing, with only gradual relaxation, is accepted as inevitable. Nonetheless, the armistice with Germany will release a flow of spending—however much discouraged officially—which will pour through every gap not closed by definite *per caput* rationing. The end of the war will break the mould in which the social conscience has been set for the last five years. Few will give a second thought to saving fuel or money, making do and mending, or taking journeys which on any definition are not "really necessary."

Many of the journeys will be the prelude to the first holiday since the last days of peace. Reunited families, demobilised ex-servicemen on paid leave, workers on holidays with pay, newly married couples, families of children who have never seen the sea, and other

The soft-pedalling of the campaign for "holidays at home" and the urgent appeal that arrangements should be made for staggering holidays are evidence of this.

The mere removal of prohibitions is unlikely by itself to produce a satisfactory state of affairs. Scenes at railway stations and endless queues for meals and beds at seaside resorts may be accepted as an inevitable concomitant of war, but post-war holiday-makers will deserve and demand a better deal. How to ensure them more comfortable journeys and a measure of welcome at their destination promises to be one of the minor problems of the immediate post-war period. It seems that the Ministry of Production is to assist in staggering holidays, while the Ministry of Labour is to be the Government agency to supervise the overall problem, operating through the Catering Wages Commission.

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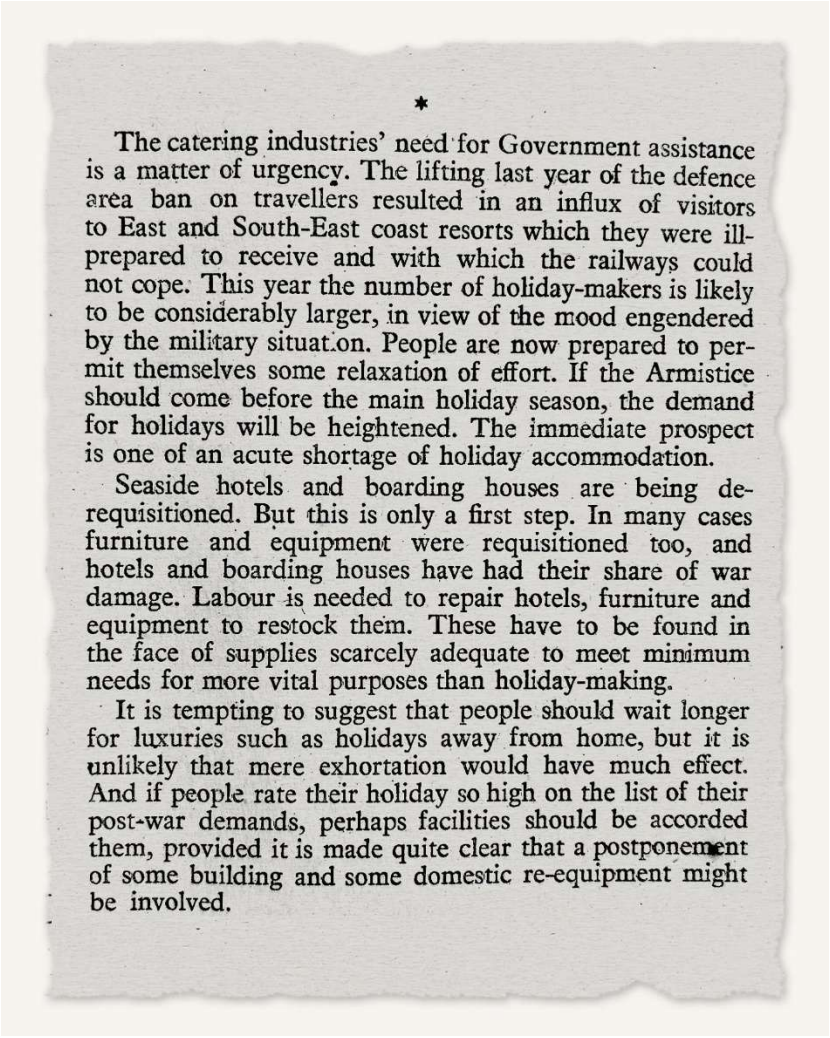
It seemed only natural that Britons would crave "the first holiday since the last days of peace". The government had long urged them to spend "holidays at home"; now it was no longer discouraging them from relaxing outside it. "Reunited families, demobilised ex-servicemen on paid leave, workers on holidays with pay, newly married couples, families of children who have never seen the sea, and others who have forgone wartime holidays" were just some of the groups that we expected would soon flock to British resorts, including Margate, Brighton and Eastbourne.

Children would return to beaches with their buckets and spades in the summer of 1945. In this video from July, barbed wire still stretches across the railings of a seafront promenade.

But it wasn't clear the seaside resorts would be up to it. After years of sitting closed for naval-security reasons, it was easy to imagine "endless queues for meals and beds". In 1944, when some resorts re-opened, they struggled to cope even with smaller crowds:



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The catering industries' need for Government assistance is a matter of urgency. The lifting last year of the defence area ban on travellers resulted in an influx of visitors to East and South-East coast resorts which they were ill-prepared to receive and with which the railways could not cope. This year the number of holiday-makers is likely to be considerably larger, in view of the mood engendered by the military situation. People are now prepared to permit themselves some relaxation of effort. If the Armistice should come before the main holiday season, the demand for holidays will be heightened. The immediate prospect is one of an acute shortage of holiday accommodation.

Seaside hotels and boarding houses are being de-requisitioned. But this is only a first step. In many cases furniture and equipment were requisitioned too, and hotels and boarding houses have had their share of war damage. Labour is needed to repair hotels, furniture and equipment to restock them. These have to be found in the face of supplies scarcely adequate to meet minimum needs for more vital purposes than holiday-making.

It is tempting to suggest that people should wait longer for luxuries such as holidays away from home, but it is unlikely that mere exhortation would have much effect. And if people rate their holiday so high on the list of their post-war demands, perhaps facilities should be accorded them, provided it is made quite clear that a postponement of some building and some domestic re-equipment might be involved.

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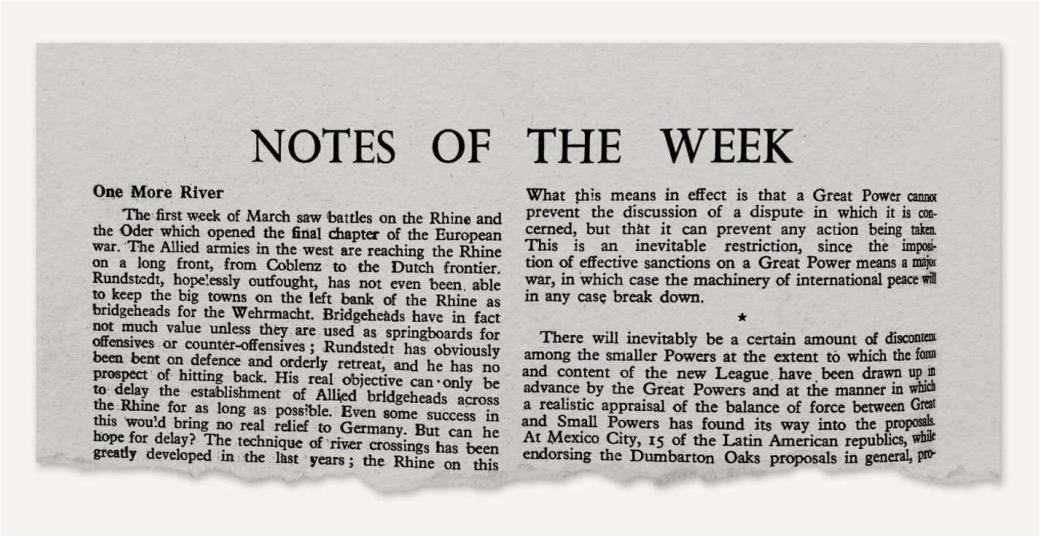
There were a few ways in which the government might try to help, *The Economist* noted. Some had floated the idea of state-run holiday camps—though this, we wrote, "mercifully, would be destined for unpopularity". Better options, we thought, would be for the government to open up old army camps and industrial workers' hostels to big groups, and to offer special loans to businesses that wanted to cater to holidaymakers. After years of anxiety over the country's supply of guns and butter, worrying about ice cream and parasols must have felt like a relief.

March 7

One more river

In western Europe, the Allies had suffered a tough start to the year. After advancing through Nazi-occupied France for most of late 1944, the Americans and the British had got bogged down. In mid-December Gerd von Rundstedt, a German general, had launched a counter-offensive in the Ardennes, between Luxembourg and Belgium. But by February the Allies had routed Rundstedt, whose forces were running out of supplies; and by March they were again pushing into German-held territory from the west.

"At last the Allies stand upon the Rhine, and tomorrow they may be across it," we wrote hopefully in our issue of March 10th. There was just one more big river for them to cross before they reached the German heartland:



NOTES OF THE WEEK

One More River

The first week of March saw battles on the Rhine and the Oder which opened the final chapter of the European war. The Allied armies in the west are reaching the Rhine on a long front, from Coblenz to the Dutch frontier. Rundstedt, hopelessly outfought, has not even been able to keep the big towns on the left bank of the Rhine as bridgeheads for the Wehrmacht. Bridgeheads have in fact not much value unless they are used as springboards for offensives or counter-offensives; Rundstedt has obviously been bent on defence and orderly retreat, and he has no prospect of hitting back. His real objective can only be to delay the establishment of Allied bridgeheads across the Rhine for as long as possible. Even some success in this would bring no real relief to Germany. But can he hope for delay? The technique of river crossings has been greatly developed in the last years; the Rhine on this

What this means in effect is that a Great Power cannot prevent the discussion of a dispute in which it is concerned, but that it can prevent any action being taken. This is an inevitable restriction, since the imposition of effective sanctions on a Great Power means a major war, in which case the machinery of international peace will in any case break down.

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There will inevitably be a certain amount of discontent among the smaller Powers at the extent to which the form and content of the new League have been drawn up in advance by the Great Powers and at the manner in which a realistic appraisal of the balance of force between Great and Small Powers has found its way into the proposals. At Mexico City, 15 of the Latin American republics, while endorsing the Dumbarton Oaks proposals in general, pro-

“The first week of March saw battles on the Rhine and the Oder which opened the final chapter of the European war. The Allied armies in the west are reaching the Rhine on a long front, from Coblenz to the Dutch frontier. Rundstedt, hopelessly outfought, has not even been able to keep the big towns on the left bank of the Rhine as bridgeheads for the Wehrmacht...His real objective can only be to delay the establishment of Allied bridgeheads across the Rhine for as long as possible. Even some success in this would bring no real relief to Germany.”

Over to the east, the Red Army, commanded by Georgy Zhukov and Konstantin Rokossovsky, had made it north to the Polish coast and cut off German forces around the port-city of Danzig (now Gdansk). Like the Allies massed on the Rhine in the west, the Red Army now faced the task of crossing the lower parts of the Oder, which flows north through eastern Germany to the Baltic Sea. Soon the Red Army would launch an assault on Stettin (now Szczecin), a city at the river’s mouth. “The next few weeks”, we reported, “are thus certain to see the last two great battles for river crossings in the German war.”

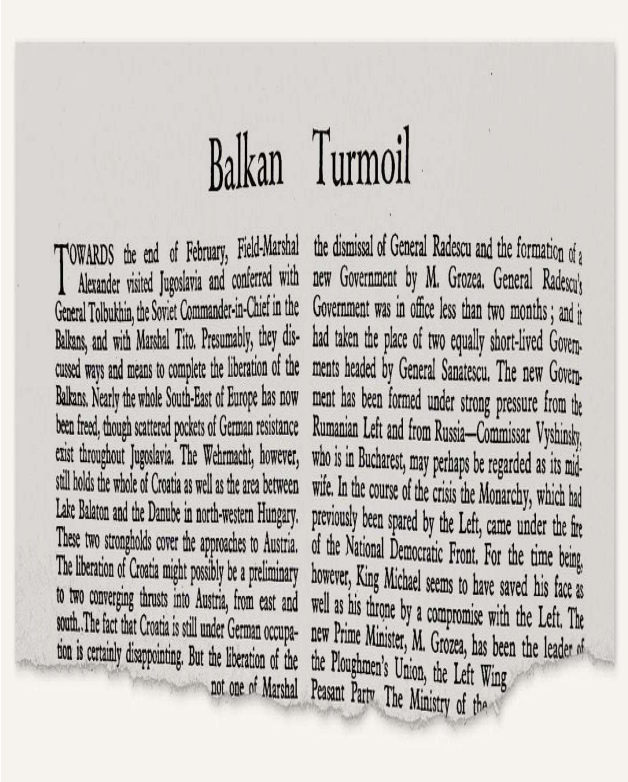
Meanwhile, in the Pacific, America was intensifying its bombing campaign in Japan. America had been bombing the Japanese mainland since 1942, but stepped up its campaign in 1944—first using air bases on mainland China and later from Saipan, an island that it captured from Japan that summer. Early strikes were targeted at military and industrial sites. But after difficult weather conditions caused a series of raids to fail, American generals abandoned that strategy. In January, Curtis LeMay took charge of operations and ordered firebombing raids on the cities of mainland Japan.

