

Yalta 1945: when Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill shared out the spoils of World War Two

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REFERENCES: All quotations not otherwise ascribed are from the text of the Yalta papers as published by the N. Y. Times.

"Sherwood"=Robert Sherwood: Roosevelt and Hopkins. (1948)

"Churchill" = Winston Churchill: Second World War, Vol 6 Triumph and Tragedy (1953). "Leahy"=William D. Leahy: I Was There (1950).

"Byrnes"= James F. Byrnes: Speaking Frankly (1947), "Stettinius"= Edw. R. Stettinius: Roosevelt and the Russians

(1949)."Ciechanowski"=Jan Ciechanowski: Defeat in Victory (1947).

The battle over Yalta, which Secretary of State Dulles resignedly says he expects will go on "through the ages," is no mere accident of partisan factionalism. All the politics of the Allied camp in the world war was focused at the Yalta conference. It stands midway reflecting the politics of one war and pointing to the next.

The Tehran conference of the Big Three in 1943 had been an inconclusive preliminary to Yalta. After Yalta the Potsdam conference, coming later in 1945, saw a rounding out of the deal. But it was at Yalta in February of 1945 - with the military victory in sight, and in sight also the problems of the post-war world, that is, the post-war division of the world - that the war aims of the Allied

imperialist powers were concentrated into a few days of intense discussion and bargaining. The fate of the world is in our hands, Churchill kept reminding his colleagues at the Yalta round table.

"These are among the most important days that any of us shall live," he said at the 6th plenary session, expressing the thought not for the first time. Alone among the three Churchill, historian, gave tongue to a feeling of acting out a moment of historical destiny.

"It is a new picture the Yalta revelations gave us, a picture not of a treasonable sell-out, but of an irresistible fate driving us down a blind alley," editorialized the Boston Herald.

By "irresistible fate" (inaccurate language) the editorialist means merely to convey his feeling of the impersonality and objectivity of that which, greater than the Great Men, drove the Yalta conference to its pre-patterned end. He has the merit of realizing the triviality of trying to understand Yalta in personal terms of treason.

The liberal worshipers in the cult of FDR, likewise scout talk of treason (as everyone above the level of a McCarthyite or an idiot must do), but only because they think inside a similar framework. For them, the important thing to prove is that Roosevelt and his entourage "honestly" sought Peace and Justice; of course, they made mistakes, but do we have the right to criticize them because we enjoy 20-20 hindsight? And anyway, they recall, Roosevelt was a sick man (and strangest of all, some liberal, friends of the Great Man have invented the baseless excuse that at Yalta he was sick not only physically).

Whereas to the troglodyte right wing the devil was Roosevelt and other traitors like Hiss, to the liberals the devil at Yalta is simply the bad, nasty wicked Russian, who spoiled everything by failing to keep the promises he made, especially about Poland...

The full story of Yalta proves that this is a myth, not less silly than the GOP myth about treason.

There were no personal devils around 'the Yalta table - also no heroes, no saints, no knights, and no men of honor.

There were only three earthy imperialists, who, temporarily allied for a military victory against the Axis, knew that the agenda read: Who will get what? One cannot begin to understand the record of Yalta or to read the recently published papers intelligently except on the background of the fierce and bitter conflicts within the Allied camp, over rival imperialist aims, jockeying for the upper hand in the coalition.

One of the big facts which explain Yalta is that the most intense antagonism was not between U. S.-Britain versus their Russian ally, but between the U. S. and Britain themselves! The politics of the whole period, so different from today's, has to be recaptured - in order to see how the politics of today was born, the post-Yalta cold war of capitalism versus Stalinism.

The Yalta conference summed up one pattern of imperialist rivalry and gave birth to another.

The operational name given to the Yalta conference is the symbol. "I suggest 'Argonaut,'" wired Churchill to Roosevelt the preceding December, because of the Greek myth's association with the Black Sea area.

Roosevelt replied: "Your suggestion of Argonaut is welcomed. You and our direct descendants." Direct descendants? Perhaps he thought he was going to find the Golden Fleece of world domination in Yalta.

Neither of the direct descendants remembered that it is in the tale of the Argonauts that Jason sows the dragon's teeth, from which spring up armed men who turn against their creator, then rend each other to the last man.

[Chapter 1. The Dirty Word](#)

"Imperialist" is a dirty word. At any rate, some may think so, associating it with radical soap-box speeches.

Before going into either the Yalta record or its background, let us get a vivid look at what imperialists look like, how they talk; more important, how they think.

This chapter will be a series of exhibits.

What makes an imperialist mentality? At the very least, the habit of thinking in terms of the power of big and strong states over small nations and unbelligerent peoples; as hallmarks of imperialist thinking, surely no less can be said? Leaving aside at this time any complicated ideas about the economic roots of the imperialist mentality, let us get acquainted with our three actors in the Yalta drama.

You are not likely ever again to get so close an approximation of frank imperialist talk, when the realities have to be put on the table.

Another editor got a lively feeling from the record as he read it: "The records make it clear how much the three enjoyed having the fate of the world in their hands, to settle with a nod here, a set of initials there" (Des Moines Register.) Anyone who reads the papers can appreciate this appraisal. As a subjective statement it cannot be documented with quotations; it emerges from the whole.

What it points to is not really any irresponsible feeling of glee about dandling the globe of the world on a fingertip; what it reflects is the obvious consciousness of overlordship that emanates from the record.

THE EXCLUSIVE CLUB (1) The Big: Three, said Churchill with comfortable good-humor, was a "very exclusive club." According to Byrnes, he went on to remark that the entrance fee to this club "was "at least five million soldiers or the equivalent."

Everyone has heard the apocryphal story about the remark that Stalin was supposed to have made in Yalta: "The pope? How many divisions has he got?" It seems that Stalin never actually said exactly this, though the idea was there. But if the famous story is supposed to illustrate the military-minded crudeness of the Moscow totalitarian, what shall we think of the democratic statesman? Although apparently Stalin never applied the principle to the pope, he did put it in just such terms with respect to the issue of reparations for France.

None for France, said the marshal.. "He said that he respected France but that he could not ignore the truth and that at the present moment France only had 8 divisions in the war" while Tito had 12 and the Lublin Poles had 13 (2nd plenum.) The "exclusive club" crack

was directed by Churchill against France, for De Gaulle was sulking about being left out of Yalta. Contempt of nations even smaller than France filled the talk; and it is known that not all are yet public.

THE EAGLE CARES NOT (2) Stalin was behind no one in the heavy-handedness of his scorn for small-nations that might pretend to have a say in the world. At a dinner meeting (Feb. 5) he blurted out straight talk about the right of the three great powers to dominate.

"He said it was ridiculous to believe that Albania would have an equal voice with the three great powers who had won the war and were present at this dinner. He said some of the liberated countries seemed to believe that the great powers had been forced to shed their blood in order to liberate them 'and that they were now scolding these great powers for failure to take into consideration the rights of these small powers. Marshal Stalin said that he was prepared in concert with the U. S. and Great Britain to protect the rights of the small powers but that he would never agree to having any action of any of the great powers submitted to the judgment of the small powers.

"The President [Roosevelt] said he agreed that the great powers bore the greater responsibility and the suggestion he had thrown out earlier, that the Allies invade Switzerland (in order to teach the Germans they shouldn't have been such barbarians as to invade the Low Countries)..."

The suggestion about invading Switzerland, "in order to outflank the Siegfried Line" was reported to Washington by General Beane, head of the US Military Mission in Moscow, according to one of the documents in Vol. I of the Yalta papers. A leading Swiss paper has subsequently revealed that Roosevelt himself domineeringly demanded from the Swiss that they open up to Allied troops.

MISUNDERSTANDING (3) There was a peculiar interlude at the 3rd plenary session. Speaking of the proposal for big-power veto rights in the projected UN, Churchill approved and remarked: "The matter looks as though the three great powers are trying to rule the world," but (he went on) we're really trying to save the world.

At the reference to ruling the world Stalin's ears pricked up suspiciously. "I would like to ask my friend Mr. Churchill to name which power might intend to dominate the world," he said. Not

Britain, he was sure (he said); not the U. S.; that left the Soviet Union....

Did Churchill perhaps hint - ? "The Prime Minister replied that he had spoken of the three great powers who could collectively place themselves so high over the others that the whole world would say these three, desire to rule."

The tenseness passed. It seems it was only a question of whether three or one would rule. There were sensitive souls around.

CRIMES OF SMALL NATIONS (4) On another occasion, after Yalta, Stalin is again recorded as denouncing the reprehensible cheekiness of small-nations. On Harry Hopkins' last mission to Moscow (May 1945), Stalin is recorded as charging that "after all two world wars had begun over small nations"! (Thus the "Marxist" Stalin.) There was a tendency by small nations, he complained, to create differences among the Great Powers. And he was quite prepared to tell the little nations this to their faces." [Sherwood, p. 911.]

At this meeting, also, Stalin asked Hopkins what would be the good of Big Three agreements "if their decisions could be overturned by the votes of such countries as Honduras and Puerto Rico." [Sherwood, p. 893-4.]

EDEN LAUGHS (5) Where Stalin inveighed, the democrats found amusement. Here are the democrats at a Foreign Ministers session at Yalta (Feb. 11).

They are discussing invitations to the coming UN conference: "It is good to have a Moslem or two," says Britain's Eden, and then he mentions that Roosevelt is due to have "a cup of coffee" with Ibn Saud after the conference.

Stettinius said he had no objection (to Moslem window-dressing, that is), and Molotov muttered, "I don't know if Saudi Arabia will be much help." But Old Leadbottom did know how much help Ibn Saud would be, and to whom: he knew that this mighty king was on the payroll of a couple of oil companies.)

Eden's gentlemanly snicker had popped out at a previous session. Stettinius mentioned that Ecuador had declared war, and the record then reads: "EDEN laughed." This is the sole passage in which

Ecuador has the honor of appearing in the Yalta history. It will not make them happy in Quito.

HOW TO DECLARE WAR (6) In another connection, at a plenary session.

Roosevelt had to explain why certain Latin American states had not declared war. The State Department told them not to, he related (mistake by Sumner Welles, he claimed), but now they would be given the signal.

The dogs, apparently, were expected to jump through the hoop whenever you snapped your finger.

It was not only the Latin Americans who were expected to declare war to suit the convenience of the overlords.

In a message to Roosevelt about arrangements for sailing to Yalta, Churchill brought up the difficulty of getting warships through the Dardanelles and into the Black Sea, in view of the international conventions governing the Straits. "One way would be for Turkey to declare war," he writes, opining that she would be "very willing."

However, it turned out that Turkey didn't have to declare war in order to solve the transportation problem. Like the Latin Americans, however, she had to declare war shortly in order to get a membership ticket to the UN conference.

FAIRY GODMOTHER (7) Perhaps this is the place to mention another note that was struck in the midst of the Yalta symphony of paternalistic overlordship, even though it refers to U. S. internal politics. The same smell will be noticed. At dinner on Feb. 10, Roosevelt told a little story. As recorded in the papers, it is a flawless gem, the Lord talking about his flock: "He said he remembered when he first became President the United States was close to revolution because the people lacked food, clothing and shelter; but he had said, "if you elect me president I will... give you these things, and since then there was little problem in regard to social disorder in the United States." (Roosevelt told two other fairy tales at this same dinner.)

WICKED ANIMALS (8) With some exaggeration, but not too much, one might set out to prove that there was a positive competition among these three smug overlords as to who could be more overbearing and insulting, about the rabble that didn't belong to the Exclusive Club. At the 6th plenary session, Stalin, remarked that the Polish people were "still quarrelsome," though. he also granted they had produced some scientists and even mentioned the name of Copernicus; perhaps because the latter had no known anti-Soviet record.

