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THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE
FIRST AND SECOND COALITION 1792-1799

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Document
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PREFACE

The foreign policy of a country cannot be treated as an absolute entity, separate from all other activities of life. Social problems, political institutions, economic situations, and religious and cultural affairs all contribute to the shaping of a nation's foreign policy. Since diplomatic history primarily deals with the relations between different states, any significant change in the internal or external policies of one state would necessarily have its effect on other states. It is impossible, therefore, to study British foreign policy in the last decade of the eighteenth century in regard to the First and Second Coalitions without dealing with the affairs and problems which formed the foreign policies of the other member states of the Coalitions. Equally important is the fact that these Coalitions were essentially formed for the purpose of checking, by force, France's revolutionary principles and rising strength. Therefore, light should be shed on those most important developments of the Revolution and their effect on the European politics. Also, since the major purpose of the formation of these Coalitions was a military one, it becomes necessary to deal with the military operations that determined the development and fate of these Coalitions.

The aim of this work is not to give an extensive set of facts concerning the diplomatic relations or to dwell upon the details of the military operations. This information can be found in numerous sources. This work is, instead, an attempt

to study the factors that influenced the British foreign policy in this period, the elements which decided its trends, and the forces which controlled its execution. Still more important is to determine the causes which led the British foreign policy in that period to that particular course of action. Also, this work attempts to study the attitudes and policies of the major European states in regard to those Coalitions.

Most of the forces that directed European diplomatic relations in the last decade of the eighteenth century were only a continuation of the policies that had been developed over a long period. Each of the major European powers had its traditional line of policy in regard to its own sphere of interests and its relations with other countries. The study of these different lines of policy and their conflict or agreement with each other is essential in order to fulfill the purpose of this work. Since the major task of this work is to deal with British foreign policy, it is natural then to put more stress on the diplomatic relations between each of the continental powers and England. Having given attention to all these points, it is hoped that this work has achieved its purpose.

THE BACKGROUND

Uneasy Peace

Throughout the eighteenth century Europe was in an almost continuous state of war. England was making her colonial empire, and Prussia and Russia were developing dynastic states by means that might be described as systematic warfare. Spain was losing much of her empire and, accordingly, her seat as a first rate power. Although France emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century as the feared power in Europe, her energies were divided between building up a colonial empire overseas and being a predominant power in Europe. Thus, the periods of general peace in this century were as short as they were few. Distrust and jealousy were a general rule in the relations between the different European states. Each was only too ready to take offense at the other's real or supposed strength and prosperity.

The Treaty of Versailles, sealed in November, 1763, brought a definite close to the American war, in which Great Britain had been engaged for more than seven years. A new epoch of the American continent, Europe, and Great Britain was opened with the frank and restricted recognition of the sovereignty and independence of the United States of America. This recognition was stated in the first article of the Treaty of Versailles.

Art. 1: His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States.....to be free, sovereign and independent states, that he treats with them as such; and for himself, his heirs, and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government propriety, and territorial rights of the same, and every part of thereof, and that all disputes which

might arise in future on the subject of boundaries of the said United States, may be prevented, it is hereby¹ that the following are and shall be their boundaries....

The Treaty of Versailles was not one but four separate treaties between Great Britain on the one hand and the United States, France, Holland, and Spain, respectively, on the other. France, although triumphant, did not obtain as many valuable concessions as she had expected. Her gains were in the West Indies where she received Saint Pierre and Miquelon, and in Africa where she received Senegal and Gorce. She also took Tobago in exchange for Dominica and restored her commercial stations in India. In addition, England acknowledged the rights of the French to the fisheries in Newfoundland. Spain received Minorca and East Florida, while Great Britain regained the Bahama Islands and got the right of cutting log wood in the Bay of Honduras. England, however, held firm on the question of Gibraltar and refused to barter it for any valuable compensation that the Spanish offered. Holland recovered all her colonies with the exception of Negapatam.²

Great Britain emerged from the American war without allies. Her prestige and place in the councils of Europe had sunk to the lowest point in centuries. The British finance was demoralized and disorganized. Ireland and India had called for legislative treatment, and commerce was strangled by an antiquated fiscal code that fostered smuggling and bred administrative incompetence. Economic reform had not proved to be a controversial

¹Hansard's Debates (1066-1918), XXIII, (New York: Readex Microprint, 1961), p. 355.

²Ibid., XXIII, pp. 359-369.

issue between warring parties, but an imperative political and financial necessity.³ The anxiety and disappointment which prevailed in Great Britain as a result of the loss of the United States were better expressed by George III in his speech to the Parliament in December, 1782.

In thus admitting their separation from the crown of these kingdoms, I have sacrificed every consideration of my own, to the wishes and opinion of my people. I make it my humble and earnest prayer to Almighty God, that Great Britain may not feel the evils which might result from so great a dismemberment of the empire, and, so America may be free from those calamities which have formerly proved in the mother country how essential monarchy is to the enjoyment of constitutional liberty.⁴

If Great Britain had suffered much from the American war, her opponents had suffered also. France and Spain had achieved a costly revenge, while Great Britain could more easily pay for her defeat than they could for their victory. France's state of finance was a difficult position, and this was one of the major reasons for the Revolution. If America's independence was a hard blow to the British Empire, it was also a notable example to the colonies of the other powers. American freedom was not so satisfactory a prospect to Spain. France, indeed, did not welcome the large concessions with which Great Britain sought to conciliate the feelings of Spain. Meantime, Spain was not able to close her eyes to the fact that she had lost a part of her

³ Sir Charles Grant Robertson, England Under the Hanoverians (New York: Methuen and Co., LTD., 1958. 1st ed. 1911), pp. 306-307.

⁴ Hansard's Debates, op. cit., XXIII, p. 207.

own country, Gibraltar.⁵

The Treaty of 1783 was a sign confronting England showing the need for a new departure, a healing and constructive policy. The popular voice, expressed in the election of 1784, like the King's friends and the orthodox opposition, expressed a conviction that the new ideals and the new methods would come only, if at all, from a new man. This man would be William Pitt. Pitt inherited from his father, Lord Chatham, not only his famous name but also many of his qualities and ambitions as well. From an early age Pitt aroused great expectations. He inherited from his father the gift of oratory, a high degree of patriotism, the serene confidence in his capacity to lead the proved spirit that neither feared nor flattered flesh. Events proved him to be neither a great administrator nor a great war minister; but as a leader of a party and as a parliamentary master in the eighteenth century, he was surpassed by no other leader. This ambition was unlimited. He loved power with the same dynamic passion as his devotion to parliamentary life. At the age of twenty-five he became a prime minister. When he died in 1806, he had been at the head of the government for a longer period than any other British statesman except Walpole. No political leader before or since his day has spent such a brief period of political life out

⁵E. A. Benians, "The Beginning of the New Empire, 1783-1793," in John Holland Rose et al., editors, The Cambridge History of the British Empire II, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 3-4. This will hereafter be cited as Benians.

of office. He dominated Parliament as well as the crown and country by the sheer force of his character and ability which placed him in a lonely class by himself.⁶

When the Marquis of Rockingham had taken North's place as Prime Minister in March, 1782, and when the new Prime Minister died in July of the same year, Shelburne became head of the administration. Shelburne's major task was to carry on the negotiations for the preliminaries of the Peace of Versailles. In February, 1783, Fox and North formed a coalition and opposed the terms of the peace. Thus, the Shelburne government lost its majority in the House of Commons, and the King was forced to give office to coalition leaders. In November, 1783, the new government of North and Fox accepted almost unchanged the peace which they had condemned. The King was not pleased with the conduct of this administration, and when Fox's India Bill was defeated in the House of Lords, the King seized the opportunity and dismissed the government. Pitt was chosen as the new Prime Minister in December, 1783. He carried on the government for a few weeks in minority; finally he asked the King to dissolve Parliament. In the new Parliament, Pitt gained a substantial majority.⁷

It is doing Pitt no injustice to say that in the earlier years of his administration he was concerned more with domestic questions than with foreign affairs. The Peace of 1783 gave him the time necessary to repair his vessel so that at some future

⁶Robertson, op. cit., pp. 307-308.

⁷Benians, op. cit., p. 4.

date the ship might once more take to the seas. He had, indeed, to restore vital warmth and consistence to the shattered fragments of empire. He had, therefore, at once applied himself to place on a permanent and workable footing those complicated relations with Ireland which had been hurriedly adjusted under the pressure of defeat in America. He had to strain every nerve to restore the ruined finance of the country which was always the object of his political life.⁸

In the financial field Pitt was the pupil of Adam Smith. The chief characteristics of the budget of 1784 were the following: the raising of revenue and the crippling of smuggling by a scientific rearrangement of the tariff; the duty on tea was reduced from nineteen per cent to twelve and a half per cent; the excise on home produce was raised; the duty on imported brandy was lowered; and the deficit in revenue was met by a variety of new taxes. Next year the deficit had dropped to 1,000,000 pounds, which Pitt met by a loan from the Bank of England and by throwing the net of taxation still wider. These measures led up to the famous Sinking Fund of 1786. The nation was led to believe that this would, by automatic magic, extinguish the national debt. The fund was to be created by the establishment of a Board of Commissioners, independent of Parliament and Ministry, to whom 1,000,000 pounds was assigned

⁸Lord Rosebury, Archibald Philip Primrose, Pitt, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1893, 1st. ed. 1891), p. 99. This will hereafter be cited as Rosebury, Pitt.

annually for the purchase of stock. Each million would thus accumulate at compounded interest, and simple arithmetic seemed to prove that only a limited period of time was required to amortize the total dead weight of debt. The scheme certainly was effective when taxation could provide the annual 1,000,000 pounds from surplus revenue; but when it became necessary to provide the 1,000,000 pounds by borrowing at a higher rate of interest, the result was dead loss and, in principle, pure financial quackery. Pitt's mastery of principles and details was exemplified to the full in his budget for 1787. The Bill for the Consolidation of the Customs and Excise laid the basis of the Consolidated Fund which is the core of the modern British financial system. A single tax was laid on each item. Simplicity, efficiency, and cheapness in collecting taxes were the features of the new rate book of tariff.⁹

Pitt was eager to conclude a commercial treaty with France so England could find new markets for her industrial products; and, more important, such a treaty could possibly assure the peace between the two countries for a long time. England needed such a time to strengthen and rebuild herself in order to be ready for any future conflict. France, on the other hand, had been pacific after the Peace of Versailles. Financial difficulties would not allow her to take advantage of her superior position. After the peace the French reforming ministers found

⁹Robertson, op. cit., pp. 313-314.

full occupation at home. Hence, France seemed to be anxious to deal easily with England and not to pursue her advantage. Vergennes, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, apparently wished England to continue her overseas activities and to devote her energies to commercial and colonial schemes rather than to brood about her losses and her desired revenge regarding the American war.¹⁰ These circumstances paved the ground for signing the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce on January 26, 1787, which was favorable to the British industry. The duties on hardware, cutlery, cabinetware, coal, and cotton and woolen manufactures were lowered considerably for the advantage of England. French wines were not to pay higher duty than what those of Portugal were paying at that time. Articles of dress, luxuries in which France had the advantage, were subject to high duties. The importation of silks, or cotton and woolen goods mixed with silk, which are advantageous to France, was prohibited in both countries. This treaty was advantageous to French agriculture, but it was a disadvantage to her industry.¹¹ Hence, it is rather surprising to see that this treaty was met with bitter attack in the House of Commons by Fox, the leader of the opposition. Fox said that he would never be convinced that France was sincere when she professed by this treaty to be the friend of Great Britain. In Hansard's Debates one could find the following passage about this speech of Fox:

¹⁰Benians, op. cit., p. 31.

¹¹Hansard's Debates, op. cit., XXVI, pp. 237-238.

He undoubtedly, Mr. Fox said, would not go the length of asserting that France was and must remain the unalterable enemy of Great Britain, and that there was not a possibility for any circumstances to occur, under which France might not secretly feel a wish to act emically with respect to this kingdom. France was the natural political enemy of Great Britain. What made her so?..... It was the overwhelming pride and boundless ambition of France, her invariable and ardent desire to hold the sway of Europe.....

Mr. Fox concluded that France was the natural foe of Great Britain, and that she wished by entering into a commercial treaty with us to tie our hands and prevent us from engaging in any alliance with other powers.¹²

Fox was not alone in his opposition. He was supported by other Whig leaders such as Burke, Sheridan, and Francis. Pitt, however, was able to secure the necessary majority to seal the treaty.¹³

These views and opposition of Fox, although they might on the first viewing seem strange, are not, in fact, more than true reflections of the general British opinion of the time. The enmity, rivalry, and jealousy which existed between the two countries for a long time could not be forgotten and smoothed by a commercial treaty. England could not forget her losses in the American war and accept the French supremacy in Europe. In fact, while signing this treaty, England was working to her utmost to abandon her isolationist position and to find allies in order to check the French rising power.

¹²Ibid., XXVI, pp. 1786-1788.

¹³Rosebury, Pitt, op. cit., p. 87.

From Isolation to Triple Alliance

Pitt chose as his Secretary for Foreign Affairs the Marquis of Carmarthen (afterwards Duke of Leeds). Carmarthen's policies followed the same traditional British line. He regarded France as a natural enemy to England, and he wanted to adjust the balance of power in Europe to the advantage of England. He felt England should depart from her present position of isolation and regain her influence in the councils of Europe, which she had lost as a result of the American war. The attitude of Pitt concerning foreign policy was tying Carmarthen's hands and not allowing him to follow the active and dynamic foreign policy in which he believed. This general indifference of Pitt toward foreign policy in the period prior to the French Revolution could be explained in two ways. On the one hand, Pitt might have thought that the true interest of England lay in the peaceful development of the French commerce and industry, which Louis XVI and his ministers wished to encourage. By this policy France would have been hindered in her expansionistic passions which were dangerous to the European order. On the other hand, more probably Pitt recognized the danger of isolation to Great Britain, but he saw that there were more important things than forming alliances and recovering prestige abroad. Possibly he felt that Great Britain had to strengthen her economy, and then she could easily find the needed alliance--when her alliance would be worthwhile to the other powers. In either way, Pitt did not believe, like Carmarthen and the other British diplomats, that

there was an immediate danger to England and that a war was inevitable.¹⁴

Three alliances had governed Europe in the 1780's, and England was excluded in all three. The first alliance, which had been formed in 1756, was between France and Austria and was regarded in England as a menace to the peace of Europe. It was Carmarthen's principal objective to put an end to it. If Carmarthen had possessed more political insight, he would have seen that the alliance between France and Austria was unnatural and a hindrance to the actions of both rather than one of mutual assistance. Beside this Franco-Austrian alliance, there was the Bourbon Family Compact between France and Spain which had shown itself to be dangerous to England during the American war.¹⁵ The Austro-Russian agreement of May, 1781, was another important diplomatic instrument in directing the European politics in the 1780's and was more important in determining the future of the Eastern Question. This agreement was not expressed by means of formal documents but simply by mutual exchange of letters between Joseph II of Austria and Catherine II of Russia. Austria acknowledged Russia's possession of European Russia and her dominions in Poland. In return, Austria received a guarantee for her dominions, including those in the Low Countries and in Poland.