Most structures in Japanese cities, built from wood and paper, stood no chance against the firebombings. On the night of March 9th LeMay launched a massive raid on Tokyo. Close to 300 B-29 bombers dropped white phosphorus and napalm on the city, where it had hardly rained in weeks. That caused a firestorm. More than 100,000 inhabitants were killed and around 40 square kilometres of the city were ravaged. It was the deadliest bombing raid of the entire second world war. As the fighting in Europe entered its final stretch, the conflict in the Pacific was entering its most violent.

March 14

Balkan Turmoil

In March 1945 the Nazis were being squeezed from both east and west by the Allies. They were also under growing pressure from the south. The Balkans had been under German occupation for nearly four years. But in 1944 the balance of power shifted. The Red Army pushed south into the Balkans that summer, after storming westwards across Ukraine. Once there it joined forces with resistance fighters led by Josip Broz, a Croat communist who went by the party name “Tito”. With most of the peninsula liberated by the beginning of 1945, Tito met British and Soviet brass to plan the next stages of the campaign. As we reported on March 10th:



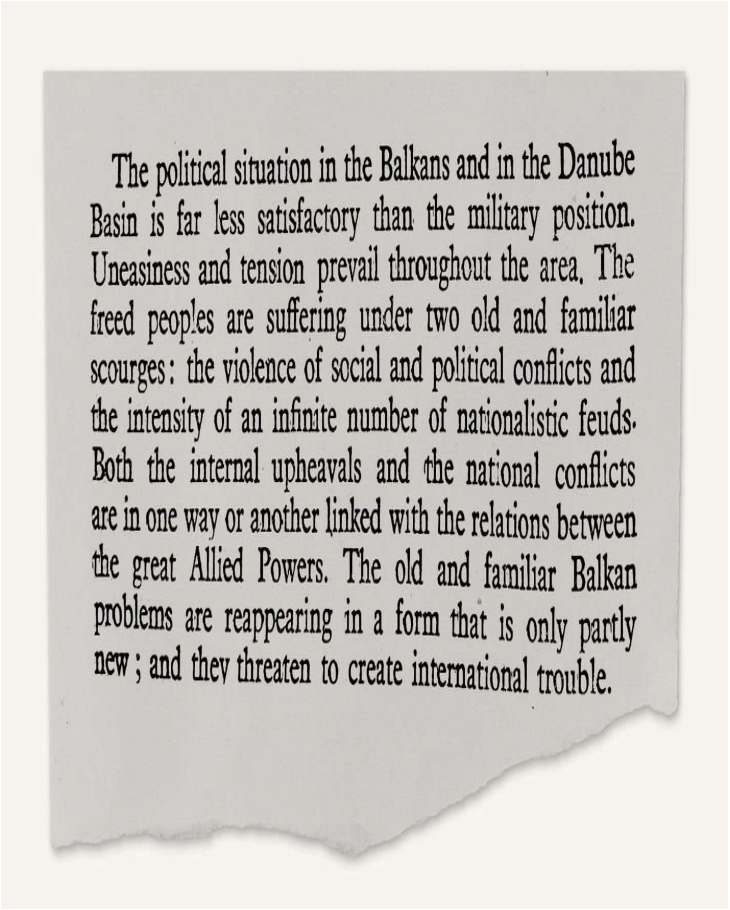
Balkan Turmoil

TOWARDS the end of February, Field-Marshal Alexander visited Jugoslavia and conferred with General Tolbukhin, the Soviet Commander-in-Chief in the Balkans, and with Marshal Tito. Presumably, they discussed ways and means to complete the liberation of the Balkans. Nearly the whole South-East of Europe has now been freed, though scattered pockets of German resistance exist throughout Jugoslavia. The Wehrmacht, however, still holds the whole of Croatia as well as the area between Lake Balaton and the Danube in north-western Hungary. These two strongholds cover the approaches to Austria. The liberation of Croatia might possibly be a preliminary to two converging thrusts into Austria, from east and south. The fact that Croatia is still under German occupation is certainly disappointing. But the liberation of the not one of Marshal

the dismissal of General Radescu and the formation of a new Government by M. Grozea. General Radescu's Government was in office less than two months; and it had taken the place of two equally short-lived Governments headed by General Sanatescu. The new Government has been formed under strong pressure from the Rumanian Left and from Russia—Commissar Vyshinsky, who is in Bucharest, may perhaps be regarded as its midwife. In the course of the crisis the Monarchy, which had previously been spared by the Left, came under the fire of the National Democratic Front. For the time being, however, King Michael seems to have saved his face as well as his throne by a compromise with the Left. The new Prime Minister, M. Grozea, has been the leader of the Ploughmen's Union, the Left Wing Peasant Party. The Ministry of the

"Towards the end of February, Field-Marshal Alexander visited Jugoslavia and conferred with General Tolbukhin, the Soviet Commander-in-Chief in the Balkans, and with Marshal Tito. Presumably, they discussed ways and means to complete the liberation of the Balkans. Nearly the whole South-East of Europe has now been freed, though scattered pockets of German resistance exist throughout Jugoslavia. The Wehrmacht, however, still holds the whole of Croatia as well as the area between Lake Balaton and the Danube in north-western Hungary. These two strongholds cover the approaches to Austria."

The liberation of most of Yugoslavia—the state that covered much of the western Balkans—and all of Romania had given the Red Army a route through Hungary to Austria. It would lay siege to Vienna in early April. But as the war drew to a close, the Allies' success in driving the Nazis out of the Balkans was overshadowed by the political, ethnic and territorial conflicts bubbling up within the region itself:


The political situation in the Balkans and in the Danube Basin is far less satisfactory than the military position. Uneasiness and tension prevail throughout the area. The freed peoples are suffering under two old and familiar scourges: the violence of social and political conflicts and the intensity of an infinite number of nationalistic feuds. Both the internal upheavals and the national conflicts are in one way or another linked with the relations between the great Allied Powers. The old and familiar Balkan problems are reappearing in a form that is only partly new; and they threaten to create international trouble.

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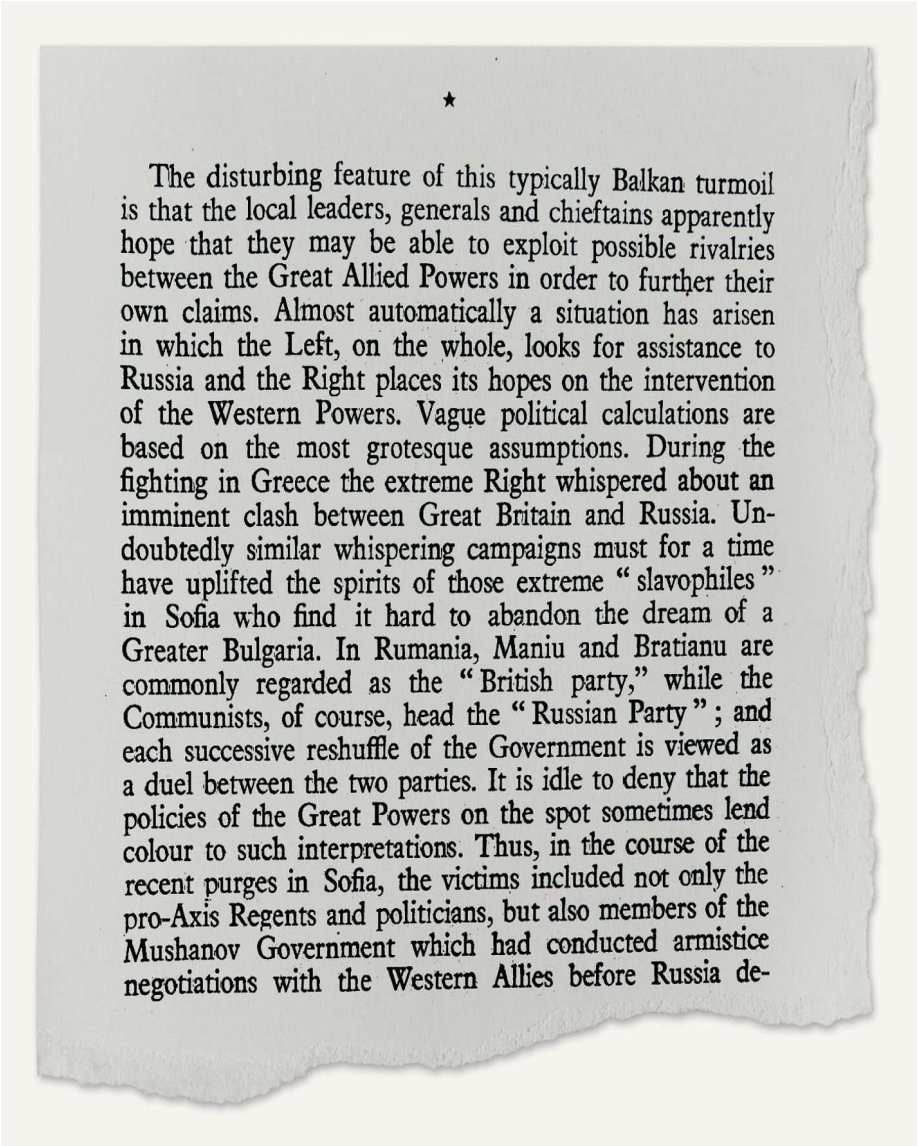
The governments formed after the Nazis’ withdrawal had proven unstable. In Romania, King Michael’s efforts to keep a non-communist government together failed for the third time in March, when Petru Groza, the leader of the left-wing Ploughmen’s Union, formed a new administration—with Russian support. (Andrey Vyshinsky, a Russian diplomat in Bucharest, “may perhaps be regarded as its midwife”, we wrote.) In Yugoslavia Tito, who had just won the support of the Serbian Democratic Party, was struggling to balance his support among Croats, Slovenes and other ethnic groups. Greece, which had erupted in civil war shortly after liberation, had settled into a truce. But sharp divisions between monarchists, communists and moderate republicans meant peace was destined to be short-lived.

Conflicts threatened to break out across borders, too. “The nationalist moods in the Balkans have been reflected in the long list of territorial claims that have already been put on record by nearly all the Balkan governments,” we wrote. In Greece we noted that chauvinistic demonstrations for a “Greater Greece” were growing, with crowds chanting: “Occupy Bulgaria for 55 years” and “Sofia! Sofia!” At the same time, many Greeks feared that Turkey might try to claim some of the Dodecanese Islands close to its coast. Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Romania were considering territorial claims of their own, too.

The proliferation of disputes both internal and external was worrying:



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The disturbing feature of this typically Balkan turmoil is that the local leaders, generals and chieftains apparently hope that they may be able to exploit possible rivalries between the Great Allied Powers in order to further their own claims. Almost automatically a situation has arisen in which the Left, on the whole, looks for assistance to Russia and the Right places its hopes on the intervention of the Western Powers. Vague political calculations are based on the most grotesque assumptions. During the fighting in Greece the extreme Right whispered about an imminent clash between Great Britain and Russia. Undoubtedly similar whispering campaigns must for a time have uplifted the spirits of those extreme "slavophiles" in Sofia who find it hard to abandon the dream of a Greater Bulgaria. In Rumania, Maniu and Bratianu are commonly regarded as the "British party," while the Communists, of course, head the "Russian Party"; and each successive reshuffle of the Government is viewed as a duel between the two parties. It is idle to deny that the policies of the Great Powers on the spot sometimes lend colour to such interpretations. Thus, in the course of the recent purges in Sofia, the victims included not only the pro-Axis Regents and politicians, but also members of the Mushanov Government which had conducted armistice negotiations with the Western Allies before Russia de-

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Brutal punishments for members of collaborationist regimes, communist smears of Western sympathisers as "fascists" and the emerging cold-war divide between pro-Russian elements and British and American officials were creating a dark, paranoid atmosphere in the Balkans. "The local Governments, parties and factions ought to be told quite bluntly that their hopes of benefiting from inter-Allied rivalry are futile," we urged. Although in Greece civil war would boil up again in 1946, the worst ethnic wars that we feared did not break out in the 1940s. But, as much of the Balkans slid behind the iron curtain, the peninsula would end up divided by the cold war instead.