Roosevelt hastened to agree that the Poles were "quarrelsome." In fact, he raised the ante. The Poles are a quarrelsome people "not only at home, but also abroad," he pointed out, as he pleaded for some assurance for the 6 million Poles in the US that there would be free elections in Poland.

Not to be outdone, Churchill shortly chimed in with "I do not care much about Poles myself" (Incidentally, contrary to the headlines, Churchill did not actually deny in Parliament that he had said this.) However, while Churchill seemed to resent the fact that the Yalta papers exposed this indiscretion of his, he himself had done the same kindness for his good friend Roosevelt.

In Churchill, Vol. 6, he quotes FDR as saying at Yalta's first session, "Poland has been a source of trouble for over five hundred years" Troublemakers, that's what these Poles are! Three times this nation was dismembered and partitioned by another Big Three (Germany, Austria, Russia) who in their own day were the overlords of Europe; see all the trouble they made? Moreover, after being partitioned, the Polish people never ceased fighting against the foreign rulers. ("This animal is wicked; it defends itself when attacked.") During World War II itself, Poland was the one country occupied by the Nazis where not a single quisling was found; which maintained the biggest, most courageous underground resistance. Troublemaker! in short, quarrelsome.

Like master, like man. Harry Hopkins was FDR's alter ego, the Grey Eminence of the White House: "A friend of Harry Hopkins and mine," writes the then Polish ambassador to the U. S., "told me that on Harry's return from Moscow [June 1945] he had remonstrated with him for having agreed to conclude with Stalin a deal so unfair to

Poland." He quoted Harry Hopkins's reply: "After all, what does it matter? The Poles are like the Irish. They are never satisfied with anything, anyhow." (Ciechanowski, p. 382-3.)

This comparison of the Poles with the Irish, by an Anglophile, was not accidental. The British always thought the Irish were a cantankerous lot. "This animal is wicked." It so happens that Engels too had once linked the Irish and the Polish, but with admiration for their national struggles.

NEVER-NEVER-NEVERLAND (9) At this same plenary session, the question of a trusteeship system for the UN came up. It had barely been mentioned when Churchill exploded at the very idea that an impious finger might be laid on the British Empire. The Yalta notes taken by Matthews reflect the self-righteous anger of the democrat who had said that he "had not become the king's first Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire".

"I will not have one scrap of the British Empire lost, after all we have done in the war," he expostulated.

"I will not consent to a representative of the British Empire going to any conference where he will be placed in the dock and asked to defend our selves. Never, never, never.

"If you tell me we are not to go and be brought up before a vague tribunal and be told how to be good and proper, I win not object.

"Every scrap of territory over which the British flog flies is immune."

Stettinius calmed him down by assuring him that the U. S. plan for the trusteeship rigamarole would have no applicability to the British Empire or to any possession of the big powers - only Japanese mandates and such.

THE WILLKIE MURDER CASE (10) It was also in connection with the British Empire, at this session, that Roosevelt indulged himself in a little joke at his pal Winston's expense - a mean joke.

The text of a Declaration on Liberated Europe was up for discussion. It contained a ritualistic reference to the Atlantic Charter and the right of all peoples to self-determination. But Churchill apparently

was in a deplorably suspicious state of mind about the purity of his colleagues' intentions.

Taking the floor, he said he was willing; to agree to the draft "as long as it was clearly understood that the reference to the Atlantic Charter did not apply to the British Empire." Then, quite contradictorily, he went on to refer to a Parliamentary statement of his to the effect that the principles of the Atlantic Charter were anyway already followed in the British. Empire. "I sent a copy of this interpretation [statement] to Wendell Willkie," concluded Churchill.

"Was that what killed him?" quipped Roosevelt. And the record reads "(Laughter)." We do not know whether Churchill laughed too.

A hilarious joke all around... The democratic signatories of the Atlantic Charter had not only exempted the British Empire, from its sphere in the May before Yalta, Churchill had announced in a public speech that it would not apply to defeated Germany. Roosevelt was making it clear that the U. S. was going to hold on to every possible Pacific island with no more by your leave than the Japanese had displayed in acquiring them.

In April 1944 a New York Times magazine article by Emery Reves had ironically noted: "In the past few months we have been told that the Atlantic Charter does not apply to India, that it does not apply to Germany, nor to Poland, nor to the Baltic countries, nor to the Pacific - a strange remedy that cannot be given to the sick and may be enjoyed only by the healthy... (This sardonic Mr Reves was arguing that the Atlantic Charter had been a mistake to begin with!) While on the subject, of the Atlantic Charter, we must mention that according to Churchill, Vol. 6, Roosevelt at Yalta expressed his happiness that the existence of the famous Charter was on the vague side.

It seems that Roosevelt had mentioned the British Constitution and the fact that it did not really exist in writing: "However [Roosevelt went on] an unwritten Constitution was better than a written one. It was like the Atlantic Charter; the document did not exist; yet all the world knew about it". (Churchill, Vol. 6, p. 344.) Churchill replied that "the Atlantic Charter was not a law, but a star." And we all know how unattainable the latter objects are.... All in all, a delightful exchange between two eminent democrats.

FRIENDLY SWAP (11) Churchill's imperialist instincts also steered him unerringly to immediate agreement with Stalin when the Russian dictator demanded three votes in the UN (by giving seats to the Ukrainian and White Russian constituent "republics"). Britain was going to have multiple votes for the dominions - "That is why, Mr. President," said Churchill at the Yalta session, "I have great sympathy with the Soviet request."

To Deputy Prime Minister Attlee back home, Churchill wrote from Yalta: "That they should have two besides their chief is not much to ask, and we will be in a strong position, in my judgment, because we shall not be the only multiple voter in the field." [Churchill, Vol. 6, p. 314].

Tit for tat: such is the rule among imperialists when they are in a friendly mood for a swap. All that was being poured down the drain was unrealistic nonsense about the equality of nations. Overlordship was being institutionalized. Roosevelt was uneasy: how would he explain Russia's three votes to the naive people back home, who might even get "quarrelsome" about it? In preparation, he exacted a promise from Stalin and Churchill to support three votes for the U. S. if he, Roosevelt, proposed it.

As it turned out, American public opinion did heat up over the three-vote deal. One reason, recalls Sherwood ruefully, was that "the State Department had been conducting an 'educational' campaign intended to emphasize the absolute equality of the United Nations voting procedure which gave the little fellow exactly the same rights as the big one." But at the same time no one went for America's claiming three votes: it was dropped.

The N. Y. Herald Tribune expressed what Sherwood calls "the healthy, intelligent attitude" in an editorial which said inter alia: "Even as matters stand, the U. S. will be able to count on the sympathetic votes of the Philippines, Cuba and others quite as surely as the United Kingdom will be able to count on those of the dominions and almost as surely as the Soviets will be able to count on White Russia and the Ukraine." (Sherwood, p. 877.) So Roosevelt had his satellites who were "almost" as much under the U. S. dollar as the Ukraine was under Moscow's knout. The Herald Tribune understood the authentic atmosphere of Yalta.

THE BLOODTHIRSTY DEMOCRATS (12) Now for an entirely different aspect of the imperialist mentality, not the least startling one.

One can understand the process of dehumanization of a soldier surrounded by blood and violence and immersed in the filth and muck of scenes of daily slaughter. Human beings, in extreme circumstances, can adapt to almost everything, even to living among hecatombs of dead. But side by side with this well-known fact, American history presents an opposed ideal: that of the President who is reluctantly leading the war on behalf of principle but who is himself torn with compassion by the slaughter, for the slaughtered as well as the slaughterers, for the killing and scenes of horror.

This is the image held of Lincoln in the Civil War.

At the opposite pole is the image of the savage ruler who exults in the blood of his slain enemies. It may seem an insinuation to ask where Roosevelt, a civilized president of the 20th century, fits in between these two types.

An incident at the Yalta conference was the second act of a little playlet whose first act had occurred at the Teheran conference. This Teheran story is related in Churchill's history; but essentially the same account is also given in another book which we prefer to quote.

This is the book by Polish Ambassador Ciechanowski, who tells about Mikolajczyk's visit to Washington in June 1944 (in-between Teheran and Yalta). Roosevelt himself was telling Mikolajczyk about Teheran: "Then, with a note of playful irony, the President said that personally he had found no difficulty in adapting himself to Stalin's moods, and that he was pleased to say he appeared more readily to understand his specific sense of humor than 'my poor friend Churchill,' who did not seem to have much affinity with the Soviet, dictator's personality.

"As an example the President, with visible relish, related an incident of the conference. When Stalin suddenly proposed a toast to the death of at least 50,000 German officers, the President said he immediately understood that Stalin meant German Junker militarists. But Churchill failed to grasp the jocular tone of Stalin's toast. He answered testily that he could not drink such a toast 'because Great Britain could never admit the killing of war prisoners'. Stalin was visibly displeased. He gave Mr. Churchill what the President called 'a dirty look,' and the atmosphere between the British Prime Minister

and Stalin became icy. [Churchill relates in his own book that he walked out of the room - H. D] The President laughed heartily, saying that he saved the situation by suggesting 'an amendment to Stalin's toast,' and proposed a revised one to the death in battle of forty-nine and a half thousand German officers.

"The President said he was much amused when, during the Teheran conference, several incidents of this kind showed him the psychological difference between the Eastern chief, Stalin, and the Victorian statesman, Churchill, who had kept a nineteenth century British mentality" (Ciechanowski, p. 292-3.)

In the background is an unspoken fact which changes the mood key from the macabre to the grisly. When Roosevelt was chuckling over this rollicking tale to his Polish visitor, the world had already been informed for over a year of the Katyn massacre - the deliberate mass slaughter of the officer corps of the Polish army, by the Russians, to make impossible the re-formation of an organized Polish resistance.

Washington scouted, or made out to scout, this charge as "Nazi propaganda" (just as, at one time, Roosevelt publicly denounced as Nazi propaganda any talk about Big Three quarrels, at a time when they were indeed pulling each other's hair out by the follicles.) Perhaps Roosevelt really disbelieved it. It is to be doubted that Churchill was as naive. It is to be supposed that at least Churchill had no doubts as to the real meaning of Stalin's toast: it was something which this "Eastern chief" had already done, not to the Germans but to the Poles.

This is the background for Act II of this particular drama, at Yalta. Roosevelt deliberately sought to continue his ingratiating with the "Eastern chief" by plucking on the string of massacre. And, incidentally, he also shows he was not so naive as to think that Stalin was merely having himself a peculiar jest. Here is Bohlen's account of the private talk with Stalin, Feb. 4, the three of them alone: "The President said that he had been very much struck by the extent of German destruction in the Crimea and therefore he was more bloodthirsty in regard to the Germans than he had been a year ago. And he hoped that Marshal Stalin would again propose a toast to the execution of 50,000 officers of the German army." (Note at this

point, also, that Roosevelt says "execution," not "death in battle." He is not the fool he "playfully" acted in Washington. Or at any rate, by this time he knows what the Eastern chief likes to hear.)

"Marshal Stalin replied that... everyone was more bloodthirsty than they had been a year ago... He said the Germans were savages and seemed to hate with a sadistic hatred the creative work of human beings.

"The President agreed with this." Speaking of bloodthirstiness, especially bloodthirsty democrats, it may be in order to mention at this point that when Roosevelt's man Friday, Hopkins, visited Stalin in Moscow later, he told Stalin "he looked forward to what for him would be a pleasant spectacle, the present state of Berlin and he might even be able to find Hitler's body." {Sherwood, p. 912.)

