

August 8, 1935.

MEMORANDUM.

If I understand it right, the idea developed in the letter in question can be summed up approximately as follows. The economic and internal political difficulties of National Socialism are such that if no further economic support is extended from abroad, and if the rest of Europe succeeds in putting up so united a front against German expansion, that the foreign political aims of National Socialism remain unfulfilled, then there is a good chance that the régime will succumb to the resulting strain and be succeeded by a government which will take a more reasonable attitude toward its neighbors, and with which it will be possible to cooperate in reorganizing international relations in Europe on a more hopeful basis. It is urged that for this reason pacts such as the recently proposed Danubian agreements can serve a useful purpose by complicating and discouraging, if not preventing outright, the pursuance of National Socialist foreign political aims, and such measures of collective security are therefore deserving of encouragement.

If I am to be frank with myself, I must admit that in the earlier period of the National Socialist rule I had little sympathy with the idea of collective security as a means of combating National Socialism. I was at that time and would still be inclined to dispute categorically the soundness of Mr. Litvinov's thesis of the indivisibility of peace - a proposition which he advanced with his tongue in his cheek and for ulterior motives. It was, perhaps, a sign of a certain bitterness engendered by intensive contact with Russian matters at an impressionable age that I could see no great disadvantages from the point of view of our own country, or even of France and England, in tolerating German expansion toward the east and allowing a conflict to develop which would probably have left both Germany and Russia exhausted and comparatively powerless in world affairs. I should never have done anything to encourage such a development, but I should also never have done anything - as the French have - to prevent it. While this view may seem extremely cynical at first thought, it was founded

on consideration of the unfortunate character of both régimes and the probability that they could be altered in any case only by bloodshed. I felt that it would be cheap at the price if both countries could be humbled by shedding each other's blood instead of that of other western nations.

It is now too late, in view of the line the French have taken, to envisage this possibility any longer, and we now have to reckon with constant German pressure on Central Europe. Under these circumstances I agree thoroughly that any projects which show even a possibility of discouraging German aggressiveness in this part of the world are worthy of consideration as long as they do not endanger peace in other ways. I further agree that it is silly to take a completely cynical attitude toward the value of treaties and to say that they have no meaning whatsoever. Even the crudest of dictatorships has to do lip service to principles of honesty and decency, and they all have responsibility to public opinion, if not any to their own consciences. On the other hand, I think it is true that the value of pacts in Europe at the present time is considerably modified by what is known to lie behind them, and agreements which have the aspect of flimsy makeshifts, hastily patched up with wrangling and recriminations, to conceal the differences actually existing between the powers, will have comparatively little effect. I do not mean to imply that the proposed Danube pacts fall within that category; but there are evidently still serious differences of opinion between the various neighbors of Austria on questions affecting the preservation of Austrian independence, and as long as these differences are known in Germany and elsewhere to exist, I am afraid that comparatively little importance will be attached to such paper agreements as these countries may find it possible to conclude. I agree that they are an important step forward, and possibly particularly necessary at the present time as a public documentation of the extent to which agreement does exist among these powers regarding the independence of Austria. On the other hand, I am afraid that unless they are accompanied by energetic attempts to solve the remaining difficulties, both domestic and international, in the Danube Basin, Germany will continue

3.

unabashed to take advantage of these differences and to make plans for expansion in Central Europe.

I, too, do not believe that the present régime in Germany stands on so solid a basis that it can endure for years more, regardless of the degree of frustration and suffering to which the German people may be subjected. Its popular backing was emotional rather than reasonable, and the wave of feeling which brought it into power must undergo a reaction, like all emotional debauches, when confronted with bitter reality. On the other hand, I am not sure that if the present order gives way, a reasonable régime can be found to succeed it. All régimes reflect inevitably the character of the people whom they govern. A large portion of Germany has been brutalized, embittered and degraded by the events of the last two decades. A generation is being educated in a world of delusions and dreams which it will not be easy for them to get rid of. The evil that men do unfortunately does live after them, and I feel that we should not place too great hopes on any sudden restoration of a reasonable and normal atmosphere in Germany, even in the event of a shift in power from the present leaders to some other group.

Another point which I should like to emphasize is the danger that preoccupation with the dominating military menace on the Continent, namely Germany, may incline us to close our eyes to the character and the policies of other countries in Europe and to permit these countries to profit by the "Stimmung" against Germany for the realization of political aims which are anything but worthy. I have little confidence in the ultimate motives of Russia or Italy, and little hope for the efficacy of the French policy of trying to maintain peace by dominating Europe diplomatically and by working against time in the stubborn defense of an unsatisfactory status quo. These are not the only countries in Europe whose attitude on international affairs gives cause for misgivings. I hope that our country and England will find it possible to take a firm and unyielding attitude toward National Socialism without allowing this attitude to be exploited for purposes little more praiseworthy than those which are being fostered in Berlin.