¹⁴Oscar Browning, "The Foreign Policy of Pitt to the Outbreak of War with France," Cambridge Modern History VIII, planned by the Late Lord Acton, A. W. Ward et al., editors. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904), pp. 277-278. This will hereafter be cited as Browning.

¹⁵Robertson, op. cit., p. 319.

Austria agreed that if war would be declared between Russia and Turkey, she would join Russia and would support the campaign with troops equal in number to those of Russia. This agreement was directed primarily against Turkey, but also indirectly against Prussia, the traditional enemy of Austria. Prussia was suspicious about this agreement but did not know its contents.¹⁶ The Emperor also hoped that this agreement would enable him to realize his favorite scheme. He wanted to exchange the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria in order that the dominions of Austria would become geographically unified. Such a scheme, if realized, would make Austria much stronger. This would never please Prussia, who aroused the other German states in opposition to this scheme.¹⁷

Frederick the Great of Prussia--not a part of these alliances--watched the Austrian Emperor and decided to maintain communications between Berlin and St. Petersburg and to remain coldly hostile toward England. Also outside this system of alliances was the United Provinces that had participated in the campaign against Great Britain during the American war. The Northern Baltic states also were not attached to any of these alliances; but because of former conflicts, Sweden was hostile

¹⁶ Arthur Hassall, The Balance of Power 1715-1785, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1900, 1st ed. 1196), pp. 360-361.

¹⁷ Charles Ross, ed., Correspondence of Charles First Marquis Cornwallis I, (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1859), pp. 191-192. This will hereafter be cited as Cornwallis Correspondence.

to Russia, and Denmark held the same attitude toward Sweden.¹⁸

In London, Carmarthen regarded the formation of some other alliance favorable to England as an absolute necessity in order to counterbalance the formidable Bourbon Alliances. He looked at Prussia as the most possible and desirable power that England should try to draw to her side. Another possibility was by separating Austria from France and a consequential agreement with Russia. In either case the minor states, like Denmark, Sweden, and particularly Holland, might be attracted to the new British system. To obtain such an objective the British diplomats knocked on the doors of all European courts, but until 1786 Carmarthen's efforts produced little. These met some success in Denmark. His labors in Vienna, Moscow, and Berlin met with no response.¹⁹

At this time, however, events occurred which created a diplomatic climate more favorable to British policies. While England and France in the 1780's were wishing for a lengthy peace, other eastern European states were restless and were preparing for military campaigns. The Austrian Netherlands and Holland, Poland and Turkey, and the Black Sea and the Baltic became the scenes of diplomatic activities and fields of military conflicts. Russia in the earlier part of the century had not only advanced her boundaries by the partition of Poland and by taking several provinces on the Baltic from Sweden, but also had

¹⁸Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 320.

conquered all of the Crimea and had become a permanent power in the Black Sea. This advance had been aided by England and France's preoccupation with western European and colonial affairs. They gave little attention to the growing dangers in the eastern waters.²⁰ In addition, Turkey was an ancient ally of France, who used her as a checking force in her conflicts with Austria. Although England did not hold as good a position as France did in Turkey in the 1770's, she was not on unfriendly terms with Turkey. However, Russia became a natural ally to England. England had helped Russia in building up her naval force; but in the 1780's Russia had become so strong and dangerous to the balance of power that England looked with fear as to what the future might bring to the European scene.²¹

The foreign policy of Catherine II was simply to destroy the Turkish empire and to advance Russian interests in the west and, more important, to the south. She looked forward to the capturing of Constantinople and to the establishment of a Greek Empire on the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean. Hence, when the Turks in August, 1787, thinking that the western European countries would help them, sent Russia a manifesto, Catherine at once seized the opportunity and declared war. The Austrian Emperor, in accord with his agreement with Russia, soon followed suit and in February, 1788, declared war against Turkey.²²

²⁰A. T. Mahan, The Influence of Sea Powers Upon the French Revolution and Europe 1793-1812, I, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1898), p. 10.

²¹Ibid., p. 12.

²²Leo Gershow, From Despotism to Revolution 1763-1789, (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1944), pp. 189-190.

Although the Turks were successful in defending their positions against the Austrians in 1788, they were defeated by the Russians in the east. In 1789 the Turks lost almost all the battles fought in Europe or in the Black Sea area and were saved from total annihilation of their empire only by the internal disturbance in the Austrian empire and by the diplomatic interference of the Triple Alliance to their advantage.²³

Joseph II was a man of high abilities and possessed a passion for justice and reform in his domestic policy. In his foreign policy his mind was filled with wide schemes, and he labored tirelessly to obtain for his empire a better seat in the councils of Europe. Most of his domestic and foreign policies, however, proved to be failures, and this was due to the recklessness and impatience that characterized his whole career. He undertook tasks far beyond his abilities and means, and his history is, therefore, only the long and sorrowful story of a prince animated by the best intentions, who failed in much of what he had attempted.²⁴

One outstanding example showing these characteristics of Joseph II is his project in the Low Countries. Fortified by his alliances with France and Russia, Joseph II thought the time was ripe for him to solve his problems in the Low Countries. In November, 1783, he decided to make a revision on the Barrier Treaty of 1718 which gave the Dutch the right to keep the

²³Hassall, *op. cit.*, pp. 385-386.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 351.

Scheldt River closed to the navigation of any foreign country. The opening of the Scheldt was not only against the vital interests of the Dutch but also Great Britain, who always had regarded the opening of the river for international navigation as a threat to her security. England supported Holland diplomatically, but she was in no position to support her materially. When the Dutch refused to open the river, two Austrian ships sailed up the river. The Dutch fired upon one and captured the other. The Imperial Ambassador left The Hague, and the Dutch Ambassador was withdrawn from Vienna. An Austrian army was collected in the Austrian Netherlands. The Dutch found it difficult to resist this army. The Dutch, nevertheless, opened their sluices, flooded their country, and prepared for war.²⁵ Russia supported the Emperor, but France disappointed him and supported Holland. King Frederick of Prussia naturally opposed the Emperor, and general European war seemed imminent. This war was averted by an armistice mediated by France, that was followed by an agreement, signed in November 8, 1785, that settled the dispute between Holland and Austria. According to this agreement the Scheldt was to remain closed, and the Emperor gave up his other claims regarding some of the Dutch bordering fortresses. In return, the United Provinces was to pay the Emperor ten million florins, and France volunteered to pay one-half of it.²⁶ Thus, this project of Joseph II was met with complete

²⁵Browning, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

²⁶William Edward Lecky, History of England in the Eighteenth Century, V (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893), pp. 355-357.

failure. France, on the other hand, was the major gainer and was rewarded for her mediation by an alliance with the Dutch. This alliance which was signed in Fontainebleau on the 15th of July, 1787, was unrestricted and effective anywhere in the world.

Art. IX. Should one of the high contracting parties be involved in a war, (which God forbid!) wherein the other should be in a situation to engage directly, they shall arrange together the plan of operation to be pursued, in order to injure the common enemy and oblige him to make peace; and they shall not discern or receive propositions for peace or truces, except with the consent of both.²⁷

Article XI of the treaty binds each party to not become involved in the future with any treaty or agreement that might be contrary to this treaty. Also, there were articles in this treaty concerning the commerce between the two countries, in which each pledged to treat the other as the most favored nation.²⁸ Undoubtedly the conclusion of this treaty was a great victory to France and to Vergennes.

One of the oldest and closest allies of Great Britain and also one of the chief maritime powers of the world had thus detached herself from all her British connections, thrown her influence in support of France, and virtually become a member of the Bourbon Family Compact. Hence, the balance of power that Britain had for so long labored and maintained had now been

²⁷Department of State, The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States of America From the Signing of Definitive Treaty of Peace 10th September, 1783, to the Adoption of the Constitution March 4, 1789, III, (Washington: John C. Rives, 1855, 1st ed. 1837), pp. 497-498. Hereafter cited as Diplomatic Correspondence.

²⁸Ibid., III, p. 498.

shifted to her disadvantage. At the time of Vergennes' death in February, 1787, France was not only the first land power but also had become, by the conclusion of this treaty, the first sea power. France's prestige at this time was high. Holland, Spain, and Austria were her allies; Catherine II was anxious for her friendship, and early in 1787 she concluded a commercial treaty with Louis XVI.²⁹ Before his death Vergennes had inflicted a severe blow on the British position and prestige in Europe by the conclusion of this treaty with the United Provinces. The question was how long France would keep this prestige after Vergennes' death. Events would prove that Vergennes' death was a great loss to the French diplomacy and prestige.

The death of Frederick the Great in August, 1786, and the rapid development of the crisis in the Netherlands ushered in the change that England longed to see in the European diplomatic atmosphere. The successor of Frederick was his nephew, Frederick William II, who was strongly attached to England. In the United Provinces the Republican party, "The Patriots", aided with French gold and diplomacy, decided to compel the Stadholder, William V, to resign his hereditary office or at least to withhold his powers. If they had succeeded, the United Provinces would have become a part of France in all but name. The province of Holland in September 1787, suspended the Stadholder from his functions, including his military powers. The carriage of the Princess

²⁹Lacky, op. cit., V, pp. 356-357.

Stadholder, who was the sister of Frederick II, was stopped by the Republican party troops who were now in control of Holland, and the Princess was treated in an undignified manner. This incident was to become the spark for a dangerous international complication. The Princess sent a letter to her brother informing him of the incident and asking his intervention. The answer of the Prussian King, with the encouragement of England, was a threat to march his troops to the United Provinces. Since France, by her treaty with the United Provinces of 1785, was pledged to defend that country in case of war, a general European war seemed inevitable.³⁰ From the beginning of this Dutch crisis, James Harris (afterwards Lord Malmesbury), the British envoy to The Hague, put all his energies in order to pave the ground for the British interest in the United Provinces. He sent warnings to London about the dangerous development of the crisis and recommended an effective British policy regarding it. Pitt, although fearing that these matters might involve England in a war that he wanted to avoid, understood the importance and danger the Dutch crisis might bring to British interests. Hence, he agreed to send money to the Stadholder party, and English officers volunteered to serve in his army.³¹

On September 13, 1787, the Prussian army, under the command of the Duke of Brunswick, advanced into Dutch territory and entered Gelderland. At the same time Pitt, in a drastic step,

³⁰Browning, op. cit., p. 385.

³¹Ibid., p. 387.

wrote to Eden in Paris directing him to get in touch with the Court of Versailles and to demand that France abandon her projects of extending her influence in the United Provinces by altering its constitution. If the authority of the Stadholder was to be preserved, and if the French would not accept these principles, the question had to be decided by war. Pitt followed this threat by immediate orders for the purpose of hastening the British military preparations on sea and land. War seemed to be on the point of breaking out. What helped England in her firm stand was the rapid advance of the Prussian army. Six days after its entry, the Republicans were crushed and the Prince of Orange was able to enter The Hague triumphantly, where he was invested with every privilege that had been taken from him.³² Meantime this rapid advance of Brunswick discouraged France from sending help to the Republicans. France, also, was hampered by her bankrupt finances, and her ally Austria was fully occupied in her operations against the Turks. Under these circumstances France, fearing to take the risk of an action in the field, looked around for a peaceful solution to her difficult position. William Grenville was sent from London to Paris to assist Eden in order to help convince the French to accept the new status quo in the United Provinces. Their labors resulted in a French declaration in which they declared that the King of France did not have, and never had, the intention of interfering in the affairs

³²Lecky, op. cit., V, pp. 358-359.

of the Republic of the United Provinces; that he retained no hostile view towards any quarter relative to what had happened in Holland; and that all warlike preparations should again be placed on the same footing as that of the peace establishment.³³

This humiliating declaration of France did not only bring an end to danger of war but also to the French influence in the Netherlands. It was also a major factor for ending England's isolation. Throughout the Dutch crisis, the British diplomats worked zealously to reach an Anglo-Prussian understanding. These labors were crowned by a defensive alliance between England and Prussia that was signed on the 18th of August, 1788.³⁴ Also, the United Provinces were now willing to sign a military alliance with England, and this was concluded on April 15, 1788. In this defensive alliance it was stated:

Art. 2. In case either of the high contracting parties should be hostilely attacked by any European power in any part of the world whatsoever, the other contracting party engages to succour its ally as well by sea as by land, in order to maintain and guarantee each other mutually in the possession of all the dominions, territories, towns, places, tranchies and liberties, which belonged to them respectively, before the commencement of hostilities.

Art. 3. Great Britain guarantees with the most effectual manner the Stadholderate as well as the office of the Hereditary Governor of each province in the serene House of Orange.³⁵

This treaty also defines the number of troops and ships that each party has to furnish the other in case of war. In this each

³³Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

³⁴Hansard's *Debates*, *op. cit.*, XXVIII, p. 1329.

³⁵*Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 553.

party also pledged to treat the other as the most favored nation in commercial relations. Shortly thereafter, these two treaties were converted into one Triple Alliance linking the three countries together.³⁶ Thus, this Dutch crisis not only marked an end to England's isolation, but it also brought England into a powerful European combination with the balance of power once again in her favor.

Revolution and Reaction

It is almost impossible for the twentieth century observer to realize the stir the French Revolution made in the eighteenth century world. For one thing, reactions of all kinds are now too easily produced and spread. It would seem that even the Russian Communist Revolution, though it may ultimately have results even more important than the French one, has not yet impressed itself so thoroughly on the Western consciousness as did the French Revolution. The developments of the French Revolution were quickly carried to all parts of western and central Europe, and its ideas reached, with much interest, the ears of almost everyone in these areas. It is inconceivable that France, lying in the midst of Europe, could have passed through a great revolution without influencing her neighbors and without becoming involved in war.