Perhaps the master had told the man how to chuck the Marshal under the chin. Thus Roosevelt amused himself with the "psychological difference" between the Eastern-chief and the nineteenth-century Victorian statesman who didn't like to hear cold-blooded massacres being bandied about. Perhaps a future biographer will amuse himself with the 'psychology' of this 20th-century capitalist democrat.

THE SENSE OF JUSTICE (13) But if the non-bloodthirsty Churchill was revolted by Stalin's yearnings for another Katyn massacre, it must not be supposed that delicacy of stomach was the only cause. As we will see when we analyze the politics of the inter-Allied imperialist struggle, the destruction of a living Germany in the heart of Europe (concomitant of the destruction of its officer corps) was a threat to British influence, which intended to base itself on its organization of the European Continent as against the American and Russian powers. Germany had to be defeated, yes, but Europe had to survive, and a Germany had to be at the heart of this Europe.

If this seems an unfair imputation against Churchill, in view of his civilized reaction to the Eastern chief, then: let us turn to an episode which (as far as I know) is mentioned only in Admiral Leahy's book.

Massacres, no: no one can take that away from Churchill; but it was not quite true that this true-born Englishman could not stand the very idea of killing war prisoners provided it was on a selective scale...

At the 6th plenary session in Yalta, Leahy recounts: "The Prime Minister next presented the question of war criminals. He said that the 'great war criminals' should be executed without formal trials. This would obviate any necessity for bringing them before a formal court, which he at that time considered unwise.

"He insisted vigorously that traditional English practice would not permit trying before any British court any person accused of an offense that was not legally a crime at the time it was committed." (Leahy, p. 314-5.)

And so since British scruples would never stand for the injustice of such an unfair trial, why, shoot 'em without a trial! (Come to think about it, nineteenth-century Victorian statesmen were not always delicate about the lives of their enemies, either - for example, Indians and Irishmen.) As is known, Churchill later permitted himself to be convinced of the justice of the ex-post-facto newly minted international justice of the Nuremberg trials.

POPULATION ENGINEERING (14) There is another interesting passage in the Yalta record (4th plenary session), this time between Churchill and Stalin in friendly agreement, the Victorian statesman's stomach having visibly firmed up by this time.

The discussion came on the difficulties of moving Poland's western boundary deep into German territory so as "to stuff the Polish goose so full of German food that it got indigestion." Millions of Germans might have to be moved out of East Prussia and Silesia - "He [Churchill] said he felt there was a considerable body of British public opinion that would be shocked if it were proposed to move large numbers of Germans, and although he personally would not be shocked he knew that that view existed in England. ...

"STALIN: There will be no more Germans there for when our troops come in the Germans run away and no Germans are left.

"CHURCHILL: Then there is the problem of how to handle them [the runaways] in Germany. We have killed 6 or 7 million and probably will kill another million before the end of the war.

"STALIN: One or two?

"CHURCHILL: Oh, I am not proposing any limitation on them. So there should be room in Germany for some who will need to fill the vacancy. . . ."

It surely takes statesmen of caliber, Eastern chief and Western chief combined, to grasp the insight that killing an additional million on the battlefield would be handy for solving the frontier problem. Create enough corpses, and no one need worry about population crowding. Demographic experts will find the principle even handier in the era of the H-bomb, when population engineering is so much easier.

DRAMA IN FOUR SCENES (15) There is an interesting series of scenes which can be collectively entitled "Public Opinion and the Imperialists."

Scene I is at a Yalta dinner meeting, Feb. 5. The record reads: "Following a toast by the Prime Minister to the proletariat masses [sic] of the world, there was considerable discussion about the rights of people to govern themselves in relation to their leaders." It was at this dinner that Vishinsky, in reply to a remark by Bohlen about American public opinion, "replied that the American people should learn to obey their leaders."

Churchill, after toasting the proletariat, roared like a democratic lion: "although he was constantly being 'beaten up' as a reactionary," he said, he was the only one present who could be thrown out of office by democratic vote at any moment, and "personally he gloried in that danger." With a fine sense of dramatic irony, Scene II opens on the same Churchill at the same dinner, after Stalin and Roosevelt had gone.

Churchill, Eden and Stettinius are left, discussing the UN voting system. Churchill says he's for the Russian view (the right of the big powers to veto small-nation discussion) in order to ensure Big Three unity, Eden takes "vigorous exception" and argues that this procedure would find no support in English public opinion. This doesn't faze Churchill: he is "thinking of the 'realities of the international situation" he replies.

He does not say "Public opinion be damned." That comes in Scene III.

Scene III is a flashback about our democratic lion, back to another conference that prepared Yalta.

The previous October, Churchill had been in conference with Stalin in Moscow. (This was the Moscow conference which, we will see later, made the deal swapping Greece for East Europe.) Both Polish "governments," the London Poles and the Lublin Poles, were also present, for their country was on the bargaining counter. In a private session, Churchill violently pressured the London Poles to accept the Curzon line as eastern boundary. Mikolajczyk, Romer and Grabski refused, even though Churchill shouted "There is no other alternative!" Finally Grabski interposed with the assurance that Polish public opinion would never stand for it; no Polish parliament would ever accept it.

"Well, answered Mr. Churchill ironically, then there is nothing to prevent Poland from declaring war on Russia after she is deprived of the support of the Powers. What is public opinion, after, all?..." (Ciechanowski, p. 335.)

Scene IV, back at Yalta, shows character development in the plot, as a good drama should.

Stalin, who at Teheran had lectured Roosevelt that the way to overcome Americans' rejection of the Russian grab of the Baltic states was to subject them to a propaganda campaign, "was later to confess to Hopkins that [at Yalta] he became pretty fed up with hearing about American and British public opinion, believing that the President and the Prime Minister kept on referring to it merely as a device..." (Sherwood, 861.) But at Yalta, though fed up, he apparently decided that if democratic-type demagoguery meant to mouth phrases about public opinion back home, why, he could do it as well as the next man. So he did.

Thus we get the semi-hilarious passage (at the 3rd plenum) after Roosevelt and Churchill suggested that perhaps Stalin would be so "magnanimous" as to deviate from the Curzon line sufficiently to let Poland keep Lwow Province. Stalin rises in "indignation" to declaim that it was not Russians who originally fixed the Curzon line but Messrs. Curzon and Clemenceau, and "Should we then be less Russian than Curzon and Clemenceau? We could not then return to

Moscow and face the people who would say Stalin and Molotov have been less sure defenders of Russian interest than Curzon and Clemenceau."

Finding that this went over like a house afire, Stalin got real interested in this new gimmick learned from his friends. Later, when he discussed, with Roosevelt what Russia was going to grab in exchange for declaring war against Japan, he hauled it out again: the Supreme Soviet back home, he told FDR, would want to know what was in it for Russia and what was he going to tell them? His democratic friend took care of the problem, as everyone knows.

At Yalta Stalin was more in character at the dinner on Feb. 10 when, apropos of French party strife "The Prime Minister remarked that Marshal Stalin had a much easier political task since he only had one party to deal with. Marshal Stalin replied that experience had shown one party was of great convenience to a leader of a state."

RING-AROUND-A-ROMANOFF (16) In a private Roosevelt-Stalin confab on Feb. 8, the two Slaves of Public Opinion made the famous deal on the slices of Chinese territory which Moscow was to get for entering the Japanese war. Chiang Kai-shek was to be told about it ("consulted") later.

There was no ceremony on Roosevelt's part in trading another people's land for his own purposes: it has been sadly noted by his best friends that the president accepted all of Stalin's demands like a shot, without a single murmur. It was no skin off his class.

Yet to this day, some people pretend that "imperialism" is just a radical soapbox term.

A not uninteresting sidelight is the fact that the Yalta agreement on this U. S.-Russian sellout of Chinese territory is explicitly based on nothing: else than the "rights" of tsarist imperialism in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904. This piquant approach was officially taken by Stalin when he introduced his own draft of the agreement with: "The former rights of Russia violated by treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 should be restored, viz...." And Sherwood notes: "It is quite clear that Roosevelt had been prepared even before the Teheran Conference in 1943 to agree to the legitimacy of most if not all of

the Soviet claims in the Far East, for they involved the restoration of possessions and privileges taken by the Japanese from the Russians in the war of 1904" (P. 866.)

In fact, in their Feb. 8 conversation, Stalin based his demand for use of the Manchurian railroads on the" argument that "the tsars had use of the line...." Thus Stalin consciously presented himself as the continuator of tsarist Russian national imperialism, the imperialism for whose defeat Lenin had agitated in the war of 1904. But when it came to Russian national imperialism Stalin had no monopoly. Just a couple of weeks before this, it happens, a Mr. Alexander Kerensky, anti-Bolshevik, had made a spirited public defense of all of Stalin's land-grabs from the Baltic states to Bakovina, as being no violation of the Atlantic Charter. Stalin, Kerensky and Roosevelt found themselves in perfect accord with the tsar, and Yalta sealed all.

Actually, the most important "exhibits" for this subject are in the chapters below. Here we have given some vignettes, allowing us to penetrate into the minds of the Big Three imperialists around the Yalta table.

There are not many moments in history when we can do this. The realities of international politics are usually obscured by the cottony masses of highly moral platitudes that our rulers like to spout forth in their public speeches and acts - about justice and democracy and honor and peace and other such notions whose very existence is wraithlike when they get together around the table to divide the world.

At Yalta, of course, the imperialists of only one side were represented, Germany being the enemy. But for us who live in the cold war today, Yalta shows to us in action the rulers of both of the camps embattled in the present conflict. An Eisenhower for a Roosevelt, a Khrushchev for a Stalin, Churchill for Churchill - they are no different now.

[Chapter 2. Rift in the Loot](#)

On one subject the Big Three at Yalta were united, of course: war against the common enemy, Germany.

The Second World War was supposed to be a war against Nazism, against fascism, against aggression, against barbaric enemies of humanity and civilization.

It was nothing of the sort. It was a war against an imperialist rival by a hostile coalition of imperialist rivals, who in turn were torn by internal imperialist rivalries. The official war aims were belied by Yalta.

The Big Three's deliberations on Germany are all the proof one needs.

In the first place, of course, one of the participants was indeed that state which had helped to give the green light for the launching of the war in alliance with Hitler. Until he was attacked by his Nazi partner in plunder, Stalin had ravaged Poland and Finland hand-in-glove with the Hitlerites. The only one at Yalta who mentioned this embarrassing period was actually Stalin himself, defiantly flinging its memory into the teeth of his friends, said teeth being gritted but discreetly kept locked against reproaches.

Let bygones be bygones. Russia was now fighting the Nazi Beast, defending Civilization against Barbarism.

To ensure the post-war victory of Civilization, our civilized democrats at Yalta kept bringing up the question of - enslaving German workers as forced laborers for Stalinist Russia! That would be proper punishment for those Nazi concentration camps. Who, by the way, were in those Nazi concentration camps? Why, German workers, of course, the Yalta democrats would teach the Germans a lesson by transferring them (not necessarily the same ones) to Russia.

The same German workers who had been the very first martyrs in the struggle against Nazism were going to be punished for the war started by Stalin's partner, by being enslaved to Hitler's partner.

It was not Stalin at Yalta who brought up the question of the enslavement of German workers. It was Roosevelt and Churchill who kept doing so.

The State Department had been all prepared in expectation of the Russian demand for slave labor as part of reparations. In its Yalta Briefing Book (which, by the way, Roosevelt didn't bother to read,

according to Byrnes) the State Department averred that "There is no compelling reason for the U. S. to oppose such claims within reasonable limits" - thus disposing of all the moral bunkum to which the cold war has been compelling our imperialists lately - and especially recommended that Germans who were not Nazis ("politically passive") be ensured enslavement "with minimum standards of treatment and a relatively short period of service" as distinct from formerly active Nazis.