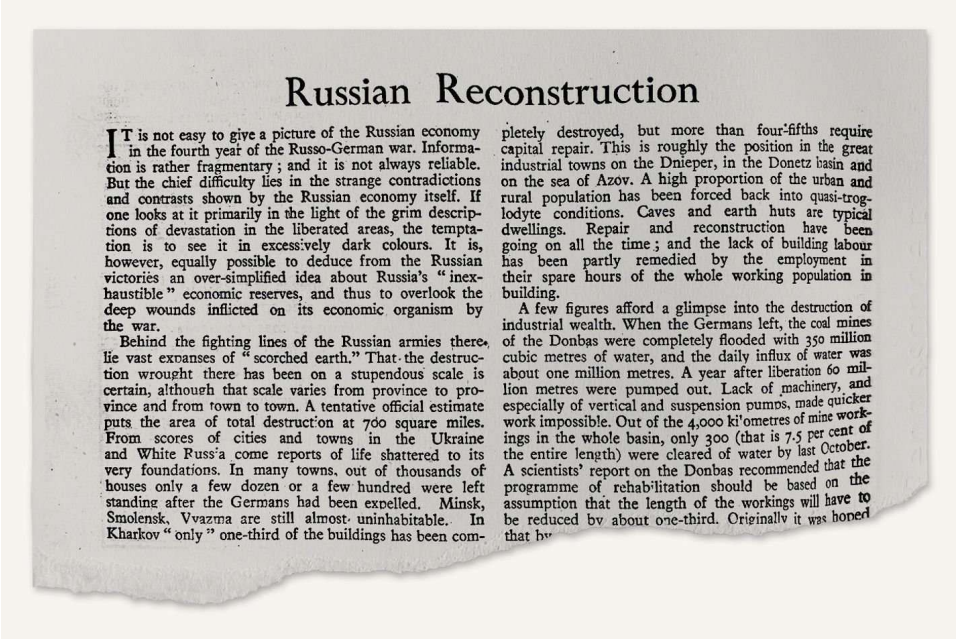
March 21

Russian Reconstruction

"It is not easy", *The Economist* wrote on March 24th, "to give a picture of the Russian economy in the fourth year of the Russo-German war." Since the beginning of Operation Barbarossa in the summer of 1941, when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, the Kremlin had been forced into a desperate fight for survival. Some of the most violent fighting of the second world war took place on the eastern front: the Soviet Union lost more

citizens than all the other Allies combined. Now Josef Stalin, the Soviet leader, faced the enormous task of rebuilding destroyed towns, cities and industries. With Soviet troops within striking distance of Berlin, we looked at the problems facing the Russian economy and its capacity to recover.

The western regions of the Soviet Union, which were the site of heavy fighting as they were liberated from Nazi control, had experienced untold destruction. We wrote:



Russian Reconstruction

IT is not easy to give a picture of the Russian economy in the fourth year of the Russo-German war. Information is rather fragmentary; and it is not always reliable. But the chief difficulty lies in the strange contradictions and contrasts shown by the Russian economy itself. If one looks at it primarily in the light of the grim descriptions of devastation in the liberated areas, the temptation is to see it in excessively dark colours. It is, however, equally possible to deduce from the Russian victories an over-simplified idea about Russia's "inexhaustible" economic reserves, and thus to overlook the deep wounds inflicted on its economic organism by the war.

Behind the fighting lines of the Russian armies there lie vast expanses of "scorched earth." That the destruction wrought there has been on a stupendous scale is certain, although that scale varies from province to province and from town to town. A tentative official estimate puts the area of total destruction at 700 square miles. From scores of cities and towns in the Ukraine and White Russia come reports of life shattered to its very foundations. In many towns, out of thousands of houses only a few dozen or a few hundred were left standing after the Germans had been expelled. Minsk, Smolensk, Vyazma are still almost uninhabitable. In Kharkov "only" one-third of the buildings has been completely destroyed, but more than four-fifths require capital repair. This is roughly the position in the great industrial towns on the Dnieper, in the Donetz basin and on the sea of Azov. A high proportion of the urban and rural population has been forced back into quasi-troglodyte conditions. Caves and earth huts are typical dwellings. Repair and reconstruction have been going on all the time; and the lack of building labour has been partly remedied by the employment in their spare hours of the whole working population in building.

A few figures afford a glimpse into the destruction of industrial wealth. When the Germans left, the coal mines of the Donbas were completely flooded with 350 million cubic metres of water, and the daily influx of water was about one million metres. A year after liberation 60 million metres were pumped out. Lack of machinery, and especially of vertical and suspension pumps, made quicker work impossible. Out of the 4,000 kilometres of mine workings in the whole basin, only 300 (that is 7.5 per cent of the entire length) were cleared of water by last October. A scientists' report on the Donbas recommended that the programme of rehabilitation should be based on the assumption that the length of the workings will have to be reduced by about one-third. Originally it was hoped that by

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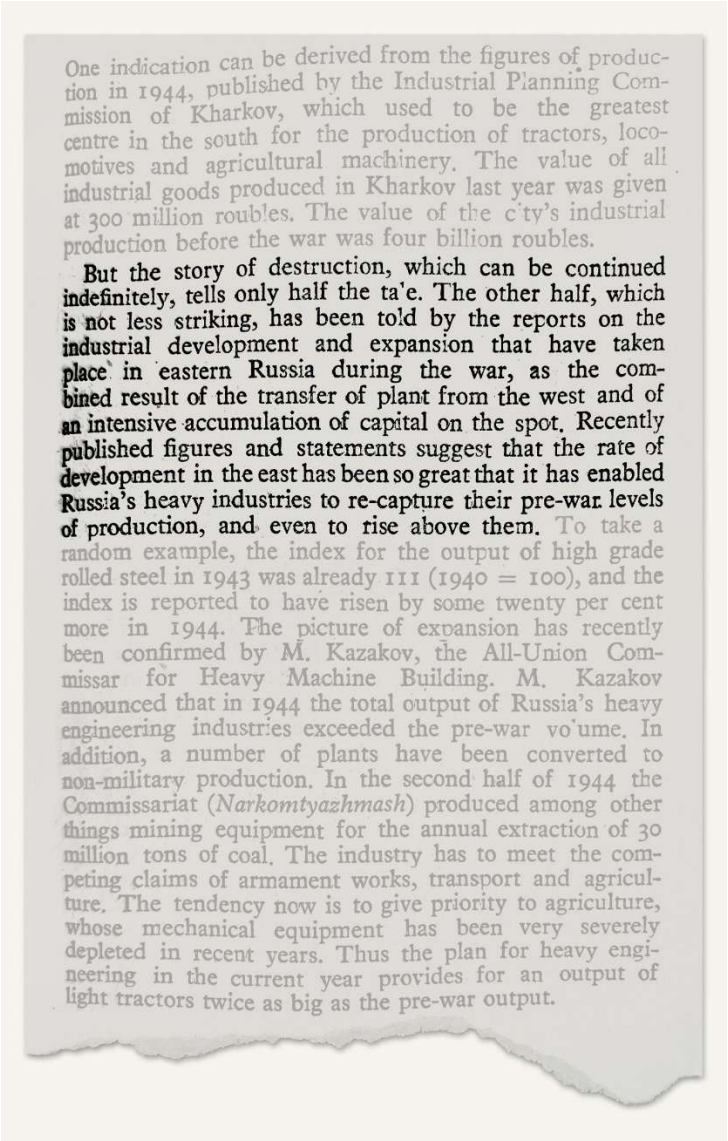
Big, industrial cities in eastern Ukraine had suffered some of the worst devastation. One-third of the buildings in Kharkiv had been completely destroyed; four-fifths of those that remained were in need of serious repair. The situation across the region was similar. "A high proportion of the urban and rural population", we wrote, "has been forced back into quasi-troglodyte conditions." Caves and mud huts had become ordinary dwellings. Mines that were flooded by the Nazis as they fled were still inundated with water; the Soviet authorities had been able to drain only 7.5% of those in the Donbas after they retook the territory.

The state of the economy varied across the vast sweep of the Soviet Union, however. We explained:



One indication can be derived from the figures of production in 1944, published by the Industrial Planning Commission of Kharkov, which used to be the greatest centre in the south for the production of tractors, locomotives and agricultural machinery. The value of all industrial goods produced in Kharkov last year was given at 300 million roubles. The value of the city's industrial production before the war was four billion roubles.

But the story of destruction, which can be continued indefinitely, tells only half the tale. The other half, which is not less striking, has been told by the reports on the industrial development and expansion that have taken place in eastern Russia during the war, as the combined result of the transfer of plant from the west and of an intensive accumulation of capital on the spot. Recently published figures and statements suggest that the rate of development in the east has been so great that it has enabled Russia's heavy industries to re-capture their pre-war levels of production, and even to rise above them. To take a random example, the index for the output of high grade rolled steel in 1943 was already 111 (1940 = 100), and the index is reported to have risen by some twenty per cent more in 1944. The picture of expansion has recently been confirmed by M. Kazakov, the All-Union Commissar for Heavy Machine Building. M. Kazakov announced that in 1944 the total output of Russia's heavy engineering industries exceeded the pre-war volume. In addition, a number of plants have been converted to non-military production. In the second half of 1944 the Commissariat (*Narkomtyazhmash*) produced among other things mining equipment for the annual extraction of 30 million tons of coal. The industry has to meet the competing claims of armament works, transport and agriculture. The tendency now is to give priority to agriculture, whose mechanical equipment has been very severely depleted in recent years. Thus the plan for heavy engineering in the current year provides for an output of light tractors twice as big as the pre-war output.

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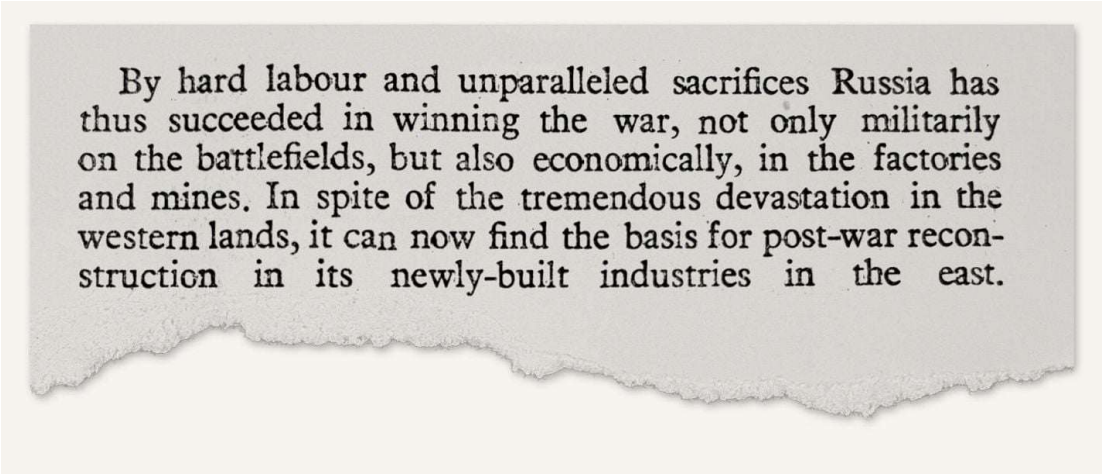
Industrial production in the east, especially in the region around the Ural mountains and in Central Asia, had boomed. Figures for the production of steel—a primary input for weapons, transport and agricultural equipment—gave a sense of Soviet industry's stunning growth: around 30% more high-grade steel was being produced by 1944 than in 1940. Electricity generation had boomed, too. The Soviet Union's ability to substitute lost capacity in areas under occupation by expanding industry in the east played a big role in helping it to defeat the Nazis:



By hard labour and unparalleled sacrifices Russia has thus succeeded in winning the war, not only militarily on the battlefields, but also economically, in the factories and mines. In spite of the tremendous devastation in the western lands, it can now find the basis for post-war reconstruction in its newly-built industries in the east.