The reasons for this widespread interest in the Revolution are not difficult to discover, and they help throw light on the

³⁶Diplomatic Correspondence, op. cit., III, p. 608.

whole process of change in late eighteenth century Europe. In spite of her military defeat under Louis XV, France was still regarded as "the great nation"; her language and arts were still imitated throughout most of Europe. The middle classes in England, in much of urban Germany and in the Rhineland, in northern Italy, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and in much of Scandinavia had already worked out a way of life with similar grievances against the privileged classes. The climate of opinion and ideology of the philosophes was almost uniform in western and central Europe. Interests and ideas blended curiously, but almost identically, in the different countries. Finally the French Revolution began in a country economically prosperous, in a Europe which had been reasonably long at peace or, at any rate, without major international wars, and in an atmosphere of confidence rare in the history of revolutions.

The British outlook on the French Revolution, in its first stage, was twofold. First, it was viewed as internal troubles that would weaken the rival power of England. Second, it was viewed as a constitutional reform similar to what England had experienced in her revolution of 1688. In both cases the British reaction was favorable to the French Revolution. In regard to the first point, it is only natural for Great Britain to be pleased in seeing her "natural foe" engaged in internal problems that might disable her for a long time. In conjunction with this idea, Fox, in February, 1790, said in the House of Commons, "Had France remained in that formidable and triumphant state by which she was distinguished in the year 1783,

I shall have been the first to applaud such an augmentation." He described her as now being "in a state which could neither fill us with alarm nor excite us to indignation." "If fortune," he continued, "has humbled the pride and ambition of this mighty empire, if anarchy and confusion incidental to such a revolution has struck her people with inertness and inactivity, why should we dread her sudden declaration of hostilities?"³⁷ By the same tone Pitt said:

The present convulsions in France must sooner or later terminate a general harmony and regular order, and though the fortunate arrangements of such a situation may make her more formidable, they may also render her less obnoxious as a neighbour. I hope I may rather wish as an Englishman for that, respecting the accomplishment of which I feel myself interested as a man, for the restoration of tranquility in France, though that appears to me to be distant. Whenever the situation of France shall become restored, it will prove freedom rightly understood, freedom resulting from good order and good government; and thus circumstanced France will stand forward as one of the most brilliant pioneers of Europe. She will enjoy that invaluable existence of which I revere and to cherish. Nor can I under this predicament regard with envious eyes an approximation in neighbouring state to those sentiments which are the characteristic features of every British subject, and we must aggrandisement those precious moments of peace and leisure which are before us.³⁸

Although in this quotation Pitt tried to show his sympathy to the French in their struggle for reform, he was not able to hide his satisfaction with the disabilities that France was experiencing.

The reasons and roots of the French Revolution in its early

³⁷Rosebury, Pitt, op. cit., p. 119.

³⁸Ibid., p. 120.

stages were difficult for Englishmen to understand. They did not anticipate its violence because they knew little or nothing of its nature and causes. Between 1789 and 1792 Englishmen honestly believed that the French were on their way to achieve, with no undue disturbance, institutions roughly analogous to those of Great Britain. That was the most they could imagine. In fact, in all discussions in England about the Revolution in its early stages, the writers maintained the attitude of disinterested spectators, and no one had yet imagined that England would be directly concerned. The events were regarded as merely wonderful phenomena and, therefore, proper subjects for speculation. Not until 1791 was the French Revolution to become a party question in England. Previous to that time, the newspapers which represented the view of the party in power, were fully as extravagant in their praise of the progress of affairs in France as those which were the organs of the aristocratic Whigs. Both depreciated the excesses of the populace and approved only of the underlying purpose which was supported to give rise to them. The means were to be justified by the ends.³⁹

While the first idea about the political advantages for England from the Revolution was held, particularly by statesmen, the admiration to its reformation prospects became far more popular in England. Statesmen, thinkers, liberal societies were

³⁹William Thomas Laprade, England and the French Revolution 1789-1797, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1909), pp. 9-10.

all alike in their enthusiasm for the Revolution. Such intellectuals as Wordsworth, Priestley, Price, Gilbert Wakefield, Erasmus Darwin, Boulton, Watt, Parr, Robert Hall, and William Roscoe⁴⁰ agreed with the spirit of Fox's comment on the fall of the Bastille, "How much it is the greatest event that ever happened in the world and how much the best."⁴¹ By the close of 1791, the domestic masses of France had become the vital question on which the British attention was focused. Several important events which took place in the latter part of 1789, in 1790, and in the early months of 1791 contributed to this rising attention in British political circles and gave active spirit to the democratic and radical societies.

The real leadership of the new radicalism in Great Britain was outside the old political circles; it rested with intellectuals closely backed by artisans, shopkeepers, dissenting ministers, school masters, and the like. Support to these radical societies came not from the poorest nor from the unorganized labor of the industrial towns; it came rather from the dissenters of the middle class. It came from men of skill, either professionals or men conscious both of their ability, and of the lack of privilege and opportunity. Radicalism was a movement of political theory, not of economic organization.⁴²

In England, chief among the early reactions to the Revolution

⁴⁰Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

⁴¹John Drinkwater, Charles James Fox, (London: Ernest Benn, Limited, 1928), p. 289.

⁴²John Steven Watson, The Reign of George III 1760-1815, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 357.

was the publication of three pamphlets. It is not likely that any one of these productions had the effect which its author anticipated. Probably not one of them, if left alone, would have exerted any considerable influence on the English people. The importance lies in the subsequent events to which they were necessary preludes, and we cannot understand these events without some knowledge of the nature of the pamphlets and the circumstances which attended their publication.

The first of these pamphlets to make its appearance was that of Dr. Richard Price, a nonconformist minister, entitled A Discourse on the Love of Country. The author states that the King of England is the only lawful monarch in the world since he was chosen by the people as a result of the 1688 revolution. To him there are three essential rights of man. These are the liberty of conscience in religious matters, the right to resist power when abused, and the right to shun one's governors and to cashier them for misconduct.⁴³

Burke's work, Reflection on the Revolution in France, was designated primarily as a reply to Dr. Price's pamphlet. As early as October, 1789, Burke had developed an intense dislike for the French Revolution, founded largely on the theory that the Revolution was a result of the agitations of unscrupulous leaders who were activated by selfish motives. A development of this idea led him to the conclusion expressed in detail in the Reflections that the confiscation of the church lands was the

⁴³Laprade, op. cit., p. 15.

result of the combined efforts of a literary group and the French monied interests. The purpose of the men of letters in France was to discredit the Christian religion by weakening the church; that of the capitalists, who held government loans as a part of their newly acquired wealth and were also envious of the position of the nobility, was to reimburse themselves for their loans to the government and to strike a blow at the nobility who controlled the patronage of the churches.⁴⁴ In connection to Price's concept about the legality of the British monarch, Burke rejected it as "either is nonsense, and therefore neither true nor false, or it affirms a most unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional position."⁴⁵ In answer to Price's concept about the peoples' rights, Burke says:

This new, and hitherto unheard of bill of rights though made in the name of the whole people, belongs to those gentlemen and their faction⁴⁶ only....if the principles of the Revolution of 1688 are anywhere to be found, it is in the statute called the Declaration of Rights. In that most wise, sober and considerate declaration, drawn up by great lawyers and great statesmen, and not by worn and inexperienced enthusiasts, not one word is said, nor one suggestion made, of a general right "to choose our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to form a government for ourselves."⁴⁷

Perhaps it is necessary to observe that in writing this pamphlet Burke was not primarily concerned with the French Revolution. One of his ambitions was, as he put it, to draw a

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁵Edmond Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, William B. Todd's, ed., (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1959, 1st ed, 1790), p. 19.

⁴⁶He means here Dr. Price and his society of "New Jewery".

⁴⁷Burke, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

picture of himself and his family. Burke believed that he was a representative of the aristocratic party, and that when his pamphlet would be published it would receive the approval of his associates, since the nobility had been one of the first objects of attack in France. He believed that if the principles of those who admired the French Revolution were permitted to spread unopposed in England, one inevitable consequence would be an attack on the English nobility, and for that, therefore, he deserved the thanks of his aristocratic friends for coming to their defense.⁴⁸

The third of these important publications was The Rights of Man by Thomas Paine, which was republican in its tone and purpose. Paine boldly affirmed that the "Civil Government" was synonymous with "Republican Government." He ridiculed Burke's arguments and developed at even greater length the ideas which he had advanced in his previous book, Common Sense. His theories were based on the doctrine of the Social Contract of Rousseau that pervaded the political writings of the time. He was, however, explicit in his opposition both to the monarchy and to the nobility. This pamphlet was widely read, the notoriety of the author and the subject insuring a hearing. It received further advertisement at the hands of both Burke and Pitt, but its doctrines were far too sweeping to receive the approval of any considerable number. Even the most radical reformers who were active in England during this period shunned it.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Laprade, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

The activities of the radical organizations--The Society for Constitutional Information, The Friends of the People, The London Corresponding Society--were remarkable. The Society for Constitutional Information, established in 1791, tried to extend its ideas of parliamentary reform among the literate by sponsoring editions of radical pamphlets. The London Corresponding Society, founded in 1790, was similar in its organization to the Jacobian Club in France and had daughter associations in many other British cities. By 1793 it was linked with Manchester, Stockport, Norwich, and Sheffield. This society was the most serious attempt to seize control of the forces of discontent and use them not for passing political advantage but to make a more equalitarian society. The Corresponding Society was not an innovator in ideas; its doctrines were those of Locke spiced with Rousseau. Their basis was the idea of government as a trust given by the majority of the people. In detail this was translated into manhood suffrage, annual parliaments, cheaper government, the end of unjust land enclosure, and a simpler legal system. It was certainly more radical than any proposals hitherto submitted to Parliament. Equally important was the fact that the Corresponding Society was founded by a shoemaker, Thomas Hardy, and its dues were very low in order to permit people of low income to become members. Inevitably, the Corresponding Society looked for France's inspiration. In November, 1792, one of its leaders had presented addresses from the Society to the French Convention, with assurance that the British people would never support war against liberty. The Friends of the People

was another radical society, although it was less extreme. It was associated with the Corresponding Society.⁵⁰

More alarming was the situation in Scotland and Ireland. In Scotland the Scotch Friends of the People societies were very active. In 1792 riots took place on the King's birthday. As a result, several eminent leaders were arrested and given severe sentences. Despite the severe measures of the government, a convention was held in Edinburgh in November, 1793, and was attended by delegates from about fifty Scotch and English radical societies for the purpose of urging parliamentary reform. The leaders, who arranged for this convention, were seized by the government and punished with fourteen years transportation each. By such a firm stand and crushing measures the government was able to hold in its hand the state of affairs in Scotland.⁵¹

In Ireland the case was much worse. The establishment of Grattan Parliament had quickened the sense of Irish nationality, and the close historical relationship with France led to an eager interest in her fortunes. The fall of the Bastille met much response in Ireland. The Irish volunteers whose organization was in opposition to Great Britain and had not entirely been broken up congratulated France on her achievements. The Catholics and Presbyterians joined hands in approving a revolution which would secure religious equality and parliamentary reform. To

⁵⁰Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-359.

⁵¹G. P. Gooch, "Europe and the French Revolution," *The Cambridge Modern History*, XIII, Lord Acton et al., editors, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1934, 1st ed., 1904), p. 770. Hereafter cited as Gooch.

accomplish these objects, by combining into one party all who desired them, Wolfe Tones created the Society of United Irishmen in 1791. Soon the main object of this organization became the establishment of an independent Irish republic. In spite of the brutal measures that the British government used in order to silence the opposition waves in Ireland, its efforts failed to give decisive results. This opposition in Ireland, later during the war with France, became a grave danger to Great Britain.⁵²

As the political thermometer rose in England towards the fever point through the years 1792-93, the government kept closer watch upon the political societies but for a long time took no action against them. It seems probable that if they had confined themselves to their professed programs, the government would have remained passive. The government did not prosecute those who, in November, 1792, congratulated the French Convention on the triumph of its armies in Belgium. What then, were the developments which aroused its stern opposition? They were the events of the French Revolution which seemed to show the need of taking decided and early measures against a resolute and desperate group of radicals. Pitt never declared that under no circumstances would he oppose a moderate reform of Parliament; but he did declare that in his view reform was at present highly perilous, and he resolutely set himself to the task of coercing those agencies who advocated, in his understanding, dangerous

⁵²Ibid., p. 771.

reforms by unlawful methods.⁵³

The first persecution that need be noticed here was directed against Pains for seditious utterances in the Rights of Man. The attorney general made out a formidable indictment, whersupon Pains--then a member of the French Convention--informed him that the man in the moon and the liberties of the people of England were, in rsality, on trial. Several persecutions ensued, with varying results. Still more frequent were the cases of cursing the King, somstimes in obscene terms. On November 28, 1792, Frost and Burlow presented to the French Convention addresses sent by the radical clubs in London. One of them ended with the statemst that other nations would soon imitate France in overthrowing the monarchy and would "arm ourselves for the purpose of claiming the Rights of Man."⁵⁴

The increasing terror in Paris did not only draw England gradually out of her neutrality, but also made the activities of the radicsl socitys distasteful and dangerous in the view of the governing classss and the majority of the populace all aliks. The administration decided now to take decisivs msasures in dsaling with these societies. Accordingly on May 16, 1793, Pitt presented the Parliament with the Corpus Act which gave the government wide authority in dealing with seditious activities, among which there was the arbitrary arrest. Thomas Hardy was

⁵³John Holland Ross, The Life of William Pitt, (London: G. Bsl and Sons, LTD., 1923), p. 171. Hereafter cited as Rose, Pitt.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 172.

arrested on May 17, 1793, and later on persecuted.⁵⁵ In 1795 the Treasonable Practices Act was passed, which created tougher measures for treason crimes, dispensed with the proof of overt acts, and made any writing, printing, preaching, or speaking inciting to hatred or contempt of the King, the establishment of government or constitution a high misdemeanor. In the same year the Seditious Meeting Act prohibited meeting of more than fifty persons without notice to a magistrate. In 1797 the London Corresponding Society and the Society of United Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Irishmen were suppressed under a law which put unlicensed debating clubs and reading rooms on the same footing as brothels. Englishmen now had to learn that they must hold their tongues, and that to express an opinion that the constitution was not perfect might, and probably would, be twisted into treason or a seditious act. By such drastic measures Pitt was able to keep the country united behind the policy which he, the King, and the nobility believed to be right and in the interest of the nation.⁵⁶ It is obvious, however, that such a firm and strong policy needs to be backed by all the political forces and parties who consider it necessary for the safety of the country. Moreover, the dark clouds which covered the Anglo-French relations by 1798 made such political cooperation in Great Britain a wise and necessary measure to enable the government to cope efficiently with dangers lying ahead.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 190.