At the 2nd plenary session in Yalta, Roosevelt hastened to bring up the question of giving Russia "reparations in manpower," i.e., slave labor: "First, there is the question of manpower. What does Russia want? The U. S. and British, I believe, do not want reparations in manpower." The Russians said they weren't ready to discuss the Question, and persisted in this answer throughout.

Hopkins passed a note over to Roosevelt, scribbling: "Could you. ask him (1) Why not take all Gestapo Storm Troopers and other Nazi criminals...." But not even that distinction was made by the proposals repeated at Yalta.

Churchill phrased it as a callous deal, at the same session, .in spite of the Russians' refusal even to take up the question:.

"Our objective is seeing that Germany will not starve in helping the Soviet get all it can in manpower and factories and helping the British get all they can in exports to former German markets." (See what the war was about?) Roosevelt veered back to the subject once again in the session, referring to his desire to help Russia get German manpower to reconstruct the devastated regions ..." The Russians kept mum.

At the Foreign Ministers' meeting on Feb. 7, Stettinius came back to it. He said the American delegation wanted "to know whether the subject of labor [in German reparations] would be discussed at the Crimean conference or at a later date." Molotov answered they were not ready to discuss it at Yalta, and the Americans' enthusiasm for filling Stalin's labor camps had to subside perforce.

Why were the Russians stalling on this at Yalta? Leahy writes only: "Since the Russians were using many thousands of prisoners in what was reported to be virtual slave camps, they had little to gain by

discussing the matter." (P. 302.) That is, they didn't need a deal with the Moral Democrats on this; they were garnering their slave labor already, and at will.

(And incidentally they were very jealous about their supply channels too, namely, German troop surrenders. They howled bloody murder whenever they suspected that German troops facing their armies were trying to surrender not to them but to the Anglo-Americans. In his post-Yalta Moscow talks with Hopkins, in May 1945, Stalin, seeking an example of honest dealing by an American, chose to compliment Eisenhower's honesty in turning over to the tender mercies of the Russians some 135,000 German troops who had tried to surrender to the American army.) Conversely, this also helps to explain why Roosevelt and Churchill were so anxious at Yalta to get the Russians to work out a slave-labor reparations deal.

For, as we shall see, they wanted to restrain Russian demands on the German economy; the cheapest compensations they had to offer in exchange for going easy on German capital were the lives, labor and liberty of the German workers. Stalin knew that too, and refused to discuss slave labor at Yalta until he had first exacted the highest price he could on the rest of the German economic structure. That way he would get the most of both.

Certainly, of course, the Russians had thundered to the world their intention of exacting German forced labor; they did not suffer from moral scruples or bashfulness on the point. Our democrats did, however ("public opinion," you know) and Roosevelt's report to Congress drew a veil over this aspect of Yalta. But it was known, for the conference Protocol clearly referred to it. The N. Y. Herald Tribune at the time noted that the president was "a good deal more sensitive" than either Churchill or Stalin.

More sensitive? But of course. There are differences between democratic imperialists and totalitarian imperialists.

If the Big Three's war had been a war in defense of democracy and the free world against Nazi aggression, as advertised, then whole scads of the Yalta record would be completely incomprehensible, as is indeed true for most readers. What, for example, could a naive but honest person make of the Yalta discussion on dismembering defeated Germany? .

The nation that Hitler had oppressed was to be torn apart and tortured in punishment for the evil deeds of its tormenter; and thus the easiest way would be taken to laying the seeds of new war strivings by a German militarism that would surely be reborn. To defend democracy, a whole nation was to be ripped to pieces in the heart of Europe, and world democracy along with it. Even from a sane imperialist point of view, it was a mad scheme which could take root even momentarily only in the minds of power-flushed imperialists.

But at the Yalta conference the Big Three rulers agreed on dismemberment. In the van was Roosevelt; in the rear, Churchill; but all went along.

Stalin brought the question up first, pressing for definitive decision: all had agreed on it at Teheran, he said, but "the manner of dismemberment" was still to be decided. At Teheran, he recalled, Roosevelt had proposed cutting Germany into five parts; Churchill, two; he, Stalin, had agreed with Roosevelt.

Churchill said Britain agreed to dismemberment "in principle" but was undecided on details Roosevelt repeated his stand in favor of dismemberment - "the division of Germany into five or seven states was a good idea." He proposed an agreement here and now.

Slow up, interposed Churchill, "we are dealing with the fate of 80 million people and that required more than 80 minutes to consider." This was Churchill's characteristic "statesmanlike" way of talking when he was not yet quite sure what we wanted.

A couple of months before Yalta, in fact, Churchill had raised the question with Roosevelt of "turning over parts of Germany to France after the collapse of Nazism" (Yalta papers, Part I). At a Foreign Ministers' meeting in Yalta, Feb. 7, Eden even mentioned "the assumption that Germany was to be broken up into individual states"! But not long after Yalta, all parties concerned got less and less enthusiastic about dismembering Germany. Speaking to Hopkins in Moscow, May 1945, Stalin even pretended to "remember" that dismemberment had been turned down at Yalta! - in spite of the fact that the word "dismemberment" had been written into the surrender terms. Hopkins, surprised, protested that the U. S. was still for it.

No doubt Stalin's second thoughts were due to calculations as to whether Russia could expect to grab off more of Germany one way or the other. On Britain's part, reluctance about dismemberment hardened into opposition for general reasons which will be apparent shortly. In any case Churchill had speculated about a north-south partition, whereas the cold war brought about an even more artificial east-west division, even less viable for the German nation.

In the U. S., Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau was pushing for a draconic and criminal plan to deindustrialize Germany and virtually transform it into an agrarian country. We can read in the Yalta papers that at first Churchill was "violently opposed" to the Morgenthau Plan, but came around: "The proposal apparently appealed to the Prime Minister on the basis that Great Britain would thus acquire a lot of Germany's iron and steel markets and eliminate a dangerous competitor." (Part 1, Matthews memo of Sept. 20, 1944.)

how helpful it would be if down-to-earth talk like this could be read sooner than 10 years after the lying propaganda! But at Yalta, it is obvious, Churchill (less so, Roosevelt) was still uncertain about what he wanted to do with Germany economically - milk it or use it for more grandiose plans to organize the Continent. The Russians did not need to have any hesitation?. They came into Yalta with a detailed plan, for a large-scale economic disemboweling and looting of Germany, under the head of reparations.

Maisky's report to the plenary session figured on Russia's taking a cool \$10 billion of German national wealth, in addition to \$1 billion annually for 10 years, to be paid in kind; 80 per cent of all German heavy industry was to be removed; 100 per cent of all "specialized industry useful only for military purposes," this category including all aviation, synthetic oil, etc.

Stalin offered some of the loot to the U. S.: You don't want to take machine tools, he said, but how about helping yourself to some raw materials, and "German property in the U. S."? - "The President expressed agreement with this view."

It was Churchill that kept throwing cold water on the scheme, without flatly opposing. He brought up "practical" difficulties as reasons for holding off decisions on any definite figure; he intimated that the

\$20 billion total was high. But the course of discussion made it pretty plain what was concerning him.

Let it concern you too, dear reader, for here we get a long look into the economic problems of the imperialist war - not a full one, to be sure; not a rounded one, but it has the merit of being through the eyes of the imperialists themselves. For Churchill and Roosevelt were anxious to push "slave-laborers" on pal Joe, but when it came to disemboweling the capitalist economy of their enemy, they developed a maze of scruples, an access of qualms, and a fit of prudent responsibility.

"It was beyond the capacity of Germany to pay," objected Churchill. Taking reparations out of Germany's capital assets would "in turn make it more difficult for Germany to pay her bills," he added.

If Germany were made unable to pay for necessary imports, then "it would mean that the other countries would be paying for German reparations to those countries receiving them." Churchill said "he was haunted by the specter of a starving Germany" which would be a drag on the victors' economies.

Why not simply let them starve, these reprehensible Germans who had made the mistake of being exploited by Hitler? No, Churchill could not be as blithe as Stalin about that; for he knew that in the post-war world, facing a Russian Empire on one side and the American dollar colossus on the other, Britain's only hope to equal stature would be to stand astride Europe; only as overlord of Europe could Britain hope to reach to the height of the Big Two; and it needed a Europe that was alive and viable, not broken and disemboweled; therefore it needed such a Germany too.

Furthermore, we have already quoted Churchill's remark about swapping slave labor to Russia in exchange for "former German markets" to Britain; but while German economy had to be subordinated to British capitalism, it could not be made so poor as to be a charity-dependent on its rich uncles. It was a fine problem in equilibrium for the victor-capitalists, in the last analysis insoluble; but Churchill and Roosevelt worried over some of the components of the problem.

"We lent Germany far more than we got after the last war," said Roosevelt. "That cannot happen again." Churchill recalled an unexpected boomerang from reparations after World War I: "I remember we took over some old Atlantic liners [from Germany], which permitted Germany to build better new ones. I do not want to repeat that experience."

The State Department's Briefing Book for Yalta had made a related analysis, remarking on an unexpected effect of reparations on the world capitalist market: A one-way flow of reparations from Germany "must necessarily interfere with the export trade of" other countries. [In the first place, the U. S.!]. The longer reparation lasts, moreover, the more strongly is Germany likely to become entrenched in the markets of the claimant states" [That is; German goods, sent; in reparations, would wind up by capturing, the foreign market of the receiver.] These considerations were; no considerations for Russian Stalinism, precisely because the latter's exploiting social system was not a capitalist type of exploitation..

Over the question of reparations - i.e. the economic future of-defeated Germany - the two opposed camps which would soon square off against each other in the cold war took up their respective stances: rehabilitation of German capitalism, together with the same militarists and even pro-fascists who had brought Hitler to power (the Western capitalist camp) versus the Russians calculated effort to replace the weakened capitalist class of Germany with their own exploitative totalitarian society of bureaucratic collectivism.

This is where we come in: here is the root of our world today.

Against the sole progressive force that could have offered a social alternative to both reactionary roads, the socialist working class of Germany, both imperialist camps combined with vicious suppression. The anxiety which Roosevelt and Churchill displayed to pay off Russia with German slave labor was capable of solving more than one problem for them! One of the things which kept the democratic Two convinced of Stalin's friendly bona-fides was the confidence they had in him that he too would not hesitate to crush any genuine workers' revolution in blood.

[Chapter 3. The Secret War](#)

So far Yalta has permitted a deep glimpse into the imperialist springs of the warring powers, but we have not yet gotten close to the question which has been agitating Americans politics: Why did Roosevelt "capitulate" to Stalin? In fact, was there a "capitulation" to Stalin? etc.

One reason why this current discussion will remain fruitless "through the ages" as long as it remains on the present plane is that both the liberal and the McCarthy-Knowland myth-makers bat each other about on the basis of a common assumption: the problem at Yalta was how the U. S. would handle Russia. This is completely false. Nothing will ever be understood about Yalta or the politics of the Second World War as long as this is the conception of what Roosevelt was trying to do.

The United States did not see the line-up this way.

Its major preoccupation was the bitter struggle with Britain, for imperialist dominance in the post-war world.

Fundamental to Yalta was the primacy of the American-British antagonism. We will begin to trace this in the present chapter, and we will see later how it tied in with the approach of both of them to the Russian rival...

This fact is not really open to dispute for anyone who bothers to go back and immerse himself in the political issues of the pre-Yalta war era - which now seems like a past geological epoch.

Sherwood, for example, notes that on the eve of Yalta the Grand Alliance "was beginning to show signs of cracking," and he truly adds: "and the first evidences of rupture at this time were not between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies, but between Great Britain and the United States----" (P. 836.) Why was this the primary antagonism, and how was it fought out during the war?