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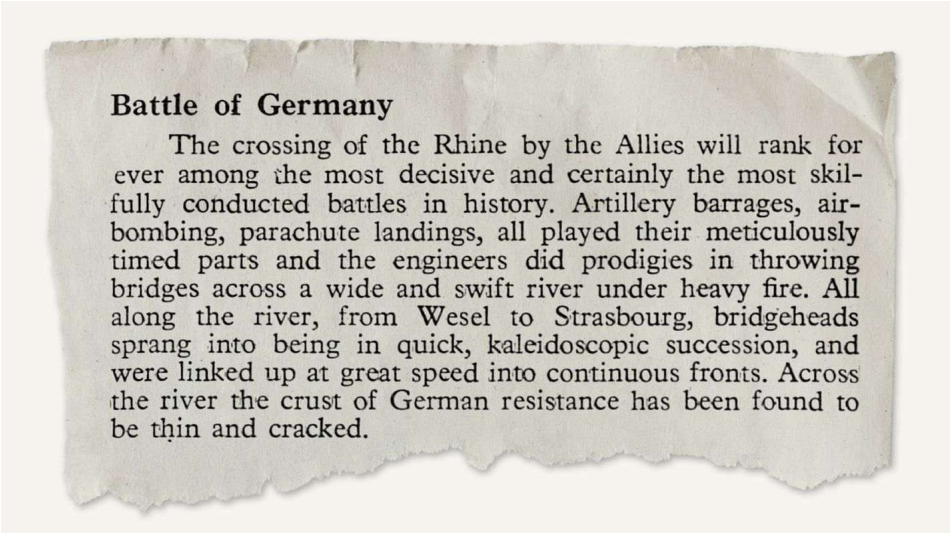
Reconstruction in the liberated territories of the western Soviet Union would lead to a slight slowdown in production in the east. "Even now", we wrote, "there are signs that the liberation of western industrial areas has already caused some relaxation in the war effort of the eastern provinces." But the Soviet Union was determined to maintain its industrial growth, including by pressing Germany for reparations to help finance its reconstruction. Stalin was determined that the Soviet Union should assert itself as a global power. Keeping up its wartime economic expansion would be key to that objective.

March 28

Battle of Germany

By late March the Allies were closing in on the German heartland. In the west their armies had stood for weeks along the Rhine, the last big river between them and the cities of western Germany. The Nazis had destroyed most of the bridges across the river as they retreated, hoping to slow the Allies' advance. Some small groups of soldiers crossed the river in early March. Then, on the night of March 23rd, the Allies piled into boats and tanks fitted with flotation aids and crossed the river along a 20km front. Operation Plunder had begun. Within days the Allies had erected bridges across the Rhine and stormed towards Frankfurt and Münster. As we wrote in our edition of March 31st:



Battle of Germany

The crossing of the Rhine by the Allies will rank for ever among the most decisive and certainly the most skilfully conducted battles in history. Artillery barrages, air-bombing, parachute landings, all played their meticulously timed parts and the engineers did prodigies in throwing bridges across a wide and swift river under heavy fire. All along the river, from Wesel to Strasbourg, bridgeheads sprang into being in quick, kaleidoscopic succession, and were linked up at great speed into continuous fronts. Across the river the crust of German resistance has been found to be thin and cracked.

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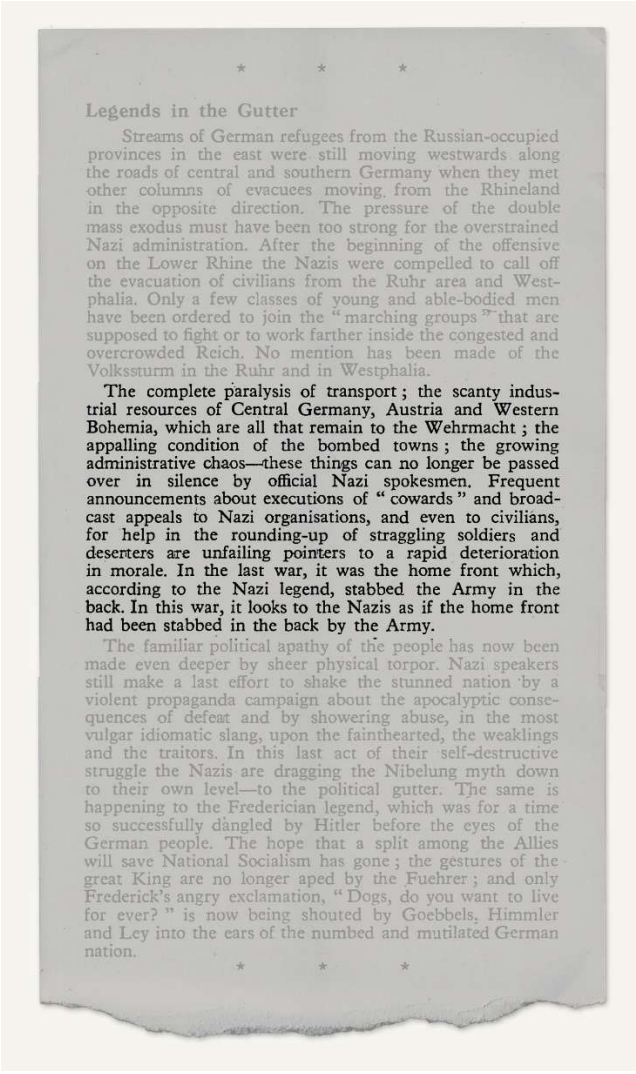
kaleidoscopic succession, and were linked up at great speed into continuous fronts. Across the river the crust of German resistance has been found to be thin and cracked."

The Allies' advance devastated the Germans. More than 250,000 soldiers fighting with the Wehrmacht had been captured as the Allies moved beyond the Rhine, we reported. That would make it hard for Albert Kesselring, the general commanding Germany's forces on the western front, to mount a serious defence without falling back towards the capital. "The ring of concentric defences around Berlin", we wrote, "may perhaps be the last battlefield chosen by the German Command. There they may still hope to prolong the twilight of the gods in the ruins of the German capital and to impose on the attackers all the handicaps of long communication lines over enemy land submerged in terrible chaos."

Still, with the Red Army massed along the Oder in north-eastern Germany and surging towards Nazi-occupied Vienna to the south, the Wehrmacht was on the brink of collapse. "The day is not far off", we wrote, "when the distinction between eastern and western fronts must become meaningless." In Germany any remaining semblance of order appeared to be unravelling. The "rump of the Reich" that remained under Nazi control was descending into panic:



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Legends in the Gutter

Streams of German refugees from the Russian-occupied provinces in the east were still moving westwards along the roads of central and southern Germany when they met other columns of evacuees moving from the Rhineland in the opposite direction. The pressure of the double mass exodus must have been too strong for the overstrained Nazi administration. After the beginning of the offensive on the Lower Rhine the Nazis were compelled to call off the evacuation of civilians from the Ruhr area and Westphalia. Only a few classes of young and able-bodied men have been ordered to join the "marching groups" that are supposed to fight or to work farther inside the congested and overcrowded Reich. No mention has been made of the Volkssturm in the Ruhr and in Westphalia.

The complete paralysis of transport; the scanty industrial resources of Central Germany, Austria and Western Bohemia, which are all that remain to the Wehrmacht; the appalling condition of the bombed towns; the growing administrative chaos—these things can no longer be passed over in silence by official Nazi spokesmen. Frequent announcements about executions of "cowards" and broadcast appeals to Nazi organisations, and even to civilians, for help in the rounding-up of straggling soldiers and deserters are unfailing pointers to a rapid deterioration in morale. In the last war, it was the home front which, according to the Nazi legend, stabbed the Army in the back. In this war, it looks to the Nazis as if the home front had been stabbed in the back by the Army.

The familiar political apathy of the people has now been made even deeper by sheer physical torpor. Nazi speakers still make a last effort to shake the stunned nation by a violent propaganda campaign about the apocalyptic consequences of defeat and by showering abuse, in the most vulgar idiomatic slang, upon the fainthearted, the weaklings and the traitors. In this last act of their self-destructive struggle the Nazis are dragging the Nibelung myth down to their own level—to the political gutter. The same is happening to the Frederician legend, which was for a time so successfully dangled by Hitler before the eyes of the German people. The hope that a split among the Allies will save National Socialism has gone; the gestures of the great King are no longer aped by the Fuehrer; and only Frederick's angry exclamation, "Dogs, do you want to live for ever?" is now being shouted by Goebbels, Himmler and Ley into the ears of the numbed and mutilated German nation.

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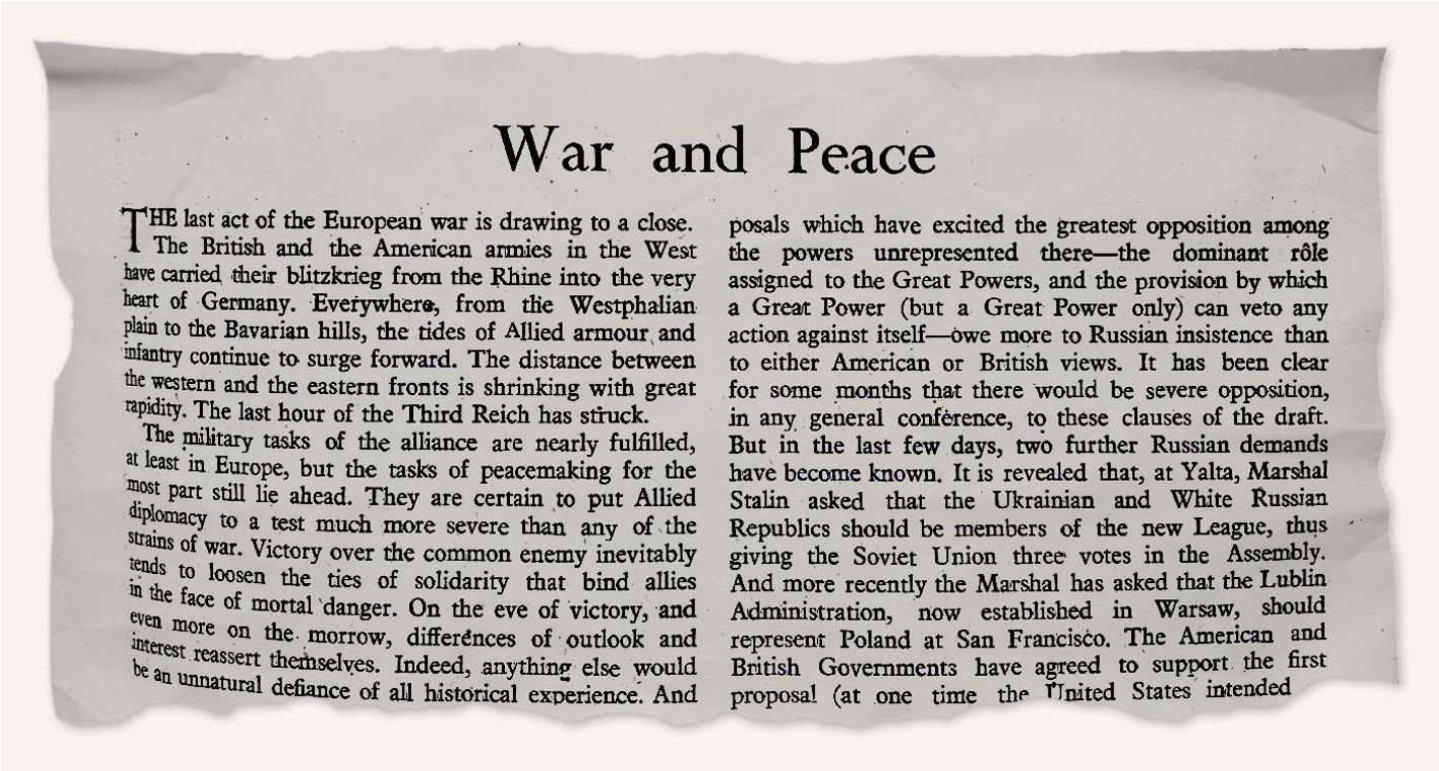
By late March, we wrote, refugees from the territories liberated by the Red Army in the east were fleeing towards central Germany only to meet with others who had been evacuated from Allied-held areas in the west. Nazi propagandists were desperately trying to "shake the stunned nation by a violent propaganda campaign about the apocalyptic consequences of defeat". Even as the inevitable end drew nearer, the regime's mouthpieces were delivering a final appeal to national pride "into the ears of the numbed and mutilated German nation".

April 4

War and Peace

"The last hour of the Third Reich has struck," declared *The Economist* on April 7th. After the Allies established themselves on the east bank of the Rhine at the end of March, British and American tanks and infantry struck "into the very heart of Germany". The Red Army was also advancing from the east. But as the Nazis' defeat drew near, the divisions between the Allies were growing increasingly plain:



War and Peace

THE last act of the European war is drawing to a close. The British and the American armies in the West have carried their blitzkrieg from the Rhine into the very heart of Germany. Everywhere, from the Westphalian plain to the Bavarian hills, the tides of Allied armour and infantry continue to surge forward. The distance between the western and the eastern fronts is shrinking with great rapidity. The last hour of the Third Reich has struck.

