

Thirty-three Years Backward and Forward

By WALTER JOHANNES STEIN

IT SEEMS to be not only the sequence of the years but the change from generation to generation, which is the decisive factor in the unrolling of world-history. Three generations occupy a century. Strange to say, many things happening in the world to-day are not a continuation of the conditions of yesterday, but of those that prevailed thirty-three years ago.

Even the Press has from time to time become aware of this fact, although without observing that there is a definite law of thirty-three years- Let us consider the present world-situation from this point of view.

Thirty-three years ago, just one generation before our own, a treaty was made between France and England. France recognized England's rights in Egypt, and in return England recognized the rights of France in Morocco. This was the beginning of the "Entente Cordiale." The strip of coast opposite to Gibraltar was given to Spain, so that France should not occupy the land immediately adjoining the Straits. Tangier was internationalized for thirty years, with the proviso that at the end of the thirty years it should remain international for another five years. In this distribution of the North African regions, Germany was not taken into account, and there followed the Moroccan crises of the years 1905 and 1911. Germany complained of having been left out, and in 1905 the Kaiser made his sensational landing at Tangier. The outcome was the Algeciras Conference, in which England, France, Germany, and Austria took part, and which resulted in guaranteeing the economic internationalization of Morocco under the sovereignty of the Sultan, with recognition of the especial interests of France.

In 1911 there came the Agadir incident-the appearance of the German gunboat *Panther* for the "protection" of German interests. Great Britain supported France, and only after long negotiations was agreement reached between France and Germany. One generation later that is, if we take the year 1904 as the starting-point of these events-Spanish Morocco becomes the base of General Franco's invasion of Spain, and Germany once more announces her economic claims in Morocco.

Thirty-three years before, Great Britain had opened out for Spain the way into Morocco, so as to form a buffer state between French Morocco and Gibraltar. To-day Great Britain has to be on her guard against a feared German intervention in Morocco. In his last speech the German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, explained that Germany seeks nothing more than economic penetration, and has no territorial claims in Morocco.

The founding of Spanish Morocco—not in accordance with the conditions inherent in the development of Spain herself-has in the sequel proved to be nothing but a source of difficulties for Spain, nay more, a danger to the stability of Europe. Spain was not equal to the task of governing her newly won colony, and every time this issue became acute, revolutionary, troubles broke out in the Motherland. This happened, for example, during the Riff wars in 1909 and again in 1923. It was in 1923, after the rising instigated by Abd el Krim in Morocco, that the crisis set in in Spain which was only brought to an end by Primo de Rivera's military dictatorship. It is interesting in this connection that General Franco, who came to the fore in the quelling of the aforesaid insurrections, has now used Spanish Morocco as a basis for his invasion of Spain. It is scarcely to be wondered at if National Socialist Germany feels in sympathy with Franco. And it is no less natural that France is interested in the other side.

The conflict of 1904 has in the meantime worked itself out in such a way as to aggravate again and again the relations between France and Germany. Even in the World War, more than seventy thousand Moroccans fought against the Germans, and after the War was over Moroccan regiments were left behind as garrison troops in the Rhineland.

The two violently antithetic movements of to-day, Communism and Fascism, have both found entry into Spain, because the aforesaid difficulties have created there a favourable ground for such conflicts. As a counterpart to these events in Western Europe in the year 1904, there were the simultaneous events in the Far East—once again, thirty-three years ago. The war between Russia and Japan broke out in the year 1904. To-day, after thirty-three years, Japan is fighting for the further development of what she gained by her victory in the war with Russia. Manchuria, which Japan at that time was only able to occupy temporarily, is now an "independent State" under Japanese tutelage, and the influence of Japan is even penetrating Mongolia and China. During the last year the conflict between Japan and Russia has become most acute. Germany, which is to-day in strong opposition to Russia, has entered into a treaty for a combined attack against Russian Bolshevism.

The Treaty between England and Japan also shows the thirty-three years' rhythm. Formed in 1902, it came to an end in 1935.

For National Socialist Germany the pact between France and Russia has become a decisive factor. Hitler's view is that when a State enters into relation with a Bolshevik country it must become Bolshevik itself. The tendency of France towards the Left (the Blum Government and the continued negotiation with the Communists) has strengthened him in this opinion.

At the same time the Spanish Government was inclining more and more towards the Left, and with the onslaught of Franco's military revolution became completely Communist. At this point the Spanish Government receives the sympathy of France and Russia; it is not by chance that the gold of the Madrid Government is in Paris.