⁵⁶Robertson, op. cit., p. 342.

Pitt's cabinet was far from being united. Lord Richmond, one of Pitt's ablest colleagues, was hostile to him. The Duke of Leeds had little capacity and was both vain and pompous. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that he had become a mere channel and signature stamp for dispatches drafted by Pitt. Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, was far from being trusted by Pitt, and it was scarcely worth while to summon a meeting of the Cabinet, for often he would disagree with Pitt. A man of Pitt's character naturally looked askance at those of his party associates who did not submit to his leadership. Therefore, he only waited for a provocation to rid his cabinet of several members who were supporters of the King, more than himself, waiting to take advantage of the occasion if it should offer itself.⁵⁷

Hence, when the Duke of Leeds reigned in 1790 as a protest against Pitt's Russian policy, Pitt at once accepted it, and Lord William Grenville became Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Grenville was Pitt's first cousin and along with Henry Dundas, the Home Minister, was the confidant of Pitt and assumed much influence in shaping his policies.⁵⁸ Eighteen months later Pitt dismissed Thurlow who was one of the King's advocates. Those two steps increased the personal power of Pitt measurably. Therefore, it was unthinkable for Pitt to accept the coalition scheme of the Whig Party which was transmitted to him in June, 1792. This scheme was formed on the grounds that Pitt and Fox

⁵⁷Laprade, op. cit., p. 28.

⁵⁸Rosebury, Pitt, op. cit., p. 111.

should hold equal powers, and each of them would assume office as secretaries of state. Pitt, also according to this plan, had to resign the treasuryship. As could be expected, Pitt rejected the idea. King George III, although feeling the rising crisis and the need for combining all energies to face it, did not like the Whig scheme. He hated Fox and regarded him as a personal enemy; besides, he did not like to make essential alterations in his government in order to suit the Whig leaders.⁵⁹

However, the scheme of government coalition showed itself as more desirable and necessary. Besides, the Right wing of the Whig Party, headed by the Duke of Portland, showed its agreeableness to cooperate with Pitt, provided Fox was excluded. Hence, an agreement was reached and Pitt's cabinet was enforced by new members of the Whig Party in July, 1794. The Duke of Portland took the Home Department along with the Colonial Office. Dundas became a Secretary of State for War. Earl Fitzwilliam became President of the Council. The Marquis of Stafford resigned the Privy Seal in favor of Earl Spencer, and Winham entered the cabinet as Secretary at War, though this office was not regarded as one of cabinet rank.⁶⁰ By this arrangement the cabinet won the support of a number of the Whigs, and Fox led a still weaker minority.

By such formation of the new cabinet, Pitt's power not only

⁵⁹Beckle Willson, George III as Monarch and Statesman, (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Co., 1907), pp. 467-468.

⁶⁰William Hunt, The History of England, X, (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1905), p. 332.

became unshakingly firm, but with this cabinet he could also better cope with the hard tasks confronting him at home and on the continent.

In summary one could say that throughout the eighteenth century rivalry and enmity continued between the European powers. The main reason for this rivalry was the ambition of each one to dominate the continent. Another field of rivalry among the European maritime powers was in regard to overseas territories. By the 1780's France had emerged as the first land power in Europe, while England assumed the supremacy on the seas. France, however, divided her energies between two aims--to dominate the continent and to build a colonial empire. England, meanwhile, concentrated her energies in the colonial field and was able to establish the largest colonial empire relative to those of the other European powers.

England's major line of policy in regard to the continent was to maintain a balance of power and to prevent any single power from dominating the continent. Also, she always tried to keep the United Provinces independent, because England believed that her security would be endangered if the United Provinces would fall into the hands of any of the large European powers. By the Treaty of Versailles of 1763, the balance of power had shifted to France's advantage, and England became isolated. England, however, was able to retain this balance to her advantage by the conclusion of the Triple Alliance of 1788.

The American war had undermined Britain's strength and prestige in the Councils of Europe. She was in need of a new

departure and strong leadership. This she found in William Pitt, who assumed the office of Prime Minister in 1783. His energies were devoted in the 1780's to reconstructing the country's finance, which he regarded as the basis for the nation's strength. He was very successful in this field, and the Anglo-French commercial treaty of 1787 illustrated this policy.

The attitude of the British government towards the French Revolution in its first stages was twofold. On the one hand, England regarded it as an event which would weaken France and hinder her expansionistic activities. On the other hand, England hoped that the Revolution would bring to France some constitutional reforms similar to those of England which were affirmed in 1688. England hoped that such reforms would limit the powers of French Kings and hinder their aggressive policies. In both cases, the Revolution seemed to be favorable to the British policies.

The British public opinion, in regard to the Revolution in its beginning, was either enthusiastic or disinterested. After 1789 many radical societies were established in England to preach the French Revolution doctrines. Some of these societies were revolutionary and violent in their activities. When violence and disorder increased in France and when Louis XVI was executed, the radical societies were suppressed by the British government, and the Revolution lost many of its sympathizers in England.

THE FIRST COALITION

During the early stages of the French Revolution the concept of a crusade against France had hardly occurred to the leading statesmen of Europe. Most of them treated it merely as internal French trouble, similar to many others with whose history they were familiar. History taught them that such a crisis would only weaken France and, hence, it was an opportunity for the other powers to profit from that weakness. Soon the progress of the Revolution gave notion to the European powers that it not only weakened France, but that its doctrines were dangerous and might arouse other European people against their kings.

The act of interfering in the affairs of a country in a state of revolution was not an abnormal proceeding in the international politics of the time. Such intervention had been expected in France since the beginning of the Revolution. The more each Frenchman was convinced of the greatness of his country and the importance and justice of his Revolution, the more he believed that the European powers would not, for long, leave France to herself. His newspapers and pamphlets coupled the praise of liberty with stories of the tyrants plotting against the Revolution. This aroused his suspicion and touched his pride. In the streets, cafes, and political clubs of Paris the designs of European Kings against French liberty had been denounced long before they had begun to take shape in the discussions of foreign statesmen. Naturally, then, the vast majority of the French nation had decided not to tolerate such interference

and to try to influence other nations with their revolutionary ideas in order that they might overthrow their tyrants. This frame of mind of the French people and this attitude of European statesmen could explain much of the political and military history of the era.⁶¹ On the other hand, the absence of France as a large power from the European scene, due to the outbreak of the Revolution, created a big gap in the balance of power. Henceforth a struggle inevitably would take place in order to form a new one. An amazing series of plans for territorial readjustments were drawn up in the courts of the different powers. Austria wanted to exchange the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria. Prussia would let Austria have Bavaria, compensating in Luxembourg and, if possible, Alsace and Lorraine. Catherine II desired the remainder of Poland. Therefore, she did everything to encourage Austria and Prussia to spend their energies in a long struggle with France so she would have a free hand in the East.⁶² It could be concluded, then, that the occurrence of hostilities between the new France and the old Europe is, on the one hand, the essence of the nature of the Revolution and, on the other hand, a result of the nature of the European politics of the time.

⁶¹John Harold Clepham, The Causes of the War of 1792, (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1899), pp. 26-27.

⁶²Crene Brinton, A Decade of Revolution 1789-1799, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1934), pp. 85-86.

Neutrality or Belligerency

The question of intervention in the affairs of France depended mainly on the two principal German powers, who lately had been steadily becoming closer to each other. The fear for his possession in the Low Countries of France and for his territories bounding Prussia led Leopold of Austria to make secret overtures to Prussia. In these he expressed his interest in ending the long enmity and rivalry between the two countries by an alliance. Frederick William of Prussia, not listening to many of his advisers, responded without delay. It was the object of Prussia to detach Austria in order to isolate Russia. Leopold felt that such an alliance would not only safeguard the Austrian domains but would also give him a strong ally in case circumstances would lead to a rupture with France. In their negotiations which started in May, 1791, the question of intervention in France was discussed. Although the Prussian line of policy was not to involve herself in French affairs, Frederick William, nevertheless, accepted the idea in principle. This matter, however, was left to be further discussed by the two sovereigns at Pilnitz.⁶³ The conference was held in Pilnitz in August, 1791, and after discussing the development of events in France, they agreed to publish their celebrated Declaration of Pilnitz. In this declaration it was stated that the position of the King of France is a matter of common interest for the European powers. They

⁶³Lecky, op. cit., VI, pp. 498-499.

were willing to set right that situation, even by force, if the other European powers would join them.⁶⁴ This declaration, which inspired the émigrés, bore little or nothing in practice. Since the Austrian Netherlands was not yet under any threat by France, the Emperor meant only to warn the French revolutionaries as to what might happen if the royal family were threatened or injured. Neither Leopold nor Frederick William was willing to act without England who, at the time, was far from being agreeable to such projects.⁶⁵ The flight of Louis XVI, the insults to which the French royal family was exposed, and the disposition of the German princes in Alsacé from their property made the Emperor take the question of intervention more seriously. He started his preparation by urging Prussia to sign a defensive alliance with him. His labors were successful, and a treaty between the two countries was concluded on February 7, 1792. It stipulated that either power would furnish the campaign with 20,000 troops if the other were attacked; but this alliance was never put into practice. On April 12, Austria proposed to Prussia an offensive alliance to take its place, for the purpose of restoring the rights of German princes in Alsace, to restore the property and rights of the Pope in France, to defend the safety of the French royal family, and to guarantee the monarchical form of government in France. Prussia agreed to the idea, and the new alliance

⁶⁴Brinton, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

⁶⁵5th Earl Phillip Henry Stanhope, Life of the Right Honourable William Pitt, II, (London: J. Murray, 1861-62), p. 136.

was concluded which required each power to participate in the campaign with 50,000 troops. In March, 1792, Leopold died and his son and heir, Francis II, was less cautious and favored war more than his father. The French Legislative Assembly, however, did not give them much time for preparation, and it declared war against both Austria and Prussia on April 20, 1792.⁶⁶

The Duke of Brunswick commanded the Austro-Prussian forces which consisted of about 100,000 troops in addition to 5,000 émigrés. Brunswick rapidly advanced through French territory, pushing back the confused and undisciplined troops of France; but Brunswick did not take advantage of this disorder to attack Paris immediately. Instead, he spent much time in reducing the fortified towns on his way, giving precious moments for the French to reorganize themselves and bring to the field new levies of troops.⁶⁷

Still a worse mistake was the Brunswick Manifesto. In it he threatened severe punishment to villages and towns that would dare to resist the Allied forces. More important, he threatened that if the King and Queen were not given their freedom at once, or if they were exposed to the smallest violence, the city of Paris would be subjected to military execution and exposed to total destruction. It is natural for such threats, coming from a foreign general, to arouse the pitch of the French patriotism

⁶⁶Georgas Lefebvre, The French Revolution From its Origins to 1793, trans. Elizabeth Evanson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 221-222.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 253.

and determination to defend their country and not to allow foreign interference in their affairs.⁶⁸ As Lord Sheffield, a prominent British politician at the time stated, "The Manifesto appears to me injudicious and not likely to answer the purposes of the invaders. If the business is spun out, the French may be taught to fight."⁶⁹

Hence, to the surprise of Europe, the French armies under Dumouriez were able to make a stand at Valmy.⁷⁰ Brunswick became discouraged, and Dumouriez was able to drive the Allies out of French territory. By November 14, 1792, Brussels and all of the Austrian Netherlands surrendered to the victorious French armies. In the south a body of French troops defeated the Sardinians who had joined the Austro-Prussian Coalition on the 10th of August, 1792. The French, thereupon, conquered both Nice and Savoy and the territory surrounding them.⁷¹

What was the attitude of the British government regarding these events that were taking place in the continent? From the beginning of the Revolution, the British government had held to a policy of strict neutrality. England did not support the Pilitz Declaration and when asked to join the Austro-Prussian Coalition, her answer was a positive refusal. It should be

⁶⁸ Stanhope, *op. cit.*, II, p. 136.

⁶⁹ William Eden, 1st Baron of Auckland, *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland*, II, (London: R. Bentley 1861-1862), p. 428.

⁷⁰ Stanhope, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 169-171.

⁷¹ A. Aspinall, ed., *The Later Correspondence of George III*, I, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1962), pp. 635-638.

observed, however, that Pitt was expecting an easy defeat for the French. Such a defeat would help him in his internal policies against the British malcontent and relieve England of her powerful rival. England, nevertheless, was first to recognize the French Constitution of 1791. In 1791 Pitt introduced measures for the purpose of reducing the British military forces on land and sea.⁷² Lord Malmesbury, the British Ambassador to Berlin, wrote on May 26, 1792, "We had declared to all continental powers that we would observe the strictest neutrality."⁷³ England seemed not to be aware of what was happening across the channel. Lord Auckland, the British Ambassador at The Hague, marked this with regret as he wrote on March 4, 1792, "This indifference as to foreign affairs is general through the kingdom; you may find it even in our newspapers; perhaps it may be justly attributed to the great prosperity of the country, which confines all attention to interior and insular details."⁷⁴

The overthrow of the French monarchy and the execution of Louis XVI on January 21, 1793, did not alter the British neutralist policy. It is true that England decided to recall Earl Gower, her Ambassador at Paris, an act to which France protested. But Grenville informed the revolutionary government that this action on the part of England was only a matter of course since the ambassador had been presented to Louis XVI. Grenville

⁷²Browning, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

⁷³Diaries and Correspondence of James Harrie, First Earl of Malmesbury, II, (London: Richard Bentley, 1844), p. 488.