The military tasks of the alliance are nearly fulfilled, at least in Europe, but the tasks of peacemaking for the most part still lie ahead. They are certain to put Allied diplomacy to a test much more severe than any of the strains of war. Victory over the common enemy inevitably tends to loosen the ties of solidarity that bind allies in the face of mortal danger. On the eve of victory, and even more on the morrow, differences of outlook and interest reassert themselves. Indeed, anything else would be an unnatural defiance of all historical experience. And

posals which have excited the greatest opposition among the powers unrepresented there—the dominant rôle assigned to the Great Powers, and the provision by which a Great Power (but a Great Power only) can veto any action against itself—owe more to Russian insistence than to either American or British views. It has been clear for some months that there would be severe opposition, in any general conference, to these clauses of the draft. But in the last few days, two further Russian demands have become known. It is revealed that, at Yalta, Marshal Stalin asked that the Ukrainian and White Russian Republics should be members of the new League, thus giving the Soviet Union three votes in the Assembly. And more recently the Marshal has asked that the Lublin Administration, now established in Warsaw, should represent Poland at San Francisco. The American and British Governments have agreed to support the first proposal (at one time the United States intended

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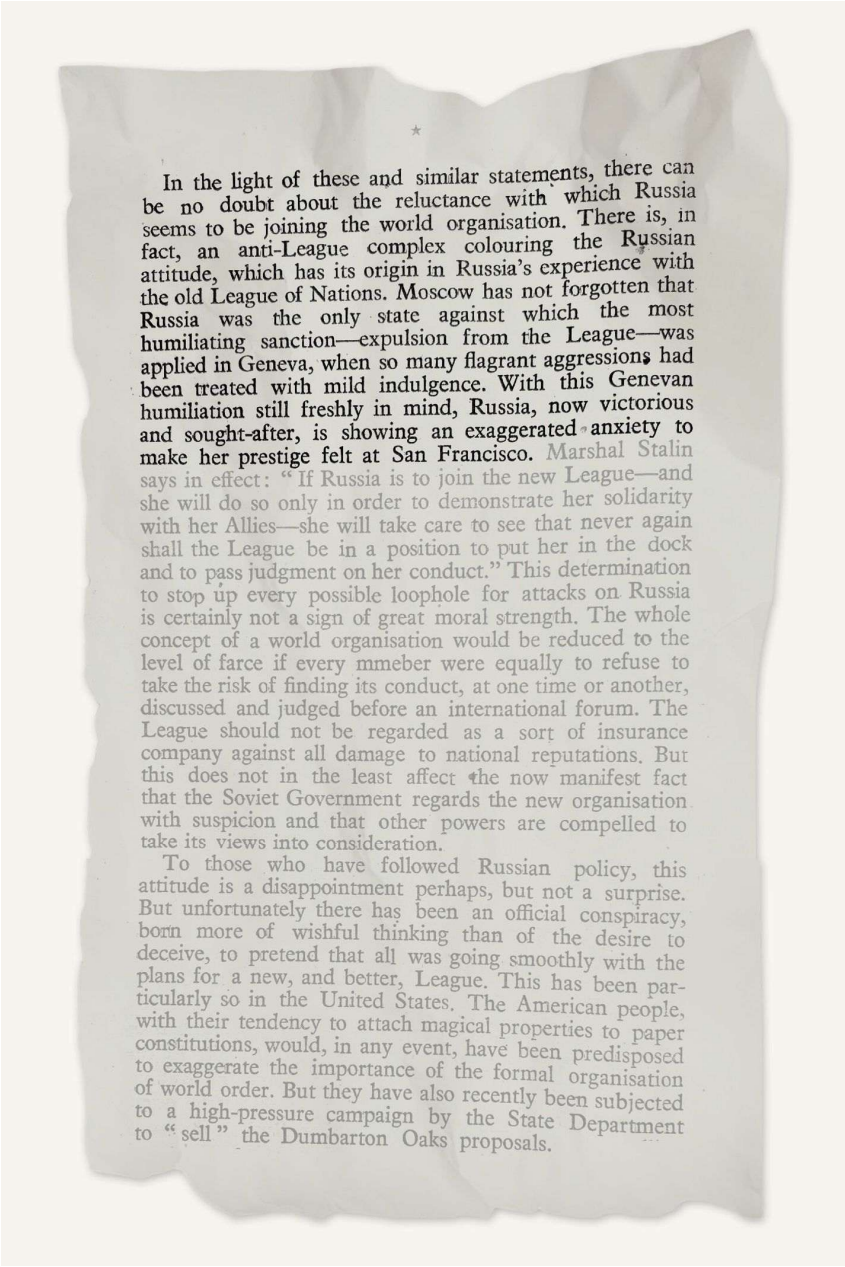
Some points of disagreement were already apparent. Among them was the structure of what would later become the United Nations. In 1943 the Allies had agreed to establish a successor to the League of Nations. The following year diplomats from America, Britain, China and the Soviet Union had gathered at Dumbarton Oaks, a mansion in Washington, DC, to come up with proposals for how the organisation would be run. Now delegates from nearly 50 Allied countries were preparing to meet in San Francisco to finalise their plans for the new League.

The Soviet Union's demands, however, were causing friction with America. As well as taking one seat for the Soviet Union, Josef Stalin wanted two of its constituent republics, Ukraine and Belarus, to have seats too, giving him more power in the assembly. Stalin also wanted Poland to be represented by the communist government in Warsaw, rather than the government in exile supported by America and Britain. Russia's attitude to international relations, we wrote, seemed to be principally about consolidating power for itself. We wrote:



In the light of these and similar statements, there can be no doubt about the reluctance with which Russia seems to be joining the world organisation. There is, in fact, an anti-League complex colouring the Russian attitude, which has its origin in Russia's experience with the old League of Nations. Moscow has not forgotten that Russia was the only state against which the most humiliating sanction—expulsion from the League—was applied in Geneva, when so many flagrant aggressions had been treated with mild indulgence. With this Genevan humiliation still freshly in mind, Russia, now victorious and sought-after, is showing an exaggerated anxiety to make her prestige felt at San Francisco. Marshal Stalin says in effect: "If Russia is to join the new League—and she will do so only in order to demonstrate her solidarity with her Allies—she will take care to see that never again shall the League be in a position to put her in the dock and to pass judgment on her conduct." This determination to stop up every possible loophole for attacks on Russia is certainly not a sign of great moral strength. The whole concept of a world organisation would be reduced to the level of farce if every mmeber were equally to refuse to take the risk of finding its conduct, at one time or another, discussed and judged before an international forum. The League should not be regarded as a sort of insurance company against all damage to national reputations. But this does not in the least affect the now manifest fact that the Soviet Government regards the new organisation with suspicion and that other powers are compelled to take its views into consideration.

To those who have followed Russian policy, this attitude is a disappointment perhaps, but not a surprise. But unfortunately there has been an official conspiracy, born more of wishful thinking than of the desire to deceive, to pretend that all was going smoothly with the plans for a new, and better, League. This has been particularly so in the United States. The American people, with their tendency to attach magical properties to paper constitutions, would, in any event, have been predisposed to exaggerate the importance of the formal organisation of world order. But they have also recently been subjected to a high-pressure campaign by the State Department to "sell" the Dumbarton Oaks proposals.

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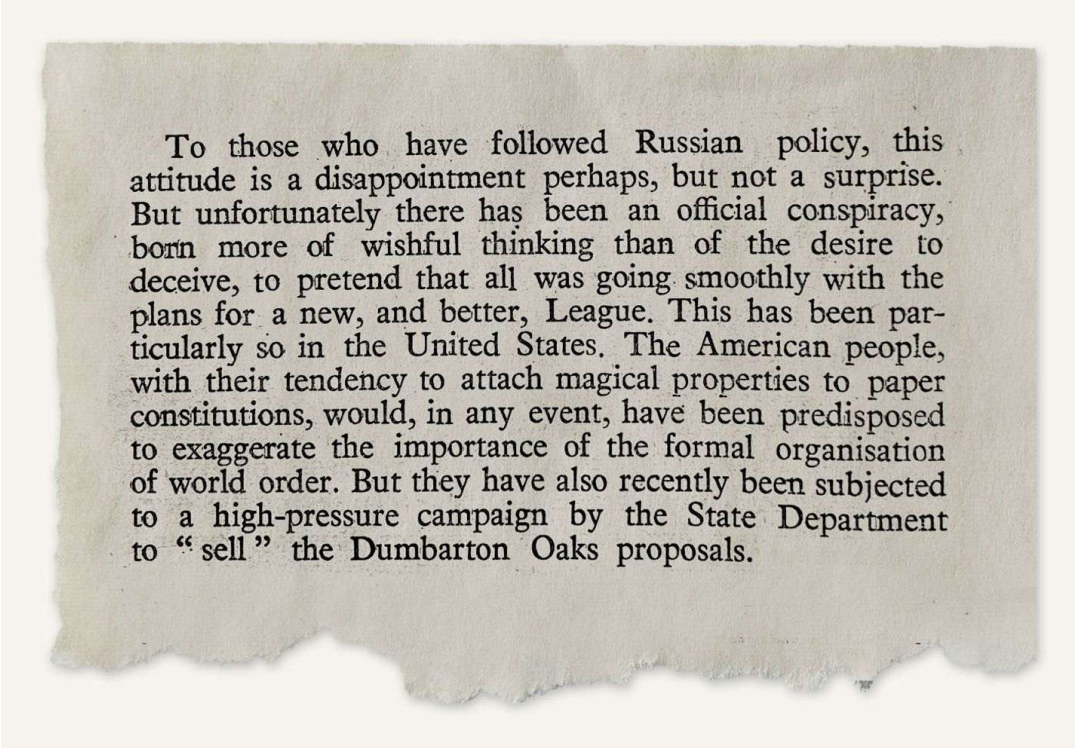
The Soviet Union—still aggrieved by its ejection from the League in 1939 over its invasion of Finland—wanted to be sure that the new organisation would not be able to "put her in the dock" again. "This determination to stop up every possible loophole for attacks on Russia", we observed, "is certainly not a sign of great moral strength." But it also presented the Allies with a bigger problem. As we explained:



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Franklin Roosevelt's administration had pitched the founding of the new organisation as "the greatest hope for continuing peace and as a discharge of the largest part of America's responsibility to the world". Now Russia's demands looked as though they could disrupt the establishment of a successor to the League.

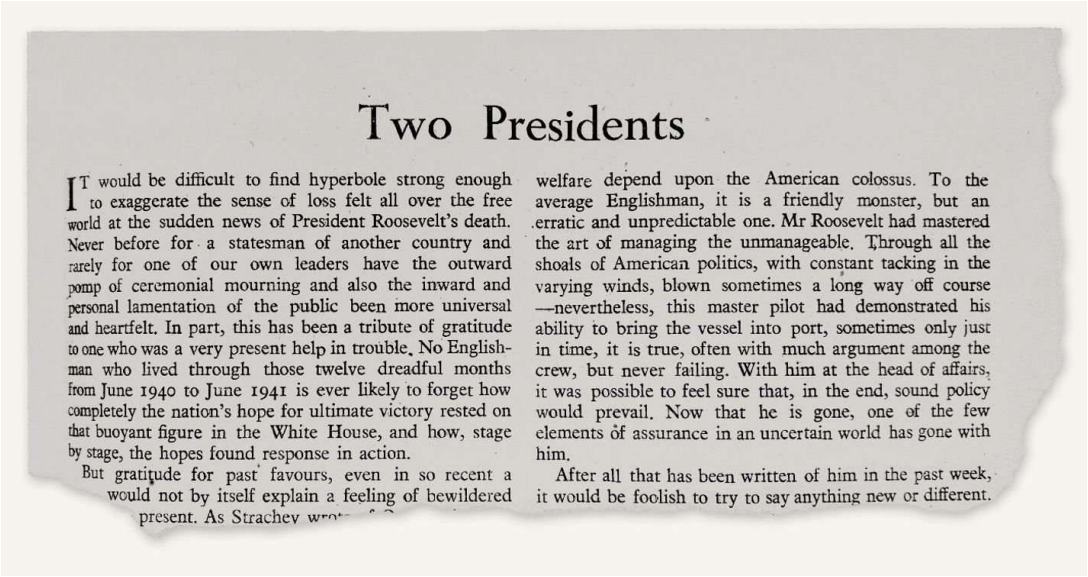
Some, we wrote, had called for the conference at San Francisco to be postponed. But doing so would be humiliating for the Roosevelt administration. The conference, which would run from the end of April until the end of June, would eventually bring the United Nations into being. But it would do so in spite of the fact that "Russian and American views of how to secure peace in the world are radically different".