In considering the general world situation of 1936-7 we should remember that we are living thirty-three years after the founding of the "Entente Cordiale." This brought Great Britain, France, and Russia into collaboration. The Moroccan agreement formed only part of this great *entente*, the "Triple Entente" which was destined to play so large a part in the history of Europe.

The seed of this *entente*, which was only entered into later by Great Britain, was sown by the alliance between France and Russia. The Russian-French collaboration was renewed in 1935.

In 1904 Great Britain turned away from Germany and towards France and Russia. This change was largely due to the Kaiser's attitude. Thirty-three years after these events, Great Britain is once again brought face to face with similar decisions. It is therefore of great importance that we should understand the true mission of Europe as a whole, so that history may not repeat itself. Today the important thing is no longer the grouping of peoples for or against one another; it is to realize the need for the collaboration of all. It is helpful to look back not only to 1904, but to 1871, once again thirty-three years' back, that is to say, two generations before our own.

What happened in 1871? On January 18, 1871, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, the German Empire was proclaimed. On January 30, 1937, Germany withdrew her signature from the Treaty of Versailles of 1919. To-day once more—thirty-three years after the founding of the *Reich-Germany* stands before the decisive question: will she now find her right place amid the chorus of the other nations? Nietzsche commented on the event of 1871: he hoped the founding of the German *Reich* would not lead to the extirpation of the German spirit! Nietzsche realized that Germany has a cultural mission to fulfill and was apprehensive when he saw her taking on a highly political mission. It was indeed the political aspirations of Germany which eventually brought her into conflict with England. At that time the need was becoming clearer and clearer to find the way from the national economies of single countries to an all-embracing world-economy. Instead, there arose a cut-throat competition between Great Powers for "a place in the sun."

All the political successes of Germany in the last years-the way she has reoccupied the Rhineland, re-armed, and shaken off the Treaty of Versailles-must be regarded as a repetition of the sudden rise of the German Empire sixty-six years ago. No wonder France fears a renewal of the war of 1870! It may be mentioned as an interesting fact that the famous telegram of Ems, which set the ball rolling in the Franco-Prussian War of that time, came about because the Prince of Hohenzollern was not allowed by France to accept the Spanish crown. Even at that time it was over Spain that France and Germany came into conflict.

Another perspective is opened out when we consider the Italian "Empire," founded in 1936 by the annexation of Abyssinia. It was in 1870-twice thirty-three years before 1936-that the united Kingdom of Italy was founded.

Germany and Italy were both of them founded in 1870. Twice thirty-three years later, both of them came into European history with especial power, the one as a newly founded "Empire," the other under the rulership of the "Fuehrer."

The contemplation of these events teaches us that at the present moment it is important for Great Britain no longer to uphold a policy of alliances, setting one group of states against another in a balance of political power. Great Britain should realize that the present crisis can never be solved in a purely political way. Political methods of this kind can only bring about war, or at the most postpone it for a time, as they are ,now doing with a success we must be very thankful for. But we need more than this temporary relief. New and constructive measures are necessary, measures which will not allow history merely to repeat itself.

In the year 1879, Marshall pointed out in his *Economic for Industry* that from thenceforward we should no longer speak of National Economy, but of Economy pure and simple-that is, World-Economy. Since 1871 the world has moved on towards the insight which Eden put into words when he said that no people could be happy unless all other peoples were happy too. This is to express the fundamental moral view of World-Economy, which tends not to the founding of new Empires, but towards economic life embracing the whole earth as one. If we add this to the good will which Roosevelt has shown so widely in the Pan-American Congress, much will be done for the good of mankind as a whole.

Great Britain in co-operation with America-a union of the old and the new worlds-could build up the foundations for a world-wide science with practical economic results embracing all peoples.

Great Britain's relationship with India quite evidently involves a spiritual mission. India is the cradle of all religions and of the most ancient wisdom. Should the East, in the grip of Japan, also make the mistake of falling into mere political channels, she would be untrue to her spiritual mission. Many of Europe's past failures could be made good again if the East could be shown that the West is prepared, even with religious enthusiasm, to tackle economic problems for the sake of all mankind.

It is not only Religion but Education, too, which must become the instrument of all mankind. Today it serves to set nations at war against each other. It is a great aim, so to educate mankind that thirty-three years after the present time there may be men and women who will be capable of uniting in one nature, religious enthusiasm and economic common sense.

Such men and women alone can be the bearers of a true democracy, for they will not see the world from the point of view of rulers and ruled; they will behold the creative spirit which does not rule but forms and builds by educating. And they will see the Earth as that which gives to all men the foundation of brotherhood, to be administered by the several faculties of all. Humanity, the Earth and the Individual will be sacred to them, and the objective of the social order will no longer be strife and war, but progress and mutual consideration.