⁷⁴Auckland, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 398-399.

emphasized the point that this recall would not change the British neutral policy. Lebrun, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, welcomed Grenville's announcement and regarded it as a sign of friendly relations between the two countries. Chauvelin, the French Ambassador at London, was informed that he no longer would be officially recognized, but he would be received unofficially.⁷⁵

As late as November 6, 1792, Grenville wrote that he had throughout disapproved of the Austro-Prussian invasion of France, as it tended to strengthen the Jacobin power in France and to delay the re-establishment of order. Although he feared the spread of republicanism to England, he believed that a policy of neutrality would help to minimize this danger.⁷⁶

When the Emperor sent a circular to the different European powers calling for advice and assistance to protect the French King, the British answer was expressed in a letter written by Grenville to Lord Auckland on September 18, 1792:

...that our neutral conduct gives us no claims to interfere either with advice or opinions unless solicited, and that our general wishes, on the one hand, are that France never again resume the same restless and troublesome system which has so often been fatal to the peace of nations; and on the other, that an executive government may exist there so as to restrain the present lawless and atrocious spirit.⁷⁷

⁷⁵John Holland Rose, "The Struggle with Revolutionary France," The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919, I, A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, ed., (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1922), pp. 216-217. Hereafter cited as Rose, The Struggle.

⁷⁶Auckland, op. cit., pp. 264-266.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 443-444.

The foregoing quotation shows the announced feelings of the British government towards the situation. As far as internal troubles were concerned, England had no desire to interfere, wishing that the revolutionary leaders would stick to their word in denouncing expansionistic war and stating that the Revolution had no territorial ambitions. But, if the revolutionary leaders would show a reverse attitude, then England would become concerned and would have to revise her neutralist policy.

When the French armies occupied Brussels in November, 1792, Britain started to worry about Holland, whom England was required to defend by the Treaty of 1788. This led England to make a declaration assuring the Dutch government that she would not hesitate in assisting her in all ways if circumstances would require, against any attempt on the part of any power to invade her dominions or to disturb her government. This declaration was meant to be a warning not only to the French but also to the Dutch republican "patriots" whose activities were increasing.⁷⁸

The attitude of King George III regarding the Revolution in this period was well expressed in a letter written by him to Pitt:

Indeed my natural sentiments are so strong for peace that no event of less moment than the present could have made me decidedly of opinion that duty, as well as interest, calls on us to join against that most savage as well as unprincipled nation.⁷⁹

This letter was written on February 2, 1793, after Louis XVI

⁷⁸Rose, Pitt, op. cit., p. 74.

⁷⁹John Heneage Jesse, Memoirs of the Life and Reign of King George the Third, III, (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867), p. 201.

had been executed. This shows that all his anger and hatred toward the Revolution was a result of his sorrow at the fate of his fellow King. It also clearly shows the vigorous hostility of George III toward the Revolution.

In a letter dated November 13, 1792, Pitt wrote to the Marquis of Stafford expressing his fears about the state of affairs in France, but he had not yet lost his hope in preserving peace between the two countries.

The strange and unfortunate events which have followed one another so rapidly on the continent, are in many views matter of serious and anxious consideration.

That which presses the most relates to the situation of Holland....and as must indeed be the case in consequence of the events in Flanders. However unfortunate it would be to find this country in any shape committed, it seems absolutely impossible to hesitate as to supporting our ally in case of necessity, and the explicit declaration of our sentiments is the most likely way to prevent the case occurring....

Perhaps some opinion may arise which may enable us to contribute to the termination of the war....leaving France (which I believe is the best way) to arrange its own internal affairs as it can.⁸⁰

The fears of the British government regarding the future foreign policy of revolutionary France were soon to materialize. The successes of the French armies raised to the highest pitch the arrogance of the Convention. On November 17, 1792, it issued the famous decree in which, in the name of the French people, it offered fraternity and assistance to any nation that desired to

⁸⁰ Leveson Vernon Harcourt, ed., The Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose, I. (London: Richard Bentley, 1860), pp. 114-115. Hereafter cited as Rose, Diaries.

gain liberty from tyrants. In other words, they offered to interfere in the internal affairs of other nations against royalty. Another decree followed on November 27 proposing the incorporation of Savoy into France. This proposal was executed. This means that they annexed a foreign territory gained by military force, an act that was contrary to their previous denunciation of expansionistic ambitions. Furthermore, a decree was issued on February 16, 1792, declaring freedom of navigation on both the Scheldt and Mouse Rivers. At this point the British could no longer maintain their neutral policy. Because of these three decrees, the British government felt that the Revolution was not only dangerous to France, but also to the other states, and more important that its policies were in direct conflict with British interests and security.⁸¹

On December 9, 1792, Pitt wrote that the gross disregard of treaties shown lately by France and her encouragement to the revolutionary spirit in all lands compelled the government to add to its armed forces. Pitt added that the present situation required firmness and decision, both at home and abroad. Both Pitt and Grenville became equally convinced of the need for firmness in resisting the French decrees, partly because of their aggressive and illegal nature, but also because surrender would influence the spirits of the British malcontents.⁸² Thus, rupture between England and France became inevitable, and it remained

⁸¹ Stanhope, op. cit., II, p. 173.

⁸² Rose, Pitt, op. cit., p. 73.

to be seen only who would declare war first. When in December, 1792, French warships forced their way to the sea, the Stadtholder concluded that invasion would follow and he called for British help. England, at once, answered with readiness to give it and ordered all shipments of grain and raw materials from England to France to be halted. On January 4, 1793, Chauvelin was given his passport in order to leave the country. On February 1, 1793, France declared war against both England and Holland. Some of the reasons given in the French declaration were that England had violated the Treaty of 1786 by refusing to trade with France, that both the King of England and the Stadtholder were conspiring with France's enemies by giving refuge to the émigrés, and that England was giving subsidies to France's enemies, Austria and Prussia. It condemned England for refusing to recognize the Republic and by preparing for war by introducing a land and sea armament program. Therefore,

The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that in consideration of all the aforementioned acts of hostility and aggression, the French Republic is at war with the King of England and the Stadtholder of the United Provinces.⁸³

Coalition on Trial

England entered the War of 1793 with certain aims to be achieved. It is needless to repeat here the traditional British

⁸³John Hall Stewart, A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951) pp. 399-401. Hereafter cited as Documentary Survey.

policy and feeling of insecurity in regard to Holland whenever Holland was threatened by any of the large powers. Another tradition in British foreign policy was the maintenance of a balance of power in Europe and intervention if any power showed signs of interest and strength desiring to dominate the continent. France, by beating Austria and Prussia and by occupying Flanders and opening the Scheldt, had threatened both lines of the British policy. If England did not have any serious territorial ambitions on the continent, she, nevertheless, looked forward to reducing the strength of her ancient rival. England's territorial ambitions lay in outstripping France of her overseas possessions. This aim could explain why Britain was sending large expeditions to the West Indies to conquer the French colonies, while the Coalition forces were fighting battles in the continent. This also would be one reason for dissolving the Coalition and defeating its forces.

Concerning this connection, Lord Malmesbury wrote in his Diaries on January 20, 1793, that Pitt told him that war was inevitable, that England was better prepared than France, that Russia and Spain were ready to join the Coalition, and that England would obtain the French overseas colonies.⁸⁴

Another aim was to prevent the Revolutionary ideas from spreading over Europe, including England, where the Republican societies had already shown themselves dangerous to the ruling class. Thus, by defeating France, those societies and their

⁸⁴Malmesbury, op. cit., II, pp. 501-502.

activities would be wiped out. Relative to this point, Grenville wrote to Auckland on November 13, 1792:

The increased activities and boldness of our Republicans since the Duke of Brunswick's retreat is certainly very striking, and still more of the same sort must be apprehended from the conquest of Flanders.⁸⁵

Pitt, however, had no real intention of imposing upon the French people a certain type of government, as was the case with other members of the Coalition. At the time Britain joined the Coalition she insisted that the allies should drop their demands for kingship restoration.⁸⁶

On the same day that the English government dispatched the declaration to Holland, they sent instructions to the British Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna directing them to break the long silence on French affairs and to start preliminary contacts in this regard with the two Courts. These instructions, as Pitt had written, were necessarily in very general terms,

....as in the ignorance of the designs of Austria and Prussia and in the uncertainty as to what events every day may produce, it seems impossible to decide definitely at the present on the line which we ought to pursue except as relates to Holland.⁸⁷

On February 5, 1793, after the war had been declared against England, a dispatch was received by Eden instructing him to pursue the establishment of a close connection between England

⁸⁵Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore, II, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1894), p. 332. Hereafter cited as Dropmore.

⁸⁶Laprade, op. cit., p. 125.

⁸⁷Rose, Diaries, op. cit., p. 115.

and both Prussia and Austria, in order to cooperate on the affairs of France and in order that no jealousy or concealment should exist between the said Courts. "The King," said Grenville in his instructions to Eden, "desires to enter into a formal engagement with the Emperor and the King of Prussia on the principles which have been always opened to both these two powers."⁸⁸ These principles include the abandonment by France of all her conquests and the renunciation of all views of interference in the interior of other countries and of all measures of aggression or hostility against them. England would at once send her troops to the continent to continue the war in conjunction with the other two powers. The three powers were not to make peace with France except by mutual consent of all of them and in agreement with the above-mentioned principles. Regarding Poland, England regretfully would not agree to any plan aiming at its partition, but, nevertheless, England had no interest in opposing the execution of such a plan.⁸⁹

Similar overtures were made by England to Russia. As early as December 29, 1792, Pitt proposed to Catherine II that a joint representation should be made to France, assuring her that if she would abandon her conquests, rescind the acts which were injurious to other nations, and give a pledge that she would not in the future disturb her neighbors, they would interfere on her behalf in order that all acts of hostility against her should

⁸⁸Morton Eden, British Ambassador to Berlin and later on to Vienna and brother of Lord Auckland.

⁸⁹Lecky, op. cit., VII, p. 164-166.

cease and that no foreign power would be allowed to interfere with her government or constitution. The French declaration of war against England interrupted these negotiations, and it was not until 1800 that the intended representation was disclosed.⁹⁰ At the time of the war declaration against England, all British diplomata were extraordinarily active on the continent. Lord St. Helen, the Ambassador to Madrid, met encouraging response to his efforts. The Spaniards were, on March 26, 1793, anxious to unite their fleet with that of Britain in order to counteract any hostile movement on the part of the French navy. The Spanish expressed their readiness to join the campaign against France.⁹¹

In the early days of April, 1793, the nations that were already engaged in war against France sent representatives to a conference at Antwerp. These nations, constituting the Coalition in its new shape, were England, Prussia, Austria, Sardinia, and Naples. Soon Spain and Portugal joined the concert.⁹²

In this conference it was agreed that it was going to be a war of conquest and plunder as well as self-defence. The avowed object was to impose on the French people a form of government based on principles repudiated by them but acceptable to the allies.⁹³ Lord Auckland, England's representative, announced

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 166.

⁹¹Dropmore, op. cit., II, p. 386.

⁹²John Holland Rose, "The Conflict With Revolutionary France 1793-1802," The Cambridge History of the British Empire, J. H. Rose, et al., ed., (Cambridge: The University Press, 1940) p. 41. Hereafter cited as Rose, The Conflict.

⁹³Robertson, op. cit., p. 371.

that his country was in favor of retaining conquests that might be made. As for her share, he mentioned Dunkirk and the French possessions in the East and West Indies. The fate of Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine was discussed.⁹⁴ England, however, did not agree to the Austrian plan of exchanging the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria. England tried to convince Austria not to keep the Netherlands by promising her territorial gains in Flanders at France's expense. England wanted to have in this area bounding France a strong power instead of a weak and dependent one which would be easy for France to overcome. England's aim was to diminish France's power.⁹⁵ The Austrians, although they were still convinced of the idea of the exchange, did not insist on their view and gave Lord Auckland the impression that if Britain would strongly oppose their scheme, they would give way and accept the British point of view.⁹⁶ Austria, however, became more interested in Flanders later on when the second partition of Poland took place in which Russia and Prussia got the best part of the prize and Austria was left empty handed. Hence, Austria's ambitions later became centered in the Low Countries to compensate for what she had missed in the East.⁹⁷ Catherine of Russia concluded a treaty of commerce with England, and in a second treaty she promised her cooperation in blockading the commerce of France. Catherine agreed to help in

⁹⁴Auckland, op. cit., III, pp. 4-5.

⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁹⁶Watson, op. cit., p. 364.

⁹⁷Hunt, op. cit., p. 349.

preventing neutral ships from supplying France with provisions. Consequently, the British navy was ordered to stop all ships engaged in trade with France and to send them to England where their cargoes would be sold and their freights paid by the government.⁹⁸

The King of Sardinia was granted a subsidy of 200,000 pounds to enable him to keep up his army. England, also, concluded a treaty with the King of the Two Sicilies, agreeing that her fleet would join the allied fleets in the Mediterranean. Jointly this fleet was a formidable one. A similar treaty was concluded with Portugal, England's ancient ally. Spain joined the Coalition in May, 1793, when France first declared war against her. Thus, it looked as if all of the European states had joined their efforts to form a formidable force in order to crush the French Revolution. No wonder, then, that England felt certain that the fruits of the expected easy victory would soon fall with abundance into her lap. Out of the Coalition in Europe there remained as neutrals the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Tuscany, Venice, Genoa, and Turkey.⁹⁹

It is not the purpose of this work to dwell with military history, but a brief summary of the military operations might help in understanding the diplomatic developments of the time. England sent an army to Flanders under the command of the Duke

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 349.