April 11

Two Presidents

Franklin Roosevelt's ill health didn't hold him back. He became president in 1933, 12 years after polio left him paralysed from the waist down. After he took office his health held up for a decade. But leading America through the war took its toll.

In 1943 those close to Roosevelt said he was becoming tired; in February 1945, at the Yalta conference, his doctor told the president's daughter, Anna, that her father had "a serious ticker situation". In March Roosevelt headed to Warm Springs, his retreat in Georgia, to rest. On April 12th, as he sat for a portrait, he collapsed. He was 63 years old. *The Economist* reported in its issue of April 21st:



Two Presidents

IT would be difficult to find hyperbole strong enough to exaggerate the sense of loss felt all over the free world at the sudden news of President Roosevelt's death. Never before for a statesman of another country and rarely for one of our own leaders have the outward pomp of ceremonial mourning and also the inward and personal lamentation of the public been more universal and heartfelt. In part, this has been a tribute of gratitude to one who was a very present help in trouble. No Englishman who lived through those twelve dreadful months from June 1940 to June 1941 is ever likely to forget how completely the nation's hope for ultimate victory rested on that buoyant figure in the White House, and how, stage by stage, the hopes found response in action.

But gratitude for past favours, even in so recent a would not by itself explain a feeling of bewildered present. As Strachey wro

welfare depend upon the American colossus. To the average Englishman, it is a friendly monster, but an erratic and unpredictable one. Mr Roosevelt had mastered the art of managing the unmanageable. Through all the shoals of American politics, with constant tacking in the varying winds, blown sometimes a long way off course —nevertheless, this master pilot had demonstrated his ability to bring the vessel into port, sometimes only just in time, it is true, often with much argument among the crew, but never failing. With him at the head of affairs, it was possible to feel sure that, in the end, sound policy would prevail. Now that he is gone, one of the few elements of assurance in an uncertain world has gone with him.

After all that has been written of him in the past week, it would be foolish to try to say anything new or different.

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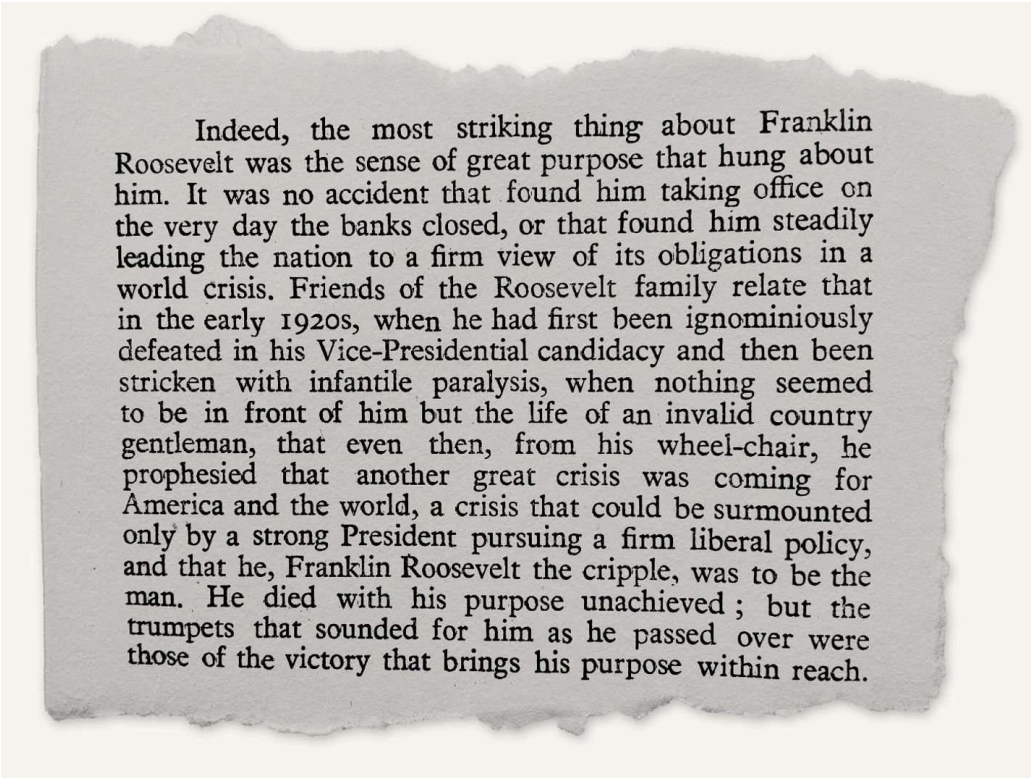
Roosevelt's death evoked the same feelings of grief as the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. "Mr Roosevelt had not been in the White House for 63 years," we wrote, "but it costs an effort of memory to set the mind back to the time of President Hoover."

After the outbreak of the second world war Roosevelt had convened a special session of Congress to provide arms to Britain and France. Then, in 1941, he secured the passage of the Lend-Lease Act, a military-aid scheme, despite opposition from isolationists. "Now that he is gone, one of the few elements of assurance in an uncertain world has gone with him." A "master pilot", Roosevelt had been an expert at leading America through crises:



Indeed, the most striking thing about Franklin Roosevelt was the sense of great purpose that hung about him. It was no accident that found him taking office on the very day the banks closed, or that found him steadily leading the nation to a firm view of its obligations in a world crisis. Friends of the Roosevelt family relate that in the early 1920s, when he had first been ignominiously defeated in his Vice-Presidential candidacy and then been stricken with infantile paralysis, when nothing seemed to be in front of him but the life of an invalid country gentleman, that even then, from his wheel-chair, he prophesied that another great crisis was coming for America and the world, a crisis that could be surmounted only by a strong President pursuing a firm liberal policy, and that he, Franklin Roosevelt the cripple, was to be the man. He died with his purpose unachieved ; but the trumpets that sounded for him as he passed over were those of the victory that brings his purpose within reach.

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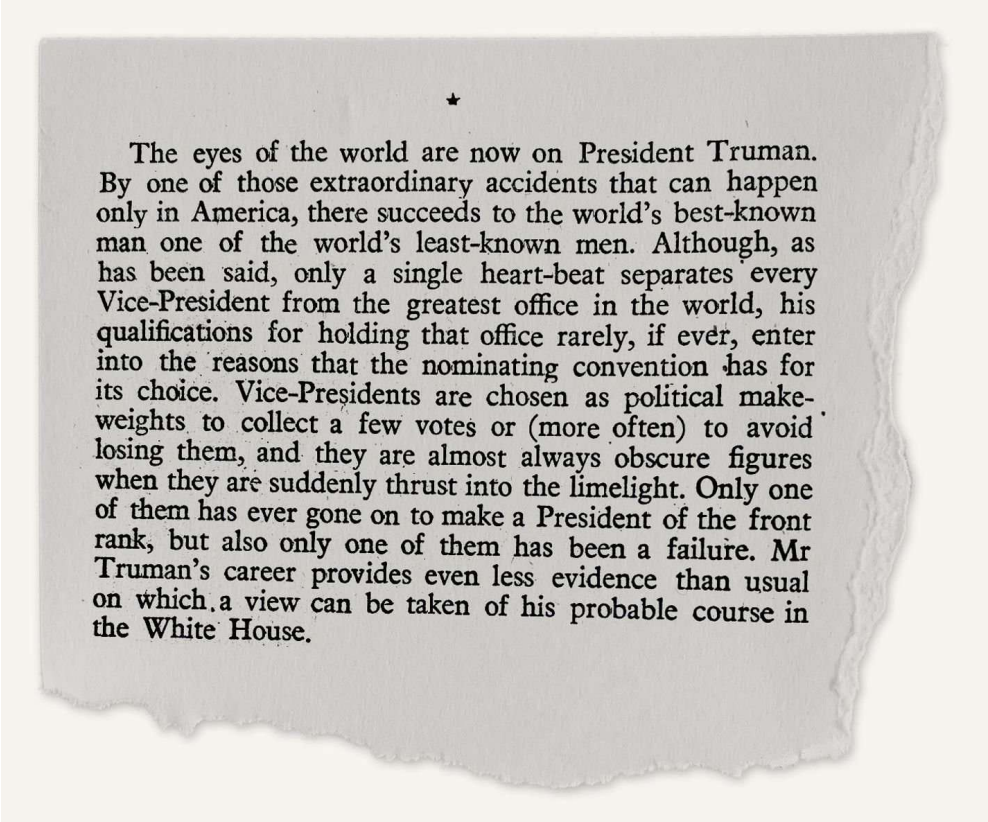
His death meant that the job of president would pass to Harry Truman, whom Roosevelt had chosen as his running-mate in the election of 1944. Truman had been vice-president for less than 90 days. Two and a half hours after Roosevelt died, he was sworn in as president in the Oval Office. “Boys,” he said to a throng of reporters after he became president, “if you ever pray, pray for me now.” The former senator from Missouri was hardly known outside America:



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The eyes of the world are now on President Truman. By one of those extraordinary accidents that can happen only in America, there succeeds to the world's best-known man one of the world's least-known men. Although, as has been said, only a single heart-beat separates every Vice-President from the greatest office in the world, his qualifications for holding that office rarely, if ever, enter into the reasons that the nominating convention has for its choice. Vice-Presidents are chosen as political make-weights to collect a few votes or (more often) to avoid losing them, and they are almost always obscure figures when they are suddenly thrust into the limelight. Only one of them has ever gone on to make a President of the front rank, but also only one of them has been a failure. Mr Truman's career provides even less evidence than usual on which a view can be taken of his probable course in the White House.

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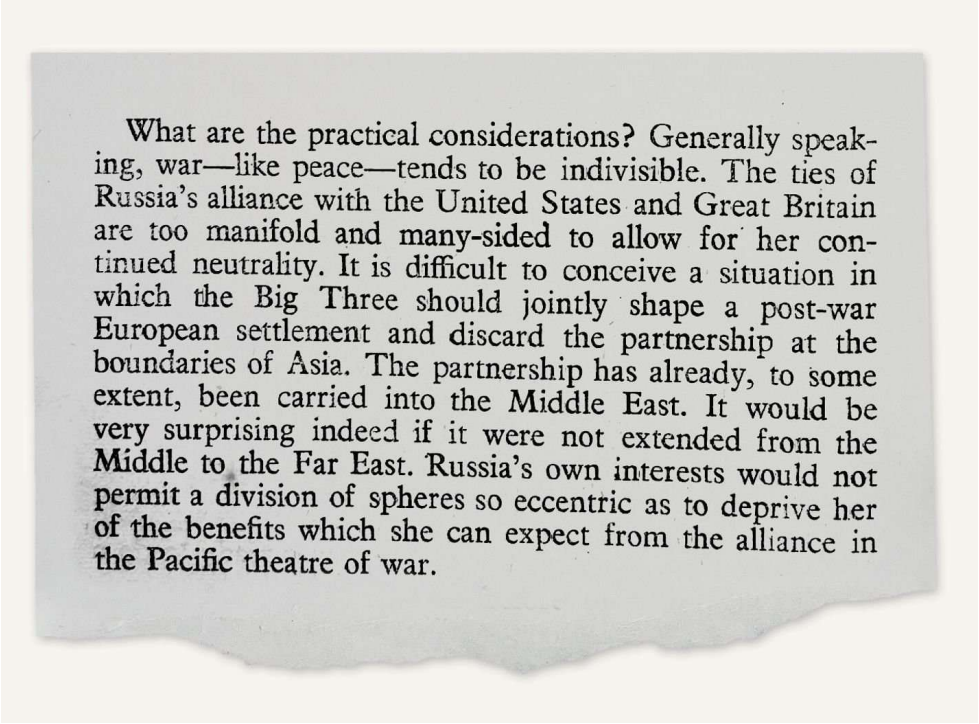
Feelings of apprehension over Truman’s accession to the presidency reflected the stability and strength that Roosevelt had conveyed, rather than any judgment of the new president’s qualities. One reassuring sign was that James Byrnes, who took charge of war mobilisation under Roosevelt, would continue his central role in American foreign policy. (Truman would pick him as secretary of state in July.) Truman, we wrote, could be expected to be “a good ordinary President”. But after 12 years during which Roosevelt had transformed America and its role in the world, that transition would come as a shock.