We have to be brief here about the basic background.

American imperialism, fledged in early adventures like the Spanish-American War, emerged out of the First World War as a world creditor and a world power, feeling its oats, while the British Empire had already begun its decline and the Russian Revolution had stimulated the beginning of the end of colonialism. In the inter-war

period, the specific character of American imperialism crystallized. Relying on its overwhelming economic power and wealth to penetrate the world's markets and dominate its sources of trade and raw materials, the U. S. would only have been hampered by old-style colonialist methods which depended on political control and military force, characteristic of the British Empire.

The burgeoning imperialism of the U. S. needed only "independent" governments that would be reliable satellites primarily because of economic dependence, not because of the big stick (with only a judicious and limited use of the latter now and then, as recently in Guatemala or whenever necessary).

In general, therefore, it was in the interest of U. S. imperialism to have "open doors" in the world, rather than colonial areas which were closed off to its economic 'penetration by political restrictions imposed from London or Paris. This, incidentally, is the origin of America's original reputation as an "anti-colonialist" power, a reputation now justifiably shot to pieces by Washington's role once it fully achieved its present dominant position as overlord of the whole capitalist world.

But this was also the origin of the irrepressible clash between U. S. imperialism and British imperialism, whose curves were going in different directions. Today this question has been settled, and Britain "knows its place"; but during the Second World War against Germany, this war was also going on.

U. S. power threatened to undermine the British in every corner of the globe. Even Australia was fast becoming an economic satellite of the U. S., while formally remaining within the British dominion structure, and Canada was an older story. Everywhere, in the guise of the war emergency, or really because of it, the U.S. got economic footholds in British preserves - in Saudi Arabia, America's first toehold into the British Near East oil reservation; in East India oil and Dutch Guiana bauxite; in Argentina and other Latin American enclaves of British economic influence in bases on Bermuda and other British Atlantic islands; in India and Malaya; in Hong Kong and Singapore; in Iran.

The U.S. was also moving into the French Empire (Indochina, Dakar, Martinique, etc.). It was displacing Britain as the leading merchant marine power. It counterposed the Hull policy of "free trade" to

British Empire restrictions. But Britain could still expect at least to dominate the Continent, couldn't it? No, U. S. influence reached out to challenge London even there, and thwart its aims and aspirations. This sector of the British-American war-behind-the-war crystallized especially around the second-front issue and the policy toward France and De Gaulle (to be explained). Even by 1943 the situation was getting almost too bitter to be kept in hand behind the scenes.

It spilled over at the October 1943 conference of Big Three Foreign Ministers at Moscow; "I ran into Harry Hopkins a few days later and he... hinted that Britain and America had not succeeded in appearing entirely united in Moscow, and that from Eden's attitude the Soviets might have concluded that Britain was trying 'to ease America out of European problems.' This struck me as an interesting comment from the lips of a man so close and friendly to Britain." (Ciechanowski, p. 229-30.)

The British-American antagonism was one of the axes of the second-front controversy. The issue was: where? What Russia demanded was not only a second front, but specifically a second front in Western Europe.

What Churchill wanted was invasion through "the soft underbelly of Europe" in the Balkans.

The issue was not military-technical. What was at stake was the post-war constellation of power in Europe. The New International explained a couple of months before Yalta: "The question as to where to invade Europe involved almost automatically the question of the domination of Europe after the war. The defeat of Germany through an invasion of Western Europe meant certain Russian domination of Poland, the Balkans, Finland, and a strong voice throughout the Continent. The latter was made all the more certain by the role of the Communists in the underground movements of Europe. Such a termination of the war would leave Moscow the 'boss' of Europe with the exception of the Atlantic fringe of British satellites." (Dec. 1944, p. 395.)

But the U. S. threw itself into the scales against the Churchill view and in favor of the Russian version of the second front. This was not because of simple stupidity or "treason." The Americans feared the domination of Europe not by the Russians but by the British.

This is the simple big fact which explains Yalta.

The typical American attitude of the time can be read in Wendell Willkie's book *One World* (1943). The Big Three alliance, he believes, is too tightly controlled by the U. S. and Britain; Britain ought to be put in her place; her empire is far in excess of her needs; the U. S. ought to use Russia, which has been relegated to a minor seat, as a counterweight against overweening British presumption...

In the months just before Yalta, this general sharpening conflict took on acute forms that burst out in public scandals, as our quotation from Sherwood about the crack-up indicated. The immediate foci of the war-within-the-war were Belgium, Italy and Greece.

In all three countries Britain was engaged in intervening: on behalf of reactionary political forces to ensure her own domination. In Belgium, the British sent in troops to smash popular demonstrations against the imposition of the Pierlot government, the representative of the Belgian big-business collaborationists and the Societe Generale du Belgique (one of Europe's biggest cartels, which worked with the Nazis). Pierlot had now sold himself to the British, and Churchill was determined to shove him down the throats of the Belgian people with bayonets.

In Italy, Britain twisted arms to oust Count Sforza as premier. Sforza was. a liberal, none too leftish at that, who was however critical of the British and opposed to the monarchy. Sforza announced publicly that Churchill had, insisted that he "accept King Victor Emmanuel III regardless of his heavy responsibilities with fascism," and he resigned under the pressure.

In Greece, as we will recount later in its place, British troops had invaded to crush the native national liberation movement, anticipate the arrival of Russian "liberating" troops, impose King George and puppet premier Papandreou to head a pro-British quisling regime.

Into this triple tinderbox in Europe, American imperialism deliberately threw a match. In a public statement which reverberated through Europe, Stettinius dissociated the U. S. specifically and sharply from the strong-arming of Sforza and Italy by Britain, and then added a rabbit-punch: "This policy would apply in an even more

pronounced degree with regard to governments of the United Nations in their liberated territories." Everybody knew this meant Italy and especially Greece.

Right on the eve of Yalta, the U. S. was deliberately challenging the influence of Britain over the Continent itself, in the public eye of all Europe! Churchill cabled Roosevelt in a violent outburst of rage. His high-pitched screams were heard across the Atlantic. British-American relations were explosive.

Throw in another angle at this point: In the Lend Lease contract with Britain, Article VII referred generally to an economic quid pro quo in exchange for American aid. It was worded very vaguely and nothing had been done about it. In 1944 (suddenly or not so suddenly) State Department officials began to raise the question of pressing Britain for economic concessions, i.e., lifting Empire economic restrictions on British preserves in favor of American interests.

A memo in Part I of the Yalta papers (dated Sept. 20, 1944) remarks that Treasury officials were pessimistic about what could be gotten from Britain "but they felt that at least it gave us a foot in the door" of the British commercial system. We learn also that the secretary of state was "shocked" to learn that Roosevelt had never put the arm on Churchill to get something out of Article VII. In other words, State Department wanted to call in the IOU, in addition to everything else boiling up.

Let us anticipate a little now and mention that at Yalta itself Stettinius sent a memo to FDR to get onto this job. Churchill thinks you are not interested in this subject, he memoed, and this "has tended to encourage the British to take an unyielding attitude on the matter of their Empire preferences and trade barriers." (What could be blunter?)

Roosevelt handed Churchill a "Dear Winston" note dated-Feb. 10 demanding action toward "implementation of Article VII." (The rich top-hatted suitor twirled his black mustache and called in the mortgage on the penniless rival for his dearly beloved.) In October before Yalta, as we have mentioned, Churchill had gone on safari to Moscow to bag a deal on Greece and East Europe. Roosevelt could not let this get-together of the other two-thirds of the Big Three pass without a cautionary warning. Five days before Churchill arrived in

Moscow, Roosevelt wired Stalin: "You naturally understand that in this global war there is literally no question, political or military, in which the U. S. is not interested. I am firmly convinced that the three of us, and only the three of us, can find the solution to the still unresolved questions."

In this definitive statement of the extension of American imperialist interests to every corner of the globe, the words "only the three of us" meant "not you and Churchill by a private deal of your own." Roosevelt was declaring himself in on every British deal.

Churchill and Stalin made their deal in Moscow, and it would seem from a State Department paper dated as late as Jan. 18, 1945 that American sources were still trying to piece the details of it together; at any rate, it frowned on this arrangement or any such arrangement. The U. S. wanted to keep the situation from jelling into spheres of influence controlled by either of its European partners; it wanted to handle spheres of influence through the UN where it had the upper hand.

Furious though he was, especially at the Stettinius statement, Churchill knew that to counter Russia he had to line the United States up on his side. To this end, preparing for the Big Three conference, he tried to get Roosevelt to "caucus" with him in advance.

This is the meaning of the series of appeals, which we can read in the Yalta papers, in which Churchill insisted that Roosevelt come for a preliminary conference with the British at Malta. "I beg you to consider this," he pleaded at one point at the cost of his dignity.

He struck the Cassandra key: "This may well be a fateful conference, coming at a moment when the great Allies are so divided and the shadow of the war lengthens out before us. At the present time I think the end of this war may well prove to be more disappointing than was the last." (Jan. 8.) Roosevelt kept fobbing him off; the last thing he wanted to do was give "Uncle Joe" the idea that he was ganging up with Churchill at Yalta! But he finally reluctantly yielded.

Churchill replied gratefully, "Pray forgive my pertinacity." However, Roosevelt himself was going to show up only at the tail of the Malta conference; the combined Chiefs of Staff would be getting together there, and Eden and Stettinius would "run over the agenda." About

the Malta conference, Sherwood writes: "The Combined Chiefs of Staff had been meeting at Malta - and had been engaged in the most violent disagreements and disputes of the entire war. (One can read the official minutes of these meetings without suspecting that a single harsh word had been exchanged, but some of those who were present tell a much more colorful story of what went on.)" (P. 848.)

What was this fierce battle about? Sherwood vaguely indicates a military disagreement over strategic plans for the drive to Berlin, something like the disagreement that Eisenhower explains in *Crusade in Europe* for this period. It is hard for this non-military outsider to see why this debate should have been so violent. But Leahy (p. 294) gives an entirely different explanation of the "acrimonious sessions" at Malta. According to him, the British were pressing for a Mediterranean attack in addition to the Western front, and he calls it a long-standing difference, indicating, that it was the old issue of the second front all over again in a new form.

This makes better sense; and it is a fact that Leahy is less diplomatic about suppressing inconvenient facts than Eisenhower is in his book. If Leahy is right, then the issue was properly a bundle of dynamite just before Yalta and while the British invasion of Greece was still going on. The British were proposing a last joint effort to halt the threatened Russian domination of the Continent, as it would be jelled by the military disposition of forces in conjunction with the political.

Stettinius reports an after-dinner conversation with Churchill at Malta, before Roosevelt arrived for the hail-and-farewell: "During the course of the conversation Churchill expressed utter dismay at the outlook of the world. It was his opinion that~future peace, stability, and progress depended on Great Britain and the US remaining in close harmony at all times." (P. 67.) But this bid by Churchill for a united U. S.-British front against Russia at Yalta got nowhere.

Even leaving aside the big questions at Yalta, for the moment, Roosevelt's behavior at the conference dramatized his thought-out strategy for world politics, which was closer to Willkie's conception than to Churchill's. This is true even on the personal level.

At his first private talk with Stalin at Yalta (Feb. 4), Roosevelt took every opportunity, big and little, to knife Churchill in the back. He especially wanted Stalin to know that he was wielding the knife. Here

is a passage in the key of the backstairs gossip: "The President said he would now tell the Marshal something indiscreet, since he would not wish to say it in front of Prime Minister Churchill...." (It is a crack at Britain's De Gaulle policy.) Discussing a possible surplus-ship deal with Stalin in another private talk, Roosevelt threw in the following clod of mud: "He said that the British had never sold anything without commercial interest but that he had different ideas".