⁹⁹Alphonse De Lamartine, History of the Girondists, III, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1874), p. 197.

of York, the son of George III. Other troops from Hanover and Hessen joined the army. This army was supposed to act in conjunction with the Austrian army under the command of the Prince of Coburg. The Prussians acted independently on the Rhine. From February to August, 1793, the French received a series of defeats. Dumouriez lost the decisive battle of Neerwinden, and he deserted to the enemy. As a result, Belgium fell into the hands of Austria again. The French fortified towns of Mayence and Valenciennes surrendered. Toulon was captured by the British with the assistance of the Spaniards and Neapolitians. These defeats did not, as the allies expected, reduce the French to helplessness or break down their spirits. On the contrary, it inspired them with new spirits of heroism and patriotism. They became a nation in arms. The tide turned to their side. Toulon was recaptured and on its scene the genius of the young officer Napoleon showed itself. The Duke of York, who was besieging Dunkirk, was driven back with the loss of all his heavy artillery. Austria was defeated at Wattignies. The Austrians, furthermore, received severe blows in the battles of Worth and Weissenburg. Brunswick did not risk a decisive battle with the French, nor did he give any assistance to the Austrians. Prussia now had come to the point where she had no real interest in this war against France. Her eyes were fixed now on the better and less costly territorial prize lying ripe for her in Poland.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰Rosebury, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

In the year 1794, the French dealt a decisive blow to the Austrians in the battle of Fleurus, which ended the campaign of Flanders with France victorious. As a result the defense for Holland was hopeless and, consequently, on November 18, 1793, the British were obliged to withdraw their soldiers from all the Low Countries, which again fell into the hands of the French. In the south the French drove out the Spaniards and Portuguese and advanced to the northern provinces of Spain.¹⁰¹

England was able, however, on the sea surfaces and in overseas territories, to make some compensation for her losses on the continent. England captured the French settlements in India and some of her West Indian Islands. These conquests, particularly in the West Indies, were very costly to Great Britain and fell short of her plans due to wild French resistance, coupled with disease and Negro determination to fight for the freedoms that they were promised by the French Revolution. Moreover, the British expeditions sent to these areas were, in some cases, taken from the British army in Flanders.¹⁰² This not only weakened the British contributions to the vigorous campaign there but also brought her complaints from her allies, who accused her of failing them for the purpose of securing selfish colonial gains. Some prominent British diplomats also had criticized this attitude of Great Britain. Lord Auckland wrote the following letter to Grenville, dated November 7, 1793:

¹⁰¹Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

¹⁰²Auckland, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 137-138.

Our first object to be is to destroy the Convention; and it appears to me this if we are materially diverted from that object by the pursuit of conquests, whether on the continent of Europe or in the East or West Indies, we risk the fate of the whole war and of the existing race of mankind. May it be added that we do this in pursuit of acquisitions which we might have without effort or expense! For it is in Europe only that the success of the allies armies and the commanding superiority of our naval force can enable us to compel the French nation to such conditions and sacrifice as may be thought necessary for our future safety and tranquility.¹⁰³

On the sea the fortunes of Britain were better than on land. In the early years of the war the British had the support of numerous allies, since the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and the Neapolitanian navies were all acting in concert with that of Britain. These allies outnumbered the French in seapower by three to one. They, however, lacked unity of aim and command, and this reduced their ability and efficiency.¹⁰⁴ While the year 1794 saw the hopes of England vanish on the continent, she had, however, achieved notable success on the sea. Hood attacked Corsica and was successful in capturing it, although the importance of this action is doubtful. The victory of June 1, 1793, was the first naval achievement for the British. Admiral Howe won a great victory in the Atlantic over the French main fleet of Brest.¹⁰⁵

By 1794 Pitt had decided that this war would not be as short as he had thought before. Pitt wrongly felt, therefore,

¹⁰³H. W. Wilson, "The Naval War," The Cambridge Modern History, VIII, Lord Acton, et al., ed., (Cambridge: The University Press, 1934), p. 456. Hereafter cited as Wilson, Naval War.

¹⁰⁴Hunt, op. cit., pp. 363-364.

¹⁰⁵Watson, op. cit., p. 370.

that since it would be a long one, the best way for England to win it was by economic warfare. He thought that by outstripping the French overseas possessions and by the British navy blockading the French trade, France would be beggered and broken. This idea certainly was incorrect, and it indicates a complete ignorance of France's richness in natural resources and of what revolutionary finance and organization could produce.¹⁰⁶

It is obvious now that the efforts of the First Coalition to impose its will and ambitions on France had met complete failure. It may be asked, then, that how, with France thus distracted and divided, the Coalition against her could fail. But the Coalition, in fact, was by no means as powerful or formidable as it seemed at first sight. Russia stood in an ambiguous state between peace and war, but contributing nothing to the military campaign. Spain and Sardinia caused only negligible trouble to the French in the southern frontiers. Prussia appeared to be fully satisfied with the siege of some towns on the Rhine and absolutely not agreeable to any aggressive operations. The Dutch looked only for the protection of their own territory. Thus the burden of the war fell mainly on Austria and England, the latter, furthermore, dividing her operation in different areas. Worse still was the way in which the military operations were carried out, for instead of uniting their armies into one mighty force to march directly to Paris, their armies

¹⁰⁶Hunt, op. cit., pp.351-354.

were divided in command and operation. Each army was occupied in conquering the territory which, by the Antwerp Conference or by their own designs, had been assigned to their respective countries. To make matters still worse, the fighting continued in different areas: in Flanders, the Rhine, France's southern frontiers, and in overseas territories.

The military deficiencies and faults of the Coalition were basically due to differences between the allies on the aims and objects of the campaign. England was concerned about Flanders for her security, while Austria was not interested in keeping it. Thus England tried to encourage Austria by promising her Alsace and Lorraine, which were to be conquered with the help of Prussia. Prussia, however, would not help to conquer territory for Austria, nor to assist in the dismemberment of France, unless the Emperor would consent to the treaty of partitioning Poland which was secretly arranged between Frederick William and Catherine II on January 23, 1793. Thugut, the Austrian Chancellor, who was violently hostile to Prussia, would not consent to such a treaty; for the result would be to strengthen Prussia, and furthermore, Austria would not share in the spoils. The Prussian King thought the Austrian refusal to accept the partition had encouraged the Poles to resist his demands. Hence, he left his army on the Rhine and went to the Polish border, ordering the Duke of Brunswick not to engage in any operation that might prevent him from sending to Poland such troops as the

situation there might demand.¹⁰⁷

This jealousy and distrust was not limited to Prussia and Austria but was also to be found in the case of Spain and Holland, who, as maritime powers, were convinced that England was planning to gain all the fruits of victory for herself. The British overseas conquests were not regarded with easiness by those two countries. Spain in particular feared that the British operations in the West Indies, where she had vital interests, would endanger those interests.

Thus it is only natural, with such division, distrust, jealousy, and difference in objectives, that the Coalition experienced military disasters in the years 1793-94. But this is not all. The Coalition had still to see its own collapse, which started in 1795 and ended in 1798.

In summing up the main points of this chapter, the following could be said: The occurrence of the French Revolution and its developments did not only arouse the Courts of Europe but also led to their military interventions. This idea of intervention was led by the two Germanic powers--Prussia and Austria--who by the Pilnitz Declaration of August, 1791, declared their intention to intervene if the French royal family was endangered. On April 20, 1792, war started between France on the one hand and First Coalition country members on the other. The French were able to halt the advance of the allied armies and then to drive them out of France. The French followed their victory by

¹⁰⁷Laprade, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

occupying Belgium, Nice, and Savoy.

From the beginning of the Revolution up to November, 1792, England had assumed an attitude of strict neutrality in regard to the Revolution. But when the French defeated the First Coalition armies and annexed Belgium, Nice, and Savoy, England not only felt her security threatened but also felt that the balance of power had been broken and that France might dominate Europe. Hence, England joined the First Coalition. Although the allied armies were able to achieve some victories over the French in 1793, the French were soon able to repulse them and finally to scatter their armies in the continent. Prussia signed the Peace of Basle with France in 1795, and the other Coalition country members followed suit. By 1798 the First Coalition was dissolved, and England found herself alone in the field against the victorious French.

OVERTURES AND TREATIES

Forced Peace

The military failures of the Allies in the campaign of 1793 emphasized the need for securing substantial help from Prussia during the year of 1794. Prussia, however, seemed resolved to continue marking time on the Rhine, while acting energetically in Poland. Pitt, therefore, advised the dispatch of Lord Malmesbury in a special mission to Berlin to clear matters up. Grenville, convinced of the falseness of the Prussian Alliance, advised against any subsidy to her. When Malmesbury met with Frederick William, the latter assured Malmesbury of his fidelity to the Treaty of 1788. The King, however, described the finances of his country as exhausted and said that unless he received a subsidy from England, he would be obliged to recall his army on the Rhine. If this subsidy were granted, he promised to increase his army on the Rhine to 100,000 men. Grenville suspected Prussia's real intentions but he, nevertheless, agreed to the suggested subsidy.¹⁰⁸ But nothing was to induce Prussia to act seriously on the Rhine. By June, 1794, even Malmesbury, who previously recommended the subsidy to Prussia, had reached the conclusion that England could not expect any more Prussian military aid. Nevertheless, both he and Pitt clung to the remote hope of honesty in the Prussian government and successfully opposed Grenville's proposition of an immediate withdrawal of

¹⁰⁸Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., pp. 243-245.

subsidies if Prussian troops would not at once begin their march to the Rhine.¹⁰⁹

On February 3, 1795, Malmesbury wrote to Grenville that Prussia was vexed at the excessive demands of the French and was about to renew war. A few days after this letter was received in London, Pitt brought forward his plan for a subsidy to Prussia to infuse energy into the war and to keep Prussia from making peace with France. Grenville's opposition was this time instant and determined. He informed Pitt that in case the plan was insisted upon, he then would resign his office. Pitt was upset at the thought of a rupture with Grenville, though he was aware that Grenville's inclination to an Austrian alliance and his distrust of Prussia would cause him to oppose the project.¹¹⁰ In the last week of February Pitt wrote to Grenville:

I have been trying to put together what, according to my idea, should be the instruction on this unfortunate subject of Prussia, and have desired a cabinet to be fixed for twelve tomorrow....The more I think on the business the more uneasiness I feel at what you seemed likely to determine, and I want much to talk it over with you at large.¹¹¹

Grenville's objections to a Prussian subsidy were drawn up in a memorial in which he reviewed former conclusive reasons against an English offer of subsidy. He accused the King of Prussia of being either unsteady in his own principles or much under the guidance of unprincipled men. Grenville further

¹⁰⁹Ephraim Douglass Adams, The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy 1787-1798, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1904), p. 27.

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹¹Dropmore, op. cit., III, p. 25.

accused him of the following: that the French party in Berlin's Court was dominating, and that that party favoring the war was grossly weakened; that the King was negotiating with France while asking subsidy from England; that the King believed that regardless of his interest in Holland, although profound and real, she would fall under the influence of France rather than that of England. Concerning Russia, whom Prussia feared, it was thought by the Prussian King that she should have France as a friend in order to be able to face the Russian expansionistic ambitions. Grenville further thought that Prussia had no interest in recovering the Netherlands to be given to her traditional enemy, Austria. Grenville believed that England's negotiations with Prussia at the present time would alienate Austria and Russia, with whom it should be England's policy to endeavor to form the closest union. Such desired union could not happen, in Grenville's opinion, as long as England would continue trying to resume her former close connections with Berlin.¹¹² Grenville suspected that Prussia might use the British subsidy offer merely to get better terms from France. He also felt that Pitt's government would be discredited at home in case her efforts in Berlin would fail to bring the desired results.

Grenville concluded his memorial with the following:

Of these objections the greater part apply with at least equal force to the opening of such a negotiation as to the conclusion of the treaty. The overture cannot be concealed from the knowledge of Austria and Russia.

¹¹²Ibid., III, pp. 26-29.

The King of Prussia has in all cases an interest in making it known to Paris, and if disclosed there it cannot be expected to remain a secret here. Whatever impression, therefore, is to be feared from the effect of the treaty upon the conduct of the Courts of Petersburg or Vienna will equally be produced by a knowledge of the offer. The objection respecting the facilitating a peace between Prussia and France supposes the failure of the negotiation. And the difficulty here would (if not equally great) be very considerable, if we had to defend the making to the King of Prussia an humiliating and fruitless offer of fresh pecuniary assistance, after having broken off the treaty last year on the ground of his ill faith.¹¹³

As early as 1794 Frederick William started his direct overtures to France, but by December he had decided to reach a conclusion in his relations with France. On December 1, 1794, he sent Count Von der Goltz to Switzerland to open negotiations with any French representative. Goltz's instructions were that Prussia coveted the role of a pacificator of Europe and would be glad to negotiate peace, not only between her and France, but for all the other belligerent countries; that Prussia could not make a definitive peace with France, much less an alliance, but desired an armistice and desired the benefits of neutrality until general European peace could be concluded. The King of Prussia preferred not to recognize the Republic but would do so if France would evacuate all Prussian territory.¹¹⁴ The French Committee of Public Safety responded to these views of Prussia by offering her an immediate alliance against Russia and Austria and this to be reinforced by the adherence of Sweden, Denmark,

¹¹³Ibid., III, p. 30.

¹¹⁴Sydney Seymour Biro, The German Policy of Revolutionary France, I, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 314.

Turkey, and Poland. The French meantime rejected the suggestions for Prussian mediation for general peace. Prussia, on the other hand, rejected the idea of alliance and, hence, France refused to grant her an armistice. The French then announced their conditions for peace: France would like to annex all territory on the left bank of the Rhine; Prussia meantime could be compensated for territorial losses on the left bank by other provinces on the right bank at the expense of Austria or the ecclesiastical bishoperies.¹¹⁵

The Franco-Prussian negotiations took place in Basle. Barthélemy, the French minister to Switzerland, represented France, and Hardenburg, who took the place of Goltz, represented Prussia. Prussia now accepted the idea of separate peace. She insisted upon her wish of neutrality, not only for herself, but also for all of northern Germany, for which Prussia was assuming leadership. France finally agreed upon this point and gave Prussia the choice of any territory in Germany to compensate for her lost territory on the left bank of the Rhine.

Finally on April 5, 1795, all points of conflict were settled and the Treaty of Basle was signed by the two parties.¹¹⁶

In this Treaty the contracting parties agreed that peace should prevail over their relations and all hostile activities should cease immediately. The French troops should evacuate the Prussian provinces which they were occupying on the right bank of

¹¹⁵Ibid., I, pp. 315-316.