April 18

Russia and Japan

As the end of the war in Europe drew near, the positions of the major powers in the Pacific theatre were shifting. The Soviet Union, though fighting alongside the Allies against the Nazis in Europe, had held back from getting involved in the war against Japan. Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet foreign minister, had negotiated a neutrality pact with Japan in April 1941. The deal prevented a war between the two even after Germany, Japan's ally, invaded the Soviet Union later that year.

With Germany all but defeated, however, the Soviet Union would soon have a free hand in the east. On April 5th 1945 Molotov poured scorn upon the pact, citing Japanese support for the Nazis, and seemed to suggest that Russia was no longer bound to neutrality. "Russia", *The Economist* wrote on April 14th, "is emerging from her enforced passivity in the Far East and assuming a more active role." The Soviet Union's strategy would be determined by what it stood to gain from joining forces with the Allies in the Pacific:



What are the practical considerations? Generally speaking, war—like peace—tends to be indivisible. The ties of Russia's alliance with the United States and Great Britain are too manifold and many-sided to allow for her continued neutrality. It is difficult to conceive a situation in which the Big Three should jointly shape a post-war European settlement and discard the partnership at the boundaries of Asia. The partnership has already, to some extent, been carried into the Middle East. It would be very surprising indeed if it were not extended from the Middle to the Far East. Russia's own interests would not permit a division of spheres so eccentric as to deprive her of the benefits which she can expect from the alliance in the Pacific theatre of war.

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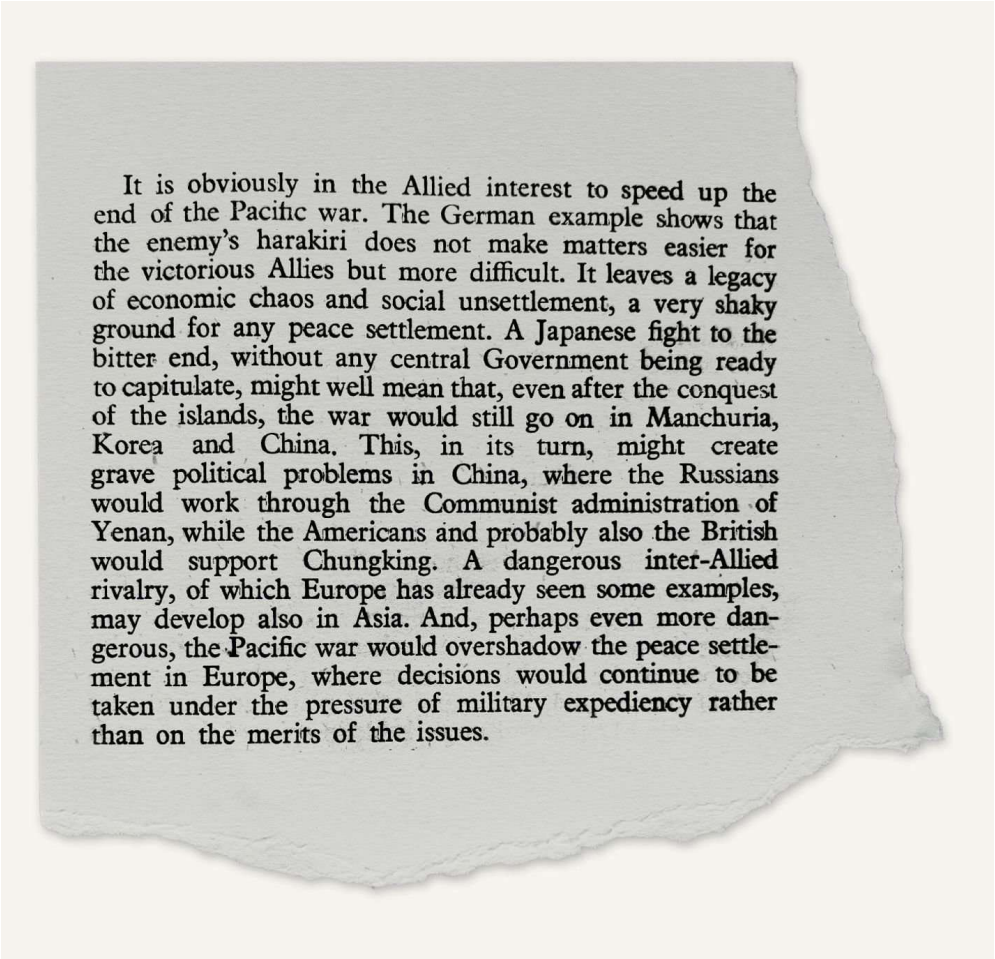
The Soviet Union's position in the east had been "reduced almost to insignificance" in the years before Germany invaded the bloc. But the Russian desire for power in the Pacific ran deep. For more than a century before the communist revolution in 1917, the tsars had striven for power in the region. Josef Stalin, the Soviet leader, was of a similar bent. "Marshal Stalin's desire", we wrote, "to win back for Russia the influence and position lost by the Czars is very likely to assert itself in the Far East with the same vigour and determination as in Europe."

Russia, which had lost a war to Japan in 1905, stood to regain territory from its old enemy (see map). The southern half of Sakhalin—divided by the Treaty of Portsmouth that year—was one potential prize; a railway link between Vladivostok and Siberia, sold to Japan in 1935, was another. But wartime politics in Asia were complicated. While the Allies might band together to defeat Japan, a long battle in the parts of China and Korea that Japan still controlled threatened to strain relations between the "Big Three":



It is obviously in the Allied interest to speed up the end of the Pacific war. The German example shows that the enemy's harakiri does not make matters easier for the victorious Allies but more difficult. It leaves a legacy of economic chaos and social unsettlement, a very shaky ground for any peace settlement. A Japanese fight to the bitter end, without any central Government being ready to capitulate, might well mean that, even after the conquest of the islands, the war would still go on in Manchuria, Korea and China. This, in its turn, might create grave political problems in China, where the Russians would work through the Communist administration of Yenan, while the Americans and probably also the British would support Chungking. A dangerous inter-Allied rivalry, of which Europe has already seen some examples, may develop also in Asia. And, perhaps even more dangerous, the Pacific war would overshadow the peace settlement in Europe, where decisions would continue to be taken under the pressure of military expediency rather than on the merits of the issues.

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If the Allies became seriously divided over China—where Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists (headquartered in Chongqing, then known as Chungking) had entered an uneasy truce with Mao Zedong's Communists to fight Japan—that could "overshadow the peace settlement in Europe". And Japan appeared to show little sign that it was willing to surrender. To the imperial government the loss of Okinawa, on which the Americans had landed in April, "may look no worse than the occupation of the Channel Islands looked to the British in 1940". The fighting in the Pacific showed little sign of abating. The Soviets had plenty of time to plan their entry in the east.

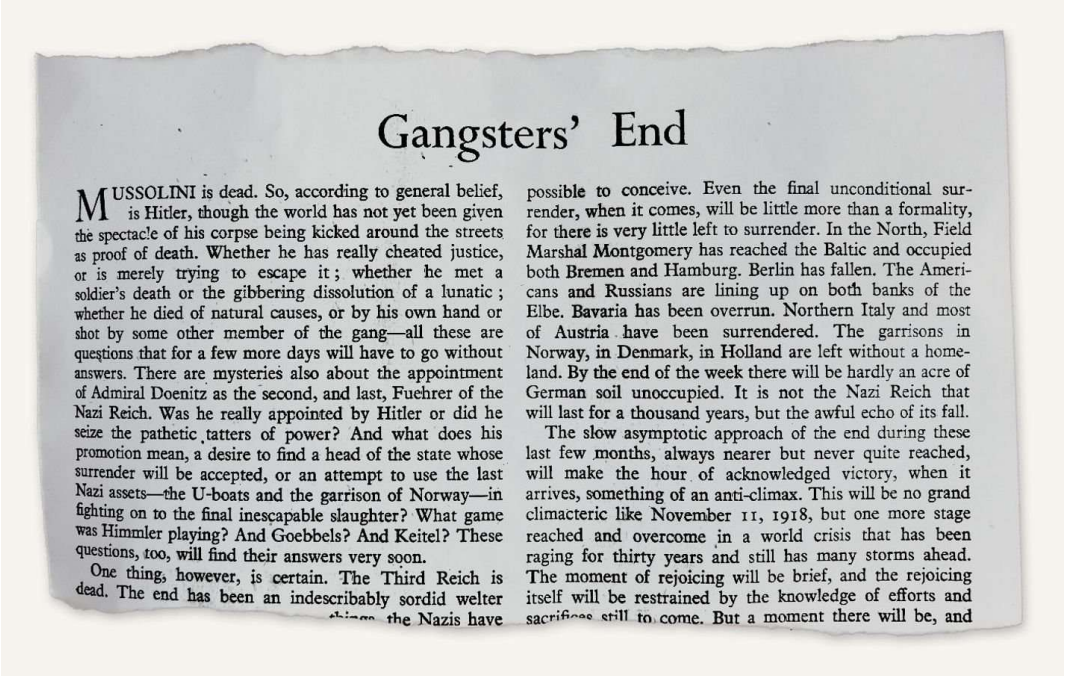
April 25

Gangsters' End

By April 20th Berlin was under siege. After Vienna fell to the Red Army a week earlier, the Soviet Union's generals were able to turn their focus to the German capital. Warplanes laid waste to the city as 1.5m soldiers stormed through the rubble. The Red Army's artillerymen fired nearly 2m shells during the attack. By May 2nd the last German troops in Berlin had surrendered.

This was all but the end for the Nazis and their allies in Europe. Benito Mussolini had been placed in charge of a Nazi puppet state in northern Italy in 1943, after the king deposed him. In April 1945 the former dictator's fief was stormed by the Allies; on the 28th he was killed by partisans. Two days later Adolf Hitler shot himself in

his bunker in Berlin. As the dust settled over the city, rumours about his demise swirled. But it was certain that the Nazi regime was finished, 12 years after Hitler had come to power. On May 5th *The Economist* wrote:



Gangsters' End

MUSSOLINI is dead. So, according to general belief, is Hitler, though the world has not yet been given the spectacle of his corpse being kicked around the streets as proof of death. Whether he has really cheated justice, or is merely trying to escape it; whether he met a soldier's death or the gibbering dissolution of a lunatic; whether he died of natural causes, or by his own hand or shot by some other member of the gang—all these are questions that for a few more days will have to go without answers. There are mysteries also about the appointment of Admiral Doenitz as the second, and last, Fuehrer of the Nazi Reich. Was he really appointed by Hitler or did he seize the pathetic tatters of power? And what does his promotion mean, a desire to find a head of the state whose surrender will be accepted, or an attempt to use the last Nazi assets—the U-boats and the garrison of Norway—in fighting on to the final inescapable slaughter? What game was Himmler playing? And Goebbels? And Keitel? These questions, too, will find their answers very soon.

One thing, however, is certain. The Third Reich is dead. The end has been an indescribably sordid welter [illegible] the Nazis have possible to conceive. Even the final unconditional surrender, when it comes, will be little more than a formality, for there is very little left to surrender. In the North, Field Marshal Montgomery has reached the Baltic and occupied both Bremen and Hamburg. Berlin has fallen. The Americans and Russians are lining up on both banks of the Elbe. Bavaria has been overrun. Northern Italy and most of Austria have been surrendered. The garrisons in Norway, in Denmark, in Holland are left without a homeland. By the end of the week there will be hardly an acre of German soil unoccupied. It is not the Nazi Reich that will last for a thousand years, but the awful echo of its fall.