It was in this talk too that Roosevelt said he'd like Britain to give Hong Kong back to China for an international free port (i.e., wide open to the U. S.). "He said he knew Mr. Churchill would have strong objections to this suggestion." (He knew, of course, that Mr. Churchill would go through the ceiling.) More: He felt (Roosevelt told Stalin) that Britain should not take part in the trusteeship over Korea "but he felt that they might resent this." Stalin opined that Churchill might "kill us" and urged letting the British in.

Throwing a dart also in the direction of France, FDR complained to Stalin that Britain wanted to give Indochina back to France.

As one reads these going-on by Roosevelt at Yalta, it is not his moral character which impresses one, but his consistent carrying out (up to and including mere backbiting) of the strategy of ostentatiously divorcing himself from Britain with relation to Stalin. But as long as we have mentioned his moral character, we cannot help quoting a remark in his sycophant Robert. Sherwood's book, where Roosevelt is constantly represented as a dear friend of his chum Winston.

Writing about Roosevelt's Fourth Inaugural Address just before Yalta, Sherwood worshipfully notes that Roosevelt said: "We have learned the simple truth, as Emerson said, that 'the only way to have a friend is to be one.'" And Sherwood comments: "I had the feeling that he was summing up his most profound beliefs... (P. 846.)

[Chapter 4. Kindness and kings](#)

The primary British-American antagonism lay behind Yalta's consideration of a number of countries.

The references to France at Yalta, and indeed all Allied politics with regard to France; can be understood only within this framework.

From the beginning Britain took De Gaulle under its wing, as the British channel for the (hoped-for) domination of France and the Continent. Washington; on the other hand, continued to recognize Vichy as the legitimate government of France, and kept this up as long as possible.

Till well into 1944 Roosevelt insisted on regarding De Gaulle as simply an adjunct to Britain's forces, without according him recognition as representing "France" This stand naturally enabled the-Americans to demagogically play the democrats at first by insisting that France had no political voice till the French people could freely elect one.

It is, for. this reason, seeking a counterweight to Britain's De Gaulle, that Roosevelt went in for the reactionary game of recognizing the Giraud-Darlan pro-fascists, Vichyite turncoats, in French North Africa - though the stench that this produced forced him to duck out.

In connection with this tug-of-war over the prostrate body of France,Eisenhower has a tale to tattle on Roosevelt, in his "Crusade for Europe", as he relates his conversations with Roosevelt in Casablanca in 1943.

"He [Roosevelt] speculated at length on the possibility of France's regaining her ancient position of prestige and power in Europe and on this point was very pessimistic. As a consequence, his mind was wrestling with the questions of methods for controlling certain strategic points in the French Empire which he felt that the country might no longer be able to Hold." (P. 136.) .

For Eisenhower, this is, a. remarkably forthright way of stating that. Roosevelt was plotting how to take over the French Empire. No doubt! The circumspect Eisenhower twists the knife on his next page, even indicating documentary evidence in a footnote to validate his accusation:

"I found; that the President, in his consideration of current African problems; did not always distinguish clearly between the military occupation of enemy territory and the situation in which we found ourselves in North Africa. He constantly referred to plans and proposals affecting the local population, the French army, and governmental officials in terms of orders, instructions, and compulsion. It was necessary to remind him that, far from governing

a conquered country, we were attempting only to force a gradual widening of the base of government, with the final objective of turning all internal affairs over to, popular control. He, of course, agreed... but he nevertheless continued, perhaps subconsciously, to discuss local problems from the viewpoint of a conqueror." .

Roosevelt certainly was in a hurry to take over. This is the background for his attitude on France in connection with Yalta.

Thus, in the above-mentioned private talk with Stalin where Roosevelt wanted to tell him "something indiscreet," the carefully planned indiscretion was the statement - "...that the British for two years have had the idea of artificially building-up France into a strong power which would have 200,000 troops on the eastern border of France to hold the line for the period required to assemble a strong British army. He said the British were a peculiar people and wished to have their cake and eat it too." Roosevelt on the contrary only wanted to eat, to tear down France into minor vassalage so as to reduce Britain's counter-strength and subordinate both to the Big One. He knew that Stalin would not object to vacuums created in Europe.

We have already mentioned Roosevelt's idea of disengaging France's claw on Indochina, mentioned to Stalin in one of the private confabs. At his meeting with the U. S. delegation on Feb. 4, Roosevelt also mentioned that "He had no objection to any U. S. action ... in Indochina as long as it did not involve any alignments with the French." In one seance with Stalin, Roosevelt laughed at De Gaulle's penchant for comparing himself with Joan of Arc. At the plenary sessions Churchill persisted in hammering for giving France an occupation zone of its own in Germany, plus membership on the Control Commission. At first Roosevelt would go along only with the first part. When Stalin privately asked him why even that much, Roosevelt answered "it was only out of kindness." Stalin and Molotov vigorously agreed. (Incidentally, Byrnes, whether by simple mistake or out of diplomacy, ascribes this remark about kindness to Molotov!) But before the conference closed Roosevelt conceded the rest of the proposition to Churchill, and Stalin thereupon immediately assented too.

Roosevelt's drive for a weak France on an atomized Continent is an integral part of the world strategy that produced Yalta. So kind, so good, so pure.

The conference is drawing to a close. The overlords of the world are at dinner: "Marshal Stalin then said he thought more time was needed to consider and finish the business of the conference.

"The President answered that he had three kings waiting for him in the Near East, including Ibn Saud." We would like to write stage directions for this dialogue.

"I've got three kings waiting for me," he says over the soup course, and rolls it on his tongue. Not necessarily in snobbishness or vainglory, just properly conscious of an overlord's power. The words should not be read off with special emphasis; they must be tossed out casually, as if saying, "Sorry, can't stay, I've got to catch a train." The three kings in his hand, with whom he had to deal, were Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia, Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and Farouk of Egypt. Another side of this tale was later told by Hopkins. Roosevelt had dropped the "three kings" on the table before a dinner table full

Churchill had to rein in his curiosity and suspicions. "Later that night," Hopkins narrates, "he, Churchill, sought me out, greatly disturbed and wanted to know what were the President's intentions in relation to these three sovereigns." Hopkins assured the worried prime minister that it was just "a lot of horse play," social stuff.

"Nothing I said, however, was comforting to Churchill because he thought we had some deep-laid plot to undermine the British Empire in these areas. The next day the Prime Minister told the President that he was also going into Egypt after a brief visit to Greece and see each of these sovereigns himself, and had already sent the messages asking them to remain in Egypt for conferences with him immediately after the President had left." (Sherwood, p. 871.) The aura that surrounds this incident, more amusing than important though it is, tells more about the politics at Yalta than yards of published commentary.

What was Churchill so worried about, that he trailed in a royal flush, after Roosevelt and the three kings? Plenty. Ethiopia was the least important; but it is worth mentioning that, during the war Britain was making valiant efforts to separate the Negus from some of his territory; in favor of adjoining British Somali land. He could do without Roosevelt getting into that friendly game.

Britain's apprehensions about Egypt, of course, are apparent in view of subsequent history.

As, for Ibn Saud, here was the most acute danger. Early in 1944 the American government, had negotiated a deal: \$25 million to Saudi Arabia for oil concessions to be turned over to Standard Oil and Texas. Oil; the U. S. to spend \$100 million to build a pipeline, for the companies; finally, the U. S to buy the oil at a price higher than oil on the domestic market. Where did this leave Britain in the area which had once been its stamping-ground? Churchill, Vol. 6, tells a story that must be heartrending to all Churchillian true-born Englishmen, if understood in this context. It seems on the surface to be only a bit of Eastern color.

When Ibn Saud came aboard Churchill's ship, he came bearing gifts to Churchill's party - magnificent perfumes and gems, costly robes, etc. Churchill had prepared gifts in return but he unexpectedly found himself so outclassed that he told the king that the real gift was going to be a super-deluxe bulletproof auto. Churchill explains that the Arab gifts, turned in by all the Englishmen to the Treasury, later paid for the special auto.

We need hardly add that no member of Churchill's entourage was unaware of the financial source of the expensive baubles that Ibn Saud was regally handing out to the ex-imperialist overlords of the area, as if to say, "Can you top this - you who have come trailing after Roosevelt?" Time heals all. Churchill's memoirs do not hint at the gall that rises in the throat and chokes. It was a fitting epilogue to Yalta.

The smell of oil hung over Yalta in another connection - Iran. Here there was a three-way conflict, though it had begun as part of the British-American war.

The British had long dominated Iranian Oil, but the American "foot in the door" was moving in. A large number of American advisers to the government were at large in the country: Millspaugh as Administrator General of Finance; A. B. Black for agrarian reform; Maj;-Gen. Ridley plus an officer staff for the Iranian army; and many others who were doing London no good.

Over a year before Yalta, Socony-Standard and Vacuum (American) and Shell (British) had both tried to get the Iranian government to give them concessions along the Afghan and Baluchistan borders.

The cabinet, under nationalist pressure refused, or anyway refused to choose, although the premier favored a grant to one or the other.

Then the Russians decided to deal-themselves in (all three allies had troops in the country). The Iranian government said: No concessions to anyone till later.

Russia started a campaign of pressure to get the northern oil fields; the Russian press denounced the government violently; pro-Stalinist demonstrations were organized in Iran: Moscow's Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs Kavtaradze threatened and stormed. The cabinet resigned in the crisis, under pressure. Among the Yalta papers is the report to Washington by Harriman, ambassador in Moscow, made only three weeks before the conference and thought important enough to be immediately put on Roosevelt's desk for his personal perusal.

Harriman described the Russian pressure on Iran and ominously mentioned.: "At the height of the controversy Izvestia asserted that there was no legal basis for the presence of American troops in Iran." After the fall of the cabinet, he concluded, the pressure from the Kremlin relaxed "but the Soviets made it clear that they did not intend to drop the issue."

Iran was one question on which Eden succeeded in caucusing with Stettinius at the Malta pre-conference; In face of the Russian push, in this case the Americans did agree to make a united front. The idea was to get Russian agreement on postponing all oil concessions in Iran till after the war. It never came to a head at Yalta because at the Foreign Ministers' sessions, Molotov made it clear no agreement was-possible.

At the Feb. 8 session Eden inaugurated the question: the Iranian government should be master in its own house, "otherwise the Allies might find themselves in competition in Iranian affairs." The British had no wish to veto oil concessions for Russia, if and when; Stettinius chimed in with the same reassurance. Molotov gave no ground: Russia still wanted to."persuade" Iran to change its mind; but he did say that "the situation was not acute at the present time".

In the course of talking, the record shows, he also said "Kavtaradze had returned and the strong-arm methods he had used have subsided." But two days later, when Eden and Stettinius tried to get him to join in any kind of communique on Iran, Molotov did his "bump on a log" act: No, nothing to add.... No, no communique... No, no reference to Iran whatsoever in any release.... The next day at luncheon Stalin made a swipe at Iran: "any nation which kept its oil in the ground and would not let it be exploited was, in fact, working against peace".

The issue of Iranian oil brings us to the side of American policy where the Russian Menace begun to assume weight as a counterpoise to the British Menace as we will see also in connection with Poland, although it was not until after Potsdam that the former began to outbalance the latter. So at this point we must turn attention from the western front, the British-American war, to the eastern war, namely, the British-Russian war, which represents the other thread to be disentangled from the Yalta record.

[Chapter 5. The Large Tick](#)

As you read the Yalta papers published by the State Department, you will find no important reference to Greece It was nowhere on the Yalta agenda. The record seems to show that at the plenary sessions there were only a couple of passing remarks made about Greece (though you also can't help noticing that these passing remarks are downright mysterious). It would seem that Greece played no role at Yalta.