¹¹⁶Ibid., I, pp. 343-344.

the Rhine, but they would continue to occupy Prussian territories on the left bank. France would welcome the good offices of the King of Prussia on behalf of the Princes and States of the Holy Roman Empire who would desire to enter directly into negotiations with France.¹¹⁷

In separate and secret articles the two contracting powers agreed that the King of Prussia should not undertake any hostile enterprises against Holland or other territories occupied by French troops. If at the general pacification between France and the States of the Holy Roman Empire, the left bank of the Rhine would remain with France, then the parties should come to terms about the cession of those Prussian provinces occupied by the French troops and how Prussia would be compensated.¹¹⁸

Prussia's decision to make peace with France was no doubt hastened by the Polish situation. On January 3, 1795, Russia and Austria had secretly come to agreement for a final partition of Poland, in which those two powers were to gain much more important accessions than what Prussia had had in the last partition. News of this agreement reached Berlin. The Prussian government, hence, hoped that by concluding an immediate peace with France, she would become free to act in the East in order to get an equal share of the spoils of the planned Third Partition.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Stewart, Documentary Survey, op. cit., pp. 563-565.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 565-567.

¹¹⁹Brinton, op. cit., p. 207.

While Prussia was negotiating with France, the former did not stop her diplomatic discussion with England for the purpose of improving their lagging relations. Prussia was continuously assuring England that she would re-enter the war if she would receive a sizeable subsidy from England. When the negotiations at Basle became known to Malmesbury, he at first considered it as mere intrigue to bring pressure to bear on France,¹²⁰ but on March 24, 1795, he became sure that Prussia had decided to reach a positive conclusion to those negotiations.¹²¹ When Malmesbury brought this news with him to London on April 4th, Pitt at once resumed with enthusiasm his scheme of a subsidy to Prussia. Instructions were drawn and sent to Lord Spencer, the now Ambassador at Berlin, to open at once negotiations with the King of Prussia.¹²² On April 10th, Malmesbury wrote to Hardenburg at Basle notifying him of the new steps taken by England and urging him to delay signing a treaty with France until he had heard from Berlin.¹²³ But Pitt was too late. The peace of Basle had been signed on April 5th, and as soon as this news reached London, all hopes of Prussian aid dropped away, and the plan for subsidy was stopped by Pitt.

The Peace of Basle was only the start of a series of disasters dealt to the British diplomacy. After concluding the Peace of Basle, the Committee of Public Safety dispatched two of

¹²⁰Adams, op. cit., p. 33.

¹²¹Malmesbury, op. cit., III, p. 250.

¹²²Adams, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

¹²³Malmesbury, op. cit., III, p. 254.

ite members, Reubell and Siéyes, to The Hague in order to negotiate a treaty with Holland.¹²⁴

The Treaty of The Hague, signed on May 16, 1795, settled the relations between the conqueror France and the conquered Holland. The freedom of navigation in the Scheldt and the other rivers was affirmed by this treaty. France recognized the United Provinces as an independent republic, while the Stadtholderate was denounced. The Dutch were to pay a war indemnity of 100,000,000 florins to the bankrupt French. The most important part of the treaty was its articles binding the two countries in an offensive-defensive alliance against the enemies of either country. The Dutch forces on land and sea were to be under the French command. The French troops were to continue occupying the country during the present war. Holland was to cede to France Dutch Flanders, Maastricht, and Venloo.¹²⁵

In secret articles Holland agreed to hand to France on unconditioned loan, three ships of the line and four frigates.¹²⁶ England was singularly awarded in two articles:

4. Said offensive and defensive alliance shall always apply against England, in all cases in which either of the two Republics is at war with her.

5. The French Republic may not make peace with England, or negotiate with her without concurrence and consent of the other.¹²⁷

¹²⁴Leo Gershoy, The French Revolution and Napoleon, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1933), p. 303. Hereafter cited as Gershoy, The French Revolution.

¹²⁵Stewart, Documentary Survey, op. cit., pp. 567-570.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 570.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 568.

Thus England's long-time ally, Holland, had deserted her and sided with her enemy. As a result she lost to Great Britain most of her West Indian colonies and, in addition, two of her most important ones, the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon.¹²⁸

In still another area a secret convention in March, 1795, ended the hostilities between France and Tuscany, who was the first member of the Coalition to desert it by making peace with France. Spain was the second large power, after Prussia, to seek peace with France, a peace concluded in Basle on July 22, 1795. The Spanish monarch recognized the French Republic, thus abandoning the cause of the Bourbons. Spain was to cede the Spanish part of Santo Domingo island, which became entirely French. In return France abandoned her recent conquests in Spanish territory. By the end of the year 1795, Saxony, Hanover, and Hesse-Cassel were also detached from the Coalition either by French armies or French diplomacy.¹²⁹

Catherine II was the master in the East as a result of partitioning of Poland because of fierce jealousies between Prussia and Austria, whereby they had become subordinated to Catherine. She virtually dictated the terms of the Third Partition, which was not completed until October, 1795. Great Britain, of course, was helpless to prevent these arrangements in the East. Thus, in the winter of 1794-95, as two years before, the

¹²⁸Gershoy, The French Revolution, op. cit., p. 303.

¹²⁹Brinton, op. cit., p. 208.

scramble for Polish lands distracted the policy of Berlin and Vienna, nullifying all the efforts of Great Britain to construct a solid barrier against France's aggressions in the West. When these efforts appeared to be fruitless, Pitt and Grenville turned to Russia and concluded a defensive alliance, which was signed at Petersburg on February 18, 1795, for granting mutual armed assistance in case either power was attacked. In such a case, Russia would furnish 12,000 troops and England twelve sails of the line.¹³⁰

In the latter months of 1794, when Prussia seemed to be withdrawing from the war and Grenville was convinced that no aid could be expected from Prussia, he was able to bring the English cabinet to accept a project for an Austrian alliance. He thought that this would be compensation for England's position due to the betrayal of Prussia. In the latter part of July, 1794, Spencer, British Ambassador to Berlin, and Thomas Grenville¹³¹ were dispatched to Vienna. But the negotiation dragged on without Austria being as yet able to agree upon terms of a treaty with England. Lord Grenville had expected to find willingness at the Court of Vienna to accept the British policy regarding the conduct of the war, provided only that a liberal subsidy and a guarantee of the possible conquests be granted. Instead the two British diplomats found a suspicious Court and a changeable

¹³⁰Rose, *The Struggle*, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

¹³¹He is the brother of Lord Grenville, the British Minister for Foreign Affairs.

policy. Austria was anxious to exchange the Netherlands for Bavaria and indirectly sounded the English ministry on this point but did not venture to propose it openly. These differences in policy, accompanied with other complications, made the British ministry withdraw her two diplomats.¹³² Thomas Grenville summed up the attitude of Austria during his mission in a letter to Lord Grenville on August 12, 1794. He noted that there were secret negotiations between Austria and France for the purpose of Austria abandoning the war, and that Austria's internal and financial problems were great. Enmity between Austria and Prussia caused the fear that Prussia might join France by alliance. Austria believed that Russia should put pressure on Prussia in order to keep her from going to extremes. He ended his letter by saying, "They (the Austrians) will, I fear, play with us by giving orders to move when they get money only, and they will probably get none till the places are lost which they ought to recover."¹³³

Lord Cornwallis¹³⁴ wrote on July 26, 1794, about the Austrian attitude at the time of the Grenville-Spencer mission, that Thugut's plans were not to move the Austrian troops unless England either pay an actual subsidy or guarantee a large loan

¹³²Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

¹³³Dropmore, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 614-615.

¹³⁴Lord Cornwallis had been commander of British armies during the American Revolution; then he was sent to India as Governor General. In 1794 he was sent by the British government to the continent to study the military situation in the proposition that he would hold the command of the joint allied armies.

of at least 3,000,000 pounds. Thugut believed that maintaining the Netherlands was not as advantageous to Austria as it was to England.¹³⁵ Spencer, in a letter to Lord Cornwallis, said that the Emperor had decided not to defend the Netherlands or to keep a big army in that area.¹³⁶

This failure of Grenville's project to conclude an alliance with Austria in the autumn of 1794 had momentarily set aside in England the thought of a close military alliance with any power. In December, 1794, however, George III himself advised Grenville to reconsider the Austrian alliance project, the chief obstacle to which was Thugut's demand for a substantial loan.¹³⁷ The Emperor's position, on the other hand, was strengthened by his treaty with Russia on January 3, 1795, which favored his claims in the Third Partition of Poland. Hence, when Britain, on May 4, 1795, offered him a loan of 4,000,000 pounds, he at once agreed to maintain an army of 200,000 men for the operation of the year 1795. On May 29th another treaty was signed between England and Austria, whereby the two powers mutually agreed to guarantee each other's possessions and to invite Catherine to form with them a triple alliance for the purpose of maintaining the system prevailing in western Europe before the French conquests. This Triple Alliance was concluded on September 28, 1795. Catherine engaged herself to supply the other two powers with either

¹³⁵Cornwallis, Correspondence, op. cit., II, p. 255.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 268.

¹³⁷Hunt, op. cit., p. 374.

30,000 troops or an equivalent in money. Even with the formation of this alliance England believed that the deficiency on the Allies side, caused by Prussia's desertion, had not been remedied.¹³⁸

On the other hand, the peace treaties concluded between France and several members of the Coalition added vastly to the prestige, influence, and strength of the French Republic. However, Austria and England, her most formidable enemies, were still in the field and still able to wage war against her on land and sea. Peace with Austria was possible provided that France renounce her annexation policy along the Rhine. The French people regarded this Coalition as a Kings' Coalition and this strengthened the French Convention's determination to pursue by force the idea of "Natural Frontiers." In October, 1795, the Convention took a decisive measure in this concern by voting the annexation of Austrian Netherlands to France as an integral part of the Republic. Meantime, the deputies decided to carry on war against Austria by attacking Southern Germany and Italy.¹³⁹

Victory did not smile on the French in 1795 in their military operations in Germany. For a time, flanking operations of Jourdan, who advanced along the Main river, and Moreau, who went down the Danube, were quite successful. As a result many states of southern Germany consented to peace with France. But the Archduke Charles, the Austrian new commander in Germany, profited

¹³⁸Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 255.

¹³⁹Gershoy, The French Revolution, op. cit., p. 304.

by the treacherous inactivity of General Pichegru, who failed to support Jourdan. In consequence, Jourdan's army was crushed in several battles, and Moreau was obliged to retreat across the Rhine. Furthermore, the Austrians were able to cross the Rhine and recover part of the territory on the left bank. With this the fighting ceased till the next spring.¹⁴⁰

It was in Italy where France, in the year 1796, achieved her marvelous victories due to the genius of the young general, Bonaparte. Bonaparte advanced in Italy in March, 1796, and defeated the Austrians in a series of battles and compelled the King of Sardinia to abandon the Coalition. He occupied Milan in May, 1796. The Austrians fell back and garrisoned the strong fortress of Mantua. In June, 1796, Ferdinand, the King of Naples, and the Pope made an armistice with the victorious general.¹⁴¹ The Austrian attempt to relieve Italy in the autumn of 1796 ended in total defeat. Mantua surrendered on February 2, 1797, and Napoleon advanced to Leoben, which is about one hundred miles from Vienna.¹⁴²

The glorious position which France now held was completed by the action of Spain, who mistrusted the British activities in the West Indies and regarded them as a plot against her own interests. In October, 1796, she declared war against Britain. The Mediterranean, already dangerous to the British fleet, now

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 304.

¹⁴¹Hunt, op. cit., pp. 380-381.

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 390.

with Spain's enmity seemed to become helpless. The British Cabinet perforce ordered the evacuation of the Mediterranean. Corsica and Alba were likewise abandoned. Only Gibraltar was to be retained, and there a Spanish assault was expected. On the sea Britain won the battle of St. Vincent over the Spanish fleet which, if it had been united with that of France, would have been a formidable Armada. By this victory England assured her supremacy as a sea power over her opponents.¹⁴³

The death of Catherine had deprived the Emperor of his hopes to receive help from Russia, and thus he found no way out of his difficulties other than seeking peace with France. On April 18, 1797, preliminaries of peace between the Austrian government and Napoleon were opened in Leoben. Bonaparte offered two alternatives. The first was that Austria would cede Belgium to France and would accept the Rhine as France's frontier, recognizing by this all the territory on the left bank to be French. In this case France would restore Milan, Montua, and the continental territories of Venice, including Istria and Dalmatia to the Hapsburgs. The second offer was that France should renounce the acquisition of the Rhine left bank, being content with the Austrian Netherlands and Liege plus some other frontier towns. According to this plan, Lombardy and Milan would form an independent Republic. Austria would obtain in this case the Venetian possessions north to the Adige and Mincio and perhaps

¹⁴³Watson, op. cit., p. 372.

also the territory between Mincio and the Adda along with Bergamo, Brescia, Dalmatia, and Istria. Gallo, the Austrian negotiator, forwarded those two offers to Thugut on April 13th for careful consideration.¹⁴⁴

Thugut favored a preliminary peace rather than a definitive treaty, because the former needed less time to conclude and, therefore, did not require legislative ratification in France. He preferred the second plan for peace over the first. Belgium could be ceded, but the integrity of Germany should be stipulated. The integrity, however, should not prevent any arrangement satisfactory to France regarding certain bits of territory. France, on the other hand, should stipulate Austria's indemnity for Belgium.¹⁴⁵

In the Preliminaries of Leoben, signed on April 18, 1797, each party pledged to promote the internal tranquility of the other. France would not attempt to revolutionize Austrian subjects, nor would Austria endeavor to restore Monarchy to France. It was also agreed that the two contracting powers would send plenipotentiaries to the city of Bern to negotiate and conclude, within three months, the definitive peace between the two powers. The Emperor agreed that the Holy Roman Empire would cease also all acts of hostilities, and a congress formed of the respective states would be held to conclude definitive peace between France

¹⁴⁴Biro, *op. cit.*, II, p. 748.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 789.

and the Holy Roman Empire. Belgium was to be given to France. The Emperor was to be indemnified by the Venetian hinterland between the Oglio, the Po, and the Adriatic Sea as well as by Delmatia and Istria. Romagna, Ferrara, and Bologna were to be given to the Venetian Republic.¹⁴⁶

The negotiations for definitive peace took the two countries a long time. Both of them, however, were eager to conclude it. Austria was exhausted, and public opinion in her country, influenced by French revolutionary propaganda, was against war. At this time France was passing through a new phase in her revolutionary development. The coup d' 'etat of 1797 established in the Directory the Jacobin's faction who were anxious to conclude peace with Austria in order to turn their energies to the last member of the Coalition, England. The negotiations for definitive peace took place in the village of Campo Formio in northern Italy instead of Bern, and were opened on August 3, 1797. The Treaty of Campo Formio was based on the Preliminaries of Leoben and was concluded on October 16, 1797, by Bonaparte and Cobenzl, the Austrian representative. In this treaty the territorial readjustments agreed upon in the Preliminaries of Leoben were reaffirmed. In addition, they agreed that the Ionian Islands, along with the Venetian fleet, were to be taken by France, giving her a supreme position in the Adriatic. Austria in return would take the Venetian Islands in the Adriatic and the City of Venice. Austria recognized the Cisalpine Republic which was created by

¹⁴⁶Stewart, Documentary Survey, op. cit., pp. 688-691.