The slow asymptotic approach of the end during these last few months, always nearer but never quite reached, will make the hour of acknowledged victory, when it arrives, something of an anti-climax. This will be no grand climacteric like November 11, 1918, but one more stage reached and overcome in a world crisis that has been raging for thirty years and still has many storms ahead. The moment of rejoicing will be brief, and the rejoicing itself will be restrained by the knowledge of efforts and sacrifices still to come. But a moment there will be, and

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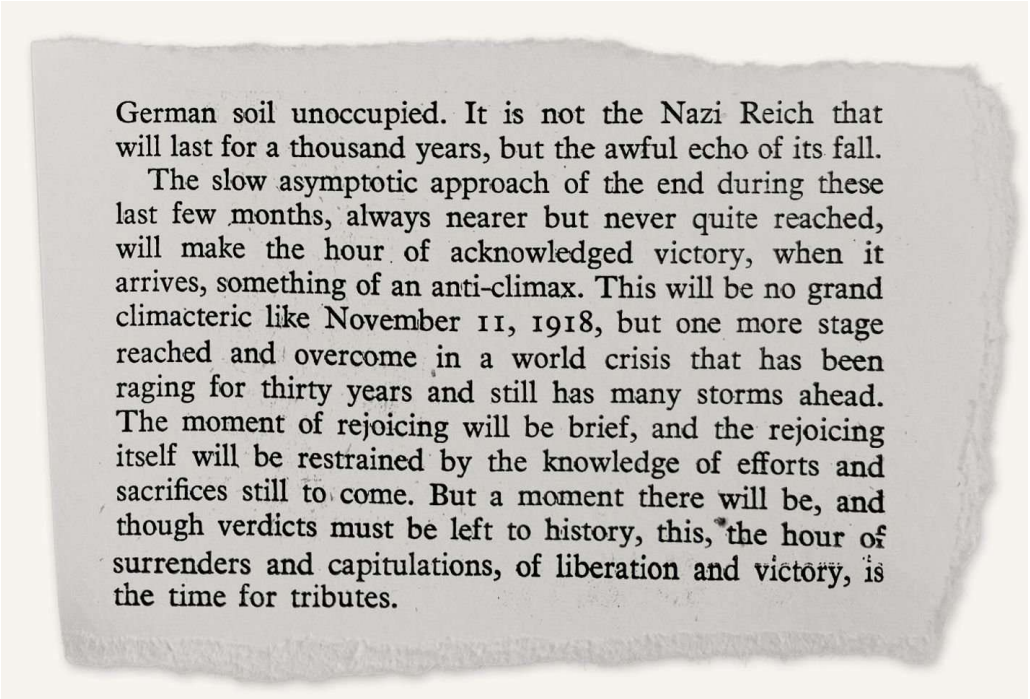
Some rumours circled around Admiral Karl Dönitz, who succeeded Hitler "as the second, and last, Fuehrer of the Nazi Reich": "Was he really appointed by Hitler or did he seize the pathetic tatters of power?" And what did he plan? A fight to the bitter end in Norway, one of the last bits of Europe still occupied by the Nazis, or using the German navy would be madness. "The Third Reich is dead," we wrote. "The end has been an indescribably sordid welter of blood and betrayal."

The fall of Berlin prompted reflection on the final phase of the war in Europe. The German counter-attack in December 1944, in the Battle of the Bulge, had meant that the Nazis' defeat came more slowly than the Allies had hoped the previous year:



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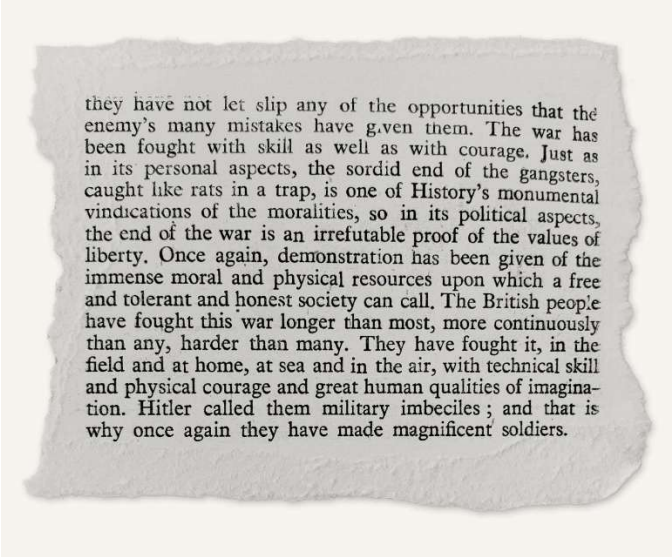
Josef Stalin, the Soviet leader, apportioned the credit for the Allies’ success accordingly: “Russia, he said, had given blood, and America material wealth, while Britain had contributed time.” Britain’s success in fending off Germany while much of the rest of Europe was under occupation provided Allied countries like France with a base for their governments-in-exile—and, eventually, the staging ground for the D-Day landings. Britain’s resilience, and the Nazis’ defeat, was vindication for democracy in Europe:



they have not let slip any of the opportunities that the enemy's many mistakes have given them. The war has been fought with skill as well as with courage. Just as in its personal aspects, the sordid end of the gangsters, caught like rats in a trap, is one of History's monumental vindications of the moralities, so in its political aspects, the end of the war is an irrefutable proof of the values of liberty. Once again, demonstration has been given of the immense moral and physical resources upon which a free and tolerant and honest society can call. The British people have fought this war longer than most, more continuously than any, harder than many. They have fought it, in the field and at home, at sea and in the air, with technical skill and physical courage and great human qualities of imagination. Hitler called them military imbeciles ; and that is why once again they have made magnificent soldiers.

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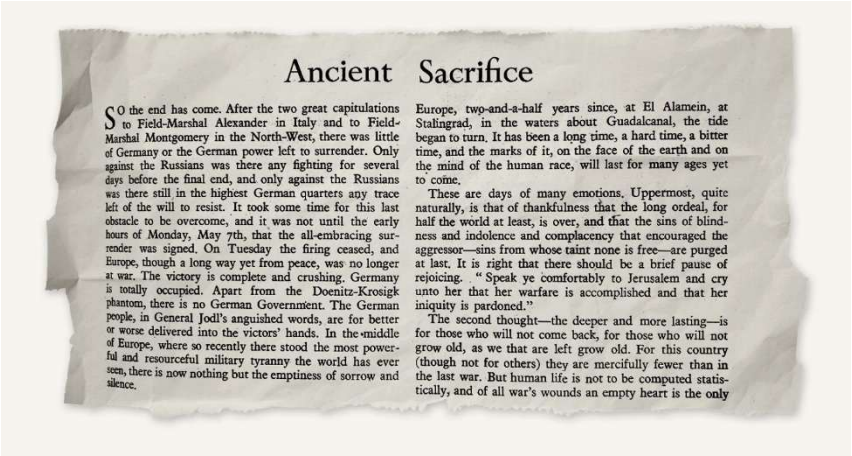
The scale of the devastation in Europe meant that the Allies faced an enormous task of rebuilding after the fighting ended. Meanwhile in eastern Europe anti-communist partisans were still fighting against the Red Army, which was extending the Soviet Union’s control across the region. Still, the collapse of the Nazi regime was cause for rejoicing. But for the formality of surrender, the war against Germany was over.

May 2

Ancient Sacrifice

“So the end has come,” wrote *The Economist* in its edition of May 12th. Earlier that week, the fighting between the Allies and Nazi Germany had finally ceased. Once the Red Army had captured Berlin it was only a matter of time before Karl Dönitz, Adolf Hitler’s successor, and Lutz Graf Schwerin von Krosigk, the chancellor, issued Germany’s formal surrender. Early on Monday May 7th they delegated General Alfred Jodl to sign the formal instrument at the Allied headquarters in France. The next day, May 8th, was Victory in Europe (VE) Day:



Ancient Sacrifice

So the end has come. After the two great capitulations to Field-Marshal Alexander in Italy and to Field-Marshal Montgomery in the North-West, there was little of Germany or the German power left to surrender. Only against the Russians was there any fighting for several days before the final end, and only against the Russians was there still in the highest German quarters any trace left of the will to resist. It took some time for this last obstacle to be overcome, and it was not until the early hours of Monday, May 7th, that the all-embracing surrender was signed. On Tuesday the firing ceased, and Europe, though a long way yet from peace, was no longer at war. The victory is complete and crushing. Germany is totally occupied. Apart from the Doenitz-Krosigk phantom, there is no German Government. The German people, in General Jodl's anguished words, are for better or worse delivered into the victors' hands. In the middle of Europe, where so recently there stood the most powerful and resourceful military tyranny the world has ever seen, there is now nothing but the emptiness of sorrow and silence.

Europe, two-and-a-half years since, at El Alamein, at Stalingrad, in the waters about Guadalcanal, the tide began to turn. It has been a long time, a hard time, a bitter time, and the marks of it, on the face of the earth and on the mind of the human race, will last for many ages yet to come.

These are days of many emotions. Uppermost, quite naturally, is that of thankfulness that the long ordeal, for half the world at least, is over, and that the sins of blindness and indolence and complacency that encouraged the aggressor—sins from whose taint none is free—are purged at last. It is right that there should be a brief pause of rejoicing. "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished and that her iniquity is pardoned."

The second thought—the deeper and more lasting—is for those who will not come back, for those who will not grow old, as we that are left grow old. For this country (though not for others) they are mercifully fewer than in the last war. But human life is not to be computed statistically, and of all war's wounds an empty heart is the only

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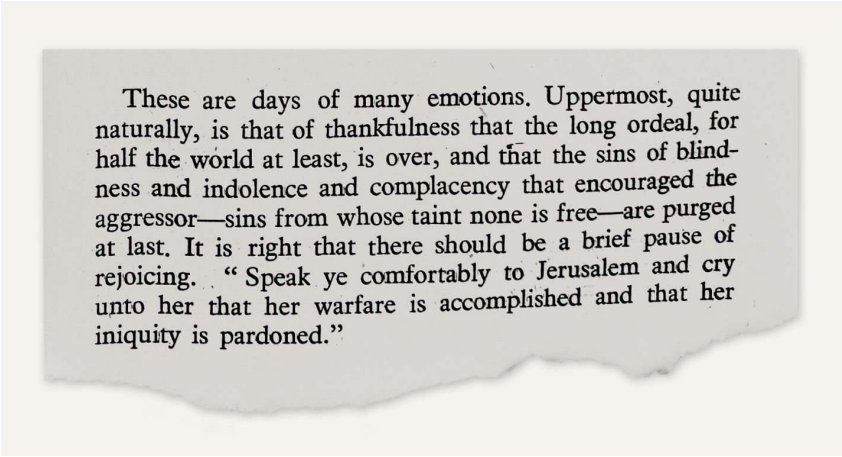
The toll of the war was immense. Around half a million Britons had died—fewer, in fact, than during the first world war. Other Allied powers suffered more: some 24m Soviet citizens died as a result of the fighting. But "human life is not to be computed statistically, and of all war's wounds an empty heart is the only one that time does not heal." As well as the dead, countless others would return home wounded and traumatised. The end of the fighting, therefore, brought about mixed feelings:



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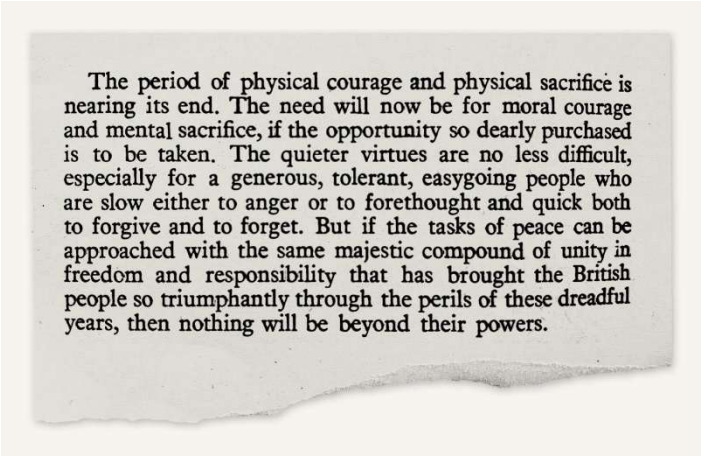
Celebration was tempered by two facts, however. First, that the war in the Pacific was still raging; and second, that Europe was fast being divided between the Allies that had liberated it from the Nazis. "It is tragic", *The Economist* wrote, "that the victory which crowns the joint military effort of the three Great Powers should be overshadowed by the gravest political dissension that has yet divided them."

After leading Britain since 1940, Winston Churchill announced the defeat of Nazi Germany to the nation.

The latest tensions had arisen over the news that 15 leaders of Poland's underground resistance had been arrested by the Soviet Union and were awaiting trial in Moscow. The episode was a foretaste of the cold war brewing between the Soviets and the West. With such uncertainty over the continent's future, peace would bring only partial respite:


The period of physical courage and physical sacrifice is nearing its end. The need will now be for moral courage and mental sacrifice, if the opportunity so dearly purchased is to be taken. The quieter virtues are no less difficult, especially for a generous, tolerant, easygoing people who are slow either to anger or to forethought and quick both to forgive and to forget. But if the tasks of peace can be approached with the same majestic compound of unity in freedom and responsibility that has brought the British people so triumphantly through the perils of these dreadful years, then nothing will be beyond their powers.

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Winston Churchill had evoked a similar sentiment in his speech on VE Day. Britain’s prime minister drove home the task of “rebuilding our hearth and home” and looked towards the end of war in Asia, where Japan still occupied portions of the British Empire, including Malaysia and Singapore. The fighting in Europe had ceased, but the end of the second world war was still months away.

https://www.economist.com/interactive/archive-1945#may-2