You could not make a bigger mistake about Yalta.

The British-Russian war over Greece loomed big over the conference. The impact on the conference is a vital element in understanding the deal over Poland. To see why, we have to go back.

To begin with, the British interest in Greece is one of the world's most blatant examples of finance-capitalist imperialism. By the end of the Greek War of Independence of 1821, Greece owed British bankers 515 million, though she had actually borrowed only one third of-that amount. Between 1825 and 1898, Greek governments borrowed \$400 million from London banks (still getting only a fraction of this sum).

By 1945 all loans had been paid off sevenfold (interest, carrying charges, etc.) but the entire face sum of the debt was still owed to British-banks. Modern Greece (up to 1935 figures anyway) had been setting aside each year one-third of her total income for servicing these loans. Even during the depression of the '30s the British Shylocks forced Greece to pay in gold, although they themselves were off the gold standard. The money that the Greek government did receive from the loans went largely into maintaining an army and navy which served as a British adjunct. The poverty-stricken people of Greece were slaveys and bondsmen of British capital.

During the German occupation in World War II, of course, it was Hitler who took his turn at plundering and starving Greece. The British reinforced their hoops of gold on the Greek government in exile. The December 19 before Yalta, Chancellor of the Exchequer Anderson announced in Parliament that the Greeks had gotten \$185 million in loans during the war plus another \$71 million in market loans. Not long before Yalta, the British Foreign Office presented the Greek government with a memorandum calling on it to "safeguard the rights and securities enjoyed by external loans and to protect the general interests of the bondholders" and "maintain unchanged the rights, privileges and conditions of service which have applied to the government loans since 1898."

But the Greek government was not really in shape to safeguard, protect or ensure anything in Greece, least of all itself - against either the "liberating" Russian troops advancing down to the border from the north, or against the internal anti-Nazi resistance movement which was taking over control in Southern Greece as the German troops withdrew.

If Britain was going to preserve its golden goose in Greece, it would have to do it itself. This, of course, had been one strong factor behind the British desire that the second front should have been opened up through the Balkan "underbelly."

In October 1944 (this is four months before Yalta) Churchill flew to Moscow to settle the matter. This is the Moscow conference which we have already had occasion to mention in other connections. Churchill's main concern, however, was Greece. He landed October 9; met Stalin. in conference the same evening; and spread out his wares without beating about the bush.

Here is Churchill's own unforgettable account - one of the world's great classics: "The moment was apt for business, so I said, 'Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. Your armies are in Romania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions and agents there. Don't let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have 90 per cent predominance in Romania, for us to have 90 per cent of the say in Greece, and go 50-50 about Yugoslavia?'

"While this was being translated I wrote out on a half-sheet of paper:
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"Romania. Russia 90%. The others 10%

"Greece. Great Britain 90% (in accord with U.S.A.) Russia 10%

"Yugoslavia 50-50%

"Hungary. 50-50%

"Bulgaria. Russia 75%. The others 25%.

"I pushed this across to Stalin, who had by then heard the translation. There was a slight pause. Then, he took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it, and passed it back to us. It was all settled in no more time than it takes to set down...

"After this there was a long silence. The penciled paper lay in the center of the table. At length I said, 'Might it not be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an offhand manner? Let us burn the paper.'

"No, you keep it,' said Stalin." (P. 198.)

Two days later, still at Moscow, Churchill included the percentage figures on paper along with a note to Stalin.... "As I said, they would be considered crude, and even callous, if they were exposed to the scrutiny of the Foreign Offices and diplomats all over the world. Therefore they could not be the basis of any public document, certainly not at the present time." (P. 202.) In a week British troops were landing in Southern Greece to take over. Thus began the British invasion of the country.

Along with British howitzers came the quislings. King George (the same British hireling who, before the war, had replaced a democratically elected Greek government with the fascist dictator

Metaxas) and Premier Papandreou, the puppet leader of the "Liberal Party." A genuine national-revolutionary upsurge of the Greek people answered in massive protest, if anything held back by the leadership of the Stalinist heads of the EAM (liberation movement) and ELAS (its military arm) For a whole period the Stalinist leadership walked a tightrope between restraining or moderating anti-British action on the one hand and retaining its leadership of the angry masses on the other.

On Nov. 7, Churchill sent a memo to Eden: "In my opinion, having paid the price we have to Russia for freedom of action in Greece, we should not hesitate to use British troops to support Papandreou." (Churchill, Vol. 6, p. 250.) He hoped troops would "not hesitate to shoot when necessary." Open civil war began December 3; the police executed a cold-blooded machine-gun massacre of an unarmed demonstration of men, women and children.

The correspondent for the N. Y. Post and Overseas News Agency cabled home: "without provocation." In his book Churchill takes responsibility for the orders to shoot: "It is no use doing things like this by halves." He wired the British general: "Do not, however, hesitate to act as if you were in a conquered city where a local rebellion is in progress." He explains proudly that he "had in mind Arthur Balfour's celebrated telegram in the 80s to the British authorities in Ireland: 'Don't hesitate to shoot.'"

The whole world cried out in outrage against this open, crude, brutal rape of a nation, which is not surpassed by any of Britain's previous crimes or by any of Stalin's before or since. Churchill himself writes that "the vast majority of the American press violently condemned our action." In England even the London Times as well as the Manchester Guardian pronounced their censures. In Parliament the attack was led by Acland, Bevan, Shinwell (the Attlee Laborite coalitionists stood with the assassins like a rock).

But - "Stalin, however, adhered strictly and faithfully to our agreement of October, and during all the long weeks of fighting the Communists in the streets of Athens not one word of reproach came from Pravda or Izvestia".

We have already seen that in this climate of shocked world opinion, Stettinius made a statement to dissociate the U. S. from the heinous crime, at least by implication; even though at the very same time the U. S. command in Italy was helping the British invasion of Greece by sending planes. We have also seen that Churchill was outraged by American hypocrisy. Sherwood says that about this time "he felt that another Big Three conference must be held without a moment's delay." But in the last analysis it was Stalin who saved Britain's bacon. Churchill was absolutely convinced (and every historian must agree) that Moscow faithfully executed its deal and did everything possible to quench the revolutionary fire in Greece short of losing leadership of the mass movement.

Being no idiot, Churchill knew why fighting still went on. In January he stated that the British troops were preventing a situation - "... in which all forms of government would have been swept away, and naked, triumphant Trotskyism installed. I think Trotskyism is a better definition of Greek Communism and certain other sects than the normal word. It has the advantage of being equally hated in Russia." By "Trotskyism" he simply meant revolutionary workers not subservient to Moscow. Trotskyist groups were not in control. Churchill understood that Moscow had to be gingerly in putting on its straitjacket.

He also understood that, if even now the British stake in Greece could be preserved only by the most ruthless terror, even this terror would not serve were the Kremlin to change the CP's signal from "all brakes on" to "open up the throttle." We have seen the stake that Greece represented for this empire in decline. We have seen the blood that Churchill unhesitatingly let spurt in order to save this stake. We have seen the world-wide contumely that he grimly faced in order to do his imperialist duty.

And therefore we have also seen the biggest single reason why, chafing and dragging feet, Churchill found it impossible at Yalta to dig his heels into the ground and make a stand against the Russian rape of Poland.

Even Churchill, even he who acutely realized the danger of Russian domination of the Continent, unlike the U.S. statesmen who were pursuing their own imperialist business of chopping down Britain while Britain was slicing off Greece.

It is this divided interest of the British watchdog of empire which made it impossible for him to agree to the Russian fate for Poland while at the same time he was forced to tolerate what he knew was happening and was going to happen.

It was torn minds like this, on the part of the Western side, which at Yalta was translated into the surface ambiguity of the conference decisions - even though, as we shall prove, neither Churchill nor Roosevelt were naive about what had been decided de facto.

On two occasions Stalin had to twist Churchill's arm for a reminder. These are the otherwise mysterious references to Greece actually recorded.

At the 5th plenary session, while the Polish question was still sticking, Stalin suddenly inquired from Churchill what was happening in Greece. In reply Churchill mentioned the British trade-union delegation to Greece [safe social-imperialists], said he had not yet seen, their report but understood "that they had had rather a rough time in Greece and they were very much obliged to Marshal-Stalin for not having taken too great an interest in Greek affairs. I thank the Marshal for his help." "I only wanted to know for information. We have no intention of intervening there in any way," said Stalin.

At the 6th plenum, Molotov made an amendment to a conference document on liberated Europe, to the effect that the Big Three would support those elements which had fought against the Nazis. The other 'Two' opposed it, naturally understanding that it could only be a legal cover for giving the Stalinist quislings in East Europe official sanction. Molotov later withdrew the amendment without fuss since it had been made in the first place only to bare teeth in a warning snarl.

In the discussion on this amendment, Matthews' minutes capture a priceless vignette, a seemingly irrelevant interlude, which we reproduce textually:

"STALIN (to Churchill who was about to say something): 'Are you worried about Greece?' (laughing)." Churchill denied that he was feeling anxious.

Bohlen's minutes add: "Marshal Stalin said he thought it would have been very dangerous if he had allowed other forces than his own to go into Greece." (He may have been referring to Tito's troops.) And so the mute deal was consummated: a Greece for a Poland.

There were two sequels: (1) On the day that the Yalta agreement was announced, it was also announced to the world that the ELAS Stalinist leaders had accepted a pact with the Greek government to disarm its fighters.

(2) Reporting to Parliament in defense of the Yalta sellout of Poland, Churchill made the connection as openly as one has a right to expect: "I felt bound to proclaim my confidence in Soviet good faith in the hope of procuring it. In this I was encouraged by Stalin's behavior about Greece."

Chapter 6. Peace and Quiet

Coming now directly to the Polish phase of the Yalta agenda, we have in effect already explained the political motivations behind the sellout. But of course, it may be objected that no sellout has yet been shown.

In fact, do not the liberals and other Democrats insist on the story that Roosevelt left Yalta convinced that Poland had been saved from the bear's clutches, that the only trouble was that Russia later violated the agreement, and that no-one could have known better at the time, and that the outcries are being made today on the basis of "20-20 hindsight"? Who could have known, they ask? Should Roosevelt have irresponsibly broken the precious Big Three unity simply out of suspicion?

It can be proved up to the hilt that when Roosevelt and Churchill left Yalta, they knew that Poland was: a goner. There is room here only to summarize the evidence. The point involved is not simply to impugn the sincerity of their protestations, for we have already seen more than enough reason not to worry about the public sincerity or morality of these gentlemen, but to exhibit the political meaning of the Yalta deal which is only obscured by the liberal myth.

To be sure, it is not decisive merely to point out that Roosevelt had no right to have any illusions about Russia's intentions for Poland: He was dealing with the brigands who had already joined in the

ravishment of Poland in alliance with Hitler! If that is considered water under the bridge, then we must point out that by the time of Yalta the Stalinist totalitarian terror in Poland was in full swing and known to the whole world. If we were merely to list the already known acts of forceful suppression and purging of all opponents, including even (already!) the purging of the first Stalinists, there are few people who would seriously consider the theory that adult statesmen could keep blinding themselves to the obvious. The month before Yalta, the Moscow embassy (Harriman) had sent in an adequate report on the Polish terror.

Was Roosevelt really naive about this? In a Roosevelt memo to Stettinius dated Sept. 29, 1944, we read the following realistic statement of his attitude: "In regard to the Soviet government, it is true that we have no idea as yet what they have in mind, but we have to remember that in their occupied territory they will do more or less what they wish. We cannot afford to get into a position of merely recording protests on our part unless there is a chance of some of the protests being heeded."

This is a statement of 'Roosevelt's strategy of not fighting Russian demands on East Europe, in the name of that hallowed Big Three unity which was necessary to organize the world. Should the Polish people be so narrow-minded and parochial as to get in the way of this glorious objective? Surely Stalin left him with little reason to misunderstand at Yalta. At the 3rd plenum, Stalin made his long speech on the subject, including: .

"Now as a military man I must say what I demand of a country liberated by the Red Army. First, there should be peace and quiet in the wake of the army... When I compare the agents of both governments I find that the Lublin ones are useful and the others the contrary. The military must have peace and quiet. The military will support such a government and I cannot do otherwise. Such is the situation."

How much more brutal did Stalin have to get before he could be sure that Roosevelt understood? Moreover, in advance of Yalta the State Department had already conceded the following in black on white in its own Briefing Book: that the U. S. "probably would not oppose predominant Soviet influence in the area" but wished that American

influence not be "completely nullified." The latter phrase was spelled out to include "some degree" of commercial and financial access to the Polish economy.

After Yalta, Leahy writes, "Personally I did not believe that the dominating Soviet influence could be excluded from Poland, but I did not think it was possible to give to a reorganized Polish government an external appearance of independence." (P. 352.) Isn't that frank? Leahy testifies that he told Roosevelt at Yalta, "Mr. President this [agreement on Poland] is so elastic that the Russians can stretch it all the way from Yalta to Washington without ever technically breaking it." Roosevelt replied: "I know, Bill - I know it. But it's the best I can do for Poland at this time." (P. 315-6.) Leahy may be charged with predating hindsight, but he cannot be charged with trying to smear Roosevelt by misquotation.

After the agreement was made, the Yalta record has Churchill saying painfully: "CHURCHILL: Wants to say declaration] re Pol [and] will be very heavily attacked in Eng. It will be said we have yielded completely on the frontiers and the whole matter to R[ussia] - However I will defend it to the best of my ability." It does not sound like a man who believes he has saved Poland. He sounds like the beaten man he was.

No different impression emerges from Churchill's report to Parliament where he tried to defend it "to the best of my ability." I refuse to discuss Russian good faith, he said. It is a mistake to look too far ahead, he said! What is democracy after all, he asked!...He does not sound like a naive man.

It is possible to document the charge that Churchill and Roosevelt never even tried to fight for the proposals which they themselves thought were vital to assure Poland's independence.

At the October Moscow conference, Churchill had laid down a sine qua non: "After the Kremlin dinner we put it bluntly to Stalin that unless Mikolajczyk had 50-50 plus himself, the Western World would not be convinced that the transaction was bona fide and would, not believe that an independent Polish government had been set up." (To Roosevelt. Churchill, Vol. 6 p. 210.) This proposal sine qua non was never even breathed at Yalta.

The State Department's pre-Yalta Briefing Book said that in order to achieve free elections in Poland, we should sponsor United Nations arrangements for their supervision. This proposal was never even breathed at Yalta.

At Yalta itself, after the 1st plenum, Churchill wired Attlee: "If it can be so arranged that 8 or 10 of these [non-Stalinist Poles] are included in the Lublin government it would be to our advantage to recognize this government at once." (Churchill, Vol. 6, p. 328.) But the record shows that neither he nor Roosevelt ever proposed adding that number of non-Stalinists! The record does show that the U. S. did put forward a proposal to replace the Polish president with a "presidential committee" of three. The record also shows that it never fought for this proposal, which the Russians rejected immediately, and quickly abandoned it.

After Yalta, the State Department soothed Polish Ambassador Ciechanowski with the claim that the U. S. would insist on a new Polish government that was "equally balanced." (Ciechanowski, p. 361.) This was a falsehood; it had never been mentioned at Yalta.

Stettinius' book on Yalta is a straight apologia, but he admits: "As a result of this military situation, it was not a question of what Great Britain and the U. S. would permit Russia to do in Poland, but what the two countries could persuade the Soviet Union to accept." What then was the bargaining at Yalta about? It is as plain as an oversize pikestaff that the Two were holding out for the best possible window-dressing for what they knew was a foregone conclusion.

It took the form mainly of a prolonged higgledy-haggle over the wording of the agreement on the Polish government which all were to recognize. It boiled down to this: the Russians held out for wording which meant a mere reorganization based on the present Lublin government, with non-Stalinists added, while Britain held out for wording which would imply that a brand-new government was being set up; and Roosevelt mainly reminded them both that only terminology was involved and they ought to get together.

That is all, absolutely all. that the main disagreement amounted to. The final text used some language ("new situation," "new government") that the British might be able to use, while it clearly defined the government in the Russian terms (the Lublin government

"reorganized on a broader democratic basis . . ."). Churchill won another hunk of window-dressing when Stalin finally agreed that Mikolajczyk would be defined as "non-fascist" and permitted to participate in the government!

The strange thing is that the Yalta record quotes Churchill himself as referring to the window-dressing character of the dispute: "He said this might be an ornament, but nevertheless an important ornament." And here, of course, we also have the significance of Roosevelt's repeated appeals to Stalin to keep in mind the Polish-American vote. (At the 3rd plenum, Roosevelt used this apropos of his request to Stalin to make a deviation from the Curzon line: "There are 6 or 7 million Poles in the U. S - Most Poles, like the Chinese, want to save face.... It would make it easier for me at home if the Soviet government would give something to Poland.")

It was at the 6th plenum that Roosevelt made his appeal for a "gesture" on the government-composition question to appease the Poles back home: "He said he felt it was very important for him in the U. S. that there be some gesture made for the 6 million Poles there, indicating that the U. S. was in some way involved with the question of freedom of elections.... He repeated that he felt, however, that it was only a matter of words and details..."

No, the facts leave no doubt as to the nature of the Yalta bargaining on the Polish question. Sellout is a dirty word, to be sure. Anyone has a right to argue that Roosevelt and Churchill were justified in selling out - pardon, neglecting Poland's rights in order to achieve more important ends labeled "Big Three unity," like Big Three unity on the rape of Greece, like Big Three unity on dividing Rumania 90-10, like Big Three unity on the suppression of small nations and colonies.

But no one has the right any longer to take seriously the myth that Roosevelt and Churchill were country boys who bought a Polish goldbrick from the Moscow city-slicker.

[Chapter 7. Strange Banners](#)

"They played excellent music and carried strange-looking banners, the meaning of which was not apparent to me." Thus Leahy described the Russian band that met the Roosevelt party when they landed for the Yalta conference. You can take this as the symbol of Yalta.

We wrote above that Roosevelt and Churchill were not, deceived about the meaning of the Polish deal. But no one can defend Roosevelt from the charge of being taken for a ride if, paradoxically, the charge is only made broad enough. He was not taken in on Poland, but he was taken in on the struggle for the world.

One of the eeriest scenes in the Yalta record is not from the recent publication but from Churchill, who records a toast made by Stalin on the evening of Feb. 8, when many a toast was drunk, although Byrnes suspected Vishinsky of watering his vodka. It is hard to say whether Stalin was getting a bit maudlin or whether it was just his usual style. (Churchill remarks: "I had never suspected that he could be so expansive.") Stalin began: "I am talking as an old man; that is why I am talking so much. But I want to drink to our alliance...[How wonderfully intimate it is!]...I know that some circles will regard this remark as naive. In an alliance the allies should not deceive each other. Perhaps that is naive? Experienced diplomatists may say, 'Why should I not deceive my ally?' But I as a naive man think it best not to deceive my ally, even if he is a fool. . . ."

"Even if he is a fool...."! Anyone acquainted with Stalin's mode of thought and style cannot avoid feeling that at this strange moment, standing knowingly on the verge of power such as few conquerors have wielded over the world, the old butcher could no longer contain the chortling contempt for his allies that slipped out.

He was not unjustified. It is true that he happily faced a whole stratum of American policy-makers (bipartisan in makeup) who were so intent on inheriting the British Empire that they could not see what was happening in the world. It is true that the Americans undoubtedly told themselves that Russia, bled white by Germany, would be near-prostrate after the war and could not offer a serious menace to the U. S. For they viewed Russia solely as just another imperialist power, like any other, understanding no more than America's rulers do today that Stalinism's weapons against the old capitalist societies are not primarily military, the military being auxiliary to the political dynamism of its anti-capitalist appeal.

And if Roosevelt and the U. S. delegation were really exultant after Yalta, as Sherwood states, it was because they were wallowing in the conception that they had succeeded in forging a "Big Three unity" that could organize the whole world under its suzerainty, while the

United States colossus of wealth and power would be the arbiter of the Three, precisely the role which Roosevelt systematically and deliberately sought to play at Yalta. To shoot at this status of Chairman of the Board of Earth, Inc., the U. S. could not do without "Big Three unity."

And so they had to believe that it was also possible; that is, that it was possible to achieve a "normal" imperialist relationship with the imperialist rival Russia as with the imperialist rival Britain, within the "normal" framework of power politics, registering the existing relationship of forces.

A "normal" imperialist relation with Stalinist Russia? We have a term for it today. It means exactly the same as the famous "peaceful coexistence." The GOP dinosaurs - who are against "peaceful coexistence" on reactionary grounds, i.e., because they want a more warlike policy against Russia - are well advised from their standpoint to make Yalta their cussword.

But there was no pro-Stalinism or treason at Yalta.

The basic fact is that always, in whatever form, the bourgeois statesmen know only the choice between attempting an imperialist peace with rivals. (Yalta) or drifting or driving toward imperialist war with rivals (Truman-Eisenhower).

And in either case the American would-be rulers of the declining capitalist world have shown the political stigmata of declining ruling classes: disorientation, and blindness, which often look like stupidity, and ignorance.

Before Yalta, this meant they had not the slightest understanding of what Stalinism is, and they still haven't, though they have painfully learned by the contusions on their rear that it is at any rate an irreconcilable enemy of capitalism.

In the Second World War climate of American power politics, there was a whole generation; of liberals and others who were sitting-ducks for the Stalinists' planned, campaign to convince the Americans that they were on their way back to capitalism like respectable folk. According to Ciechanowski (p. 249) Stalin utilized the Teheran conference to fill up Roosevelt with such a load of this sucker bait

that the latter exuded it from his pores. And everyone knows Roosevelt's reference at Yalta to the Chinese Stalinists as "the so-called Communists."

Just before Yalta, Molotov had (confidentially!) disclosed to Hurley that "Russians are not supporting Chinese Communists who are not Communists at all"; Hurley had rushed, to send this revelation to Washington, whence Roosevelt had already left; Washington hurled the sensation via the ether to Roosevelt at Yalta, who got the glad tidings on Feb. 5.

All this required no "conspiracy" in the McCarthy-Knowland sense; the political soil was thirsty for it.

American imperialism, with its world strategy, needed a rationale, a theory, that made room for its version of "Big Three unity," And if the actual elaboration of this theory was a friendly collaboration of good patriots and good Stalinoids, the details of its creation are of secondary interest.

Today the right wing of American imperialism is pushing toward another war, this time (they think) really to settle the matter of world domination. And the liberals, who today have no more idea than they ever had of how to counterpose a democratic foreign policy to the Truman-Eisenhower policy of imperialism, cannot understand the nature of this imperialism they support even when it is practically spelled out for them by the men who divided up the world at Yalta.

It is a psychological as well as a political fact; only those who are ready to struggle against them are ready to understand, down to the bottom, the nature of the rival imperialist camps that are battling for the right to exploit the world, capitalist and Stalinist imperialism.

Only those who look to the victory of a third camp, opposed to both imperialisms, can afford to dissect, and not whitewash, the cynical crimes of the rulers on both sides of the cold war.