Napoleon in northern Italy. Austria pledged herself to use her good offices to procure from the Holy Roman Empire the cession to France of all German lands west of the Rhine. France, in return, would use her endeavors to secure for the Emperor the Archbishopric of Salzburg and part of southeast Bavaria. If either party was to procure any more acquisitions in Germany, the other should be given equivalent indemnity. The two contracting parties agreed that the act of ratification of the present treaty should be exchanged in due form at Rastadt Congress, which was to include all member states of the Germanic Empire.¹⁴⁷

By the Treaty of Campo Formio the war between France and Austria, which began in 1792, came to an end. Austria had lost 3,640,000 inhabitants but gained 3,050,000 in Italy.¹⁴⁸ The two powers had thus settled their territorial disputes at the expense of the Venetian Republic and the lesser states of the Holy Roman Empire. This Treaty also assured France of a predominant seat in the German affairs by inviting her to Rastadt Congress. By this Treaty, Napoleon had achieved his first major diplomatic triumph. By it he materialized for France the dream of the generations of having the French frontiers extended to the Rhine. Another significant result of Campo Formio is that it gave the fatal blow to the First Coalition by the desertion of Austria. England now had to fight the formidable enemy alone.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 702-709.

¹⁴⁸Roae, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 282.

British Peace Overtures

In July, 1794, important political changes occurred in France. Robespierre had fallen along with his Terror regime. This ended the dictatorial powers of the Committee of Public Safety, and the Convention once again retained its supreme control over the government. To these changes in France's internal affairs, King George III referred in his message to Parliament on October 29, 1794, as being favorable for negotiation. It is, however, hard to believe that such changes in France, which did not change the basis of the French foreign policy, were the real reasons which induced England to seek peace. Such were the views of some of the opposition members in the House of Commons, who challenged the ministers to tell what changes had taken place in France's policies that would make England approach her for peace. The real reasons were certainly other than those the King mentioned in his message. The real reasons were to be found in Pitt's belief that although France was victorious on the continent, she was, nevertheless, in a state of exhaustion, and she would submit to any terms of peace England would propose if some consideration were given to France's conquests.¹⁴⁹ It was evident now to the British government that although England herself might feel secure, thanks to her navy, the war, if continued, would be a very lengthy one. England, standing alone for most of her allies had deserted her, could not hope to defeat France on

¹⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 702-709.

land. Besides, even if England had not been able to achieve her aims on the continent, she had achieved considerable success in overseas territories. Her overseas conquests would give England good grounds for bargaining in the suggested negotiations.

It cannot be said, however, that Pitt was sure or very hopeful that such negotiations would take place, still less that they would be successful. But his policy was twofold, and he thought that he would profit in both cases. If such negotiations would successfully terminate the war, with many of England's aims of the war achieved, then his position would be immensely strengthened at home. If France would refuse to make peace, then Pitt's administration would gain heartier support at home for the financial and military efforts necessary for probably two more campaigns.¹⁵⁰ Hence, the question that had to be considered was not whether Pitt had been sincere in his attempt to obtain peace, but rather if the nature of the terms suggested by England would be practical and possible enough to expect France to agree.

The first British approach to the French came on May 8, 1795. Wickham, the British minister at the Basle, applied in writing to his French colleague, Barthelemy, asking whether France was in favor of a congress consisting of the belligerent powers for the purpose of concluding a general peace. He also asked what grounds of pacification France would propose. The answer came on March 26, 1796, stating that France ardently desired peace but was in doubt whether the English ministers

¹⁵⁰Laprade, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

had the same sincere wishes. France indicated her fears that the proposed congress might be endless. The Directory went on to say that it was ready to consider any proposals that would not conflict with the existing law of France. This meant that France was not ready to discuss anything related to the Austrian Netherlands and other territories already annexed by France. The British government considered this answer as contrary to peace negotiations and ended the attempt by publishing the two notes accompanied by an announcement stating that the French policy made the continuation of war absolutely necessary.¹⁵¹

Considering Prussian desertion of the Coalition, Austria's sincerity and determination to continue the war wavering, Austria's demands for big loans, and the threat of the Irish revolution, Pitt and his colleagues decided to make a new peace overture to France. Hence, the second British peace overture to France was made on September 2, 1796. A request was sent through the Danish minister in London for a passport for a British diplomat to go to France. The French agreed to receive a British delegation if it would come to negotiate with full powers, and they proposed Paris for the purpose. Lord Malmesbury was the British choice for the task, assisted by Jackson, the British minister at Madrid.¹⁵²

The terms of peace to which England was agreeable were as follows: give to France Savoy, Nice, and all her Rhinish

¹⁵¹ Stanhope, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

¹⁵² Laprade, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.

conquests not belonging to Austris, and England to cede back all the French conquered colonies; and to restore to Holland all her colonies except the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and Cochin. If France was absolutely determined to keep the Austrian Netherlands and Austria was willing to exchange it for Bavaris, then England would consent to the transfer. Moreover, the Anglo-Austrian Alliance stated that England should not make a peace with France that would outstrip Austria of any part of her territory; hence, England was unable to conclude peace with France without Austria's consent.¹⁵³

In spite of the fact that Malmesbury was supposed to go to Paris with full powers to negotiate, to conclude, and to sign the agreement, the above-noted consideration limited his freedom of action.¹⁵⁴ Further instructions were sent to him at Paris from Grenville, putting more limits on his powers of negotiating. In a letter dated November 22, 1796, Grenville requested him to refer to home instructions if the British proposals for peace would be accepted and the business would turn to consider details. Furthermore, if Malmesbury met no difficulties, although Grenville expected many because of England's obligations to her allies, Malmesbury should refer to home instructions after the adoption of the general principles of peace.¹⁵⁵ Malmesbury, himself, objected to these limitations in his powers as adverse

¹⁵³Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-48.

¹⁵⁴Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 299-300.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 316-317.

to dealing with the French successfully. He wrote to Canning, the British Undersecretary of State, complaining of this situation:

Surely you will not now hesitate to send me a specific "projet" and broad instructions. If I am again to go on with Notes and Memorials, I had better be recalled; it would only defeat everything good which has been or may be done, and in the end force me to give up the business and recall myself.¹⁵⁶

As for the negotiations, Malmesbury suggested that France enter into negotiations for the purpose of concluding a general peace in Europe with England and her allies in particular. When Delacroix, the French negotiator and Minister for Foreign Affairs, asked about the possibility of separate peace between France and England, Malmesbury's answer was in the negative.¹⁵⁷ Delacroix expressed the dissatisfaction of the Directory with the British proposals and considered them no different than those offered at Basle in 1795. The French did not make any counterproposals but requested that Malmesbury present new ones. When Delacroix asked if England would acknowledge the Republic, Malmesbury answered affirmatively.¹⁵⁸ The rock which blocked the way of the negotiation and prevented its development was Belgium. France was not ready to discuss this matter since Belgium was already annexed under the new French constitution as a part of France, and, hence, the Directory could never change its status. Delacroix plainly expressed the view that France's intentions and interests were on the continent and not in the colonies. He stated to

¹⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 316-317.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 297-282.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 309-310.

Malmesbury:

I should be better pleased with an addition of four villages on the frontiers of the Republic than by acquisition of the richest island among the Antilles, and should be even sorry to see Pondicherry and Chandernagore again belonging to France.¹⁵⁹

Thus, Delacroix emphasized the idea that France would never give up her newly annexed Belgic provinces but that she was agreeable to bargain and to abandon her other conquests in Europe and the colonies. From November 11, 1796 on, Malmesbury became more and more disillusioned about the French sincerity for concluding peace. He asked the Directory either to accept his proposals, based upon the idea of compensatory restitutions as basis for negotiations, or otherwise to offer some of her own. The Directory declined, indicating to him that they desired that the Belgic problem should be above any discussion. Furthermore, the French suspected Malmesbury's frequent dispatches to London as being accounts about France's internal affairs and as trying to contact certain French reactionary elements in Paris.¹⁶⁰ This accusation was not altogether without grounds. One could find much evidence to support it in Malmesbury's Diaries and Correspondence.¹⁶¹

Thus, the negotiations reached a deadlock and the French decided to end it. On December 19, 1796, Delacroix sent Malmesbury a note requiring him and his suite to leave Paris within

¹⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 331-335.

¹⁶⁰Stanhope, op. cit., II, p. 403.

¹⁶¹Regarding this point see Malmesbury's dispatches to London in Malmesbury, op. cit., III, pp. 289-291, 319-320, 325-329, and 346-347.

forty-eight hours. Delacroix said in his note that the Directory would listen to no proposals contrary to the edicts which had fixed the limits of the French territory.¹⁶² Politically, this last act of the Directory was greatly to the advantage of Pitt's administration. In spite of Fox's brilliant address, in which he accused Pitt of not being sincere in his peace overtures, Pitt, nevertheless, received warm support from Parliament and public opinion alike.

The military and political scene of Europe in 1797 brought no better prospects for England. Austria had received disastrous defeats in Italy, and Napoleon threatened Vienna. By the Leoben Preliminaries in April, 1797, Austria had come to terms with France without consulting her ally England. The Triple Alliance of 1795 was, in fact, dissolved. Paul, who succeeded Catherine II, was not in favor of his mother's policies.¹⁶³ England herself was disabled and endangered by the navy mutinies. Pitt, seeing England destitute of efficient allies, short of money, burdened with debts and taxation, and plagued with mutinies of her fleet, was set on peace. He was encouraged by the affairs of the parties in France, for in May, 1797, the moderates had gained a majority in the legislative councils.¹⁶⁴

On July 1, 1797, the British government proposed to France a negotiation for preliminaries of peace which would be arranged

¹⁶² Stanhope, *op. cit.*, II, p. 403.

¹⁶³ Rose, *The Struggle*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

¹⁶⁴ Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 395-396.

for a future European congress. This proposal was rejected by the Directory, who would not allow any concert of action between England and Austria or any discussion concerning the general interest of Europe. The French, however, would agree to negotiate with England for a separate and definitive peace and suggested Lille for the purpose.¹⁶⁵ King George III was not in favor of these peace overtures. On April 9, 1797, he wrote Pitt a letter expressing his sentiments in this regard:

I think this country has taken every humiliating step for seeking peace the warmest advocates for that object could suggest, and they have met with a conduct from the enemy, bordering on contempt of the same nature; from any fear of destroying every remaining spark of vigour in this once firm nation.....

If the Low Countries remain in the possession of France, and the former United Provinces continue a Department State of the former, one may talk of balances of power, but they cannot exist; and the same chain of reasoning that will admit the above measures will, I fear, not prevent France from adding all the territory between her and the banks of the Rhine to her possessions.¹⁶⁶

Grenville took great offense at the French answer and wanted to stop any further attempt, but Pitt and the majority of the Cabinet outvoted him, favoring the purauance of peace negotiations with France.¹⁶⁷ Hence, on the next morning Grenville sent a dispatch to Delacroix stating the willingness of England to open negotiations at Lille and naming her representative to be Lord Malmesbury who would be given full powers. In reference to

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 396.

¹⁶⁶Stanhope, op. cit., III, Appendix p. iii.

¹⁶⁷Adams, op. cit., p. 56.

the idea of separate peace, he stated that England would be bound to negotiate on behalf of her ally, Portugal.¹⁶⁸

On July 3, 1797, Malmesbury landed on the French soil and proceeded to Lille where he met the French negotiators, Le Tourneur, the Director and head of the legation, and Le Pelley, the Minister of Marine, and Maret.¹⁶⁹ Malmesbury's instructions were more flexible and broad this time. England would accept the French annexation of Belgium, Luxemburg, Nice, and Savoy. England would also return to France, Spain and Holland and all the colonies conquered by England, except Trinidad and the Cape, which she would exchange for Ceylon.¹⁷⁰ As a last resort Malmesbury would demand no more than Ceylon.¹⁷¹

In the second conference held on July 7, 1797, Malmesbury suggested that England would negotiate on behalf of her ally, Portugal, while France would represent the interests of her allies, Holland and Spain. This was agreed upon. Le Tourneur commenced by stipulating that no proposals should be made in contradiction with the Constitution, Laws, and Treaties of France. This was accepted by Malmesbury, if the same would be considered in regard to England, except for the secret articles in the treaties that England did not know. This, of course, meant England's recognition of the annexed territories.¹⁷²

In the third conference Malmesbury presented the French

¹⁶⁸ Stanhope, *op. cit.*, III, p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ Biro, *op. cit.*, II, p. 788.

¹⁷⁰ Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

¹⁷¹ Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁷² Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 381-383.

legation with a rough project for a peace treaty. In it he crossed out any exchanges at the expense of France, but maintained those at the expense of Spain and Holland. By doing this he showed disregard for what he had previously agreed upon respecting the French treaties with Spain and Holland by which France had guaranteed the territorial integrity of her allies.¹⁷³ In this plan of Malmesbury, England was to keep the Cape, Cochin, and Trinidad.¹⁷⁴

The French answer to his plan was not expected by Malmesbury. It involved three preliminary points to which England was requested to yield before any further discussions. The first was the renunciation of the ancient claim to France included in the King's title. Second was the restoration of the ships seized at Toulon or the payment of their value equivalent. Third was the release of all claims to revenues of the Austrian Netherlands founded on the English loans to Austria.¹⁷⁵ All three points were not of enough significance to block the way for a peace treaty, but they irritated the British with the preliminary concessions demanded by the French.

The deadly blow to the Lille negotiation came when, on July 15, the French informed Malmesbury that all British conquests from France or any of her allies must be returned.

¹⁷³Biro, *op. cit.*, II, p. 789.

¹⁷⁴Adams, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁷⁵Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 385-389.

That everything the King had conquered from all and each of his enemies should be restored; and that, till this restoration was consented to, the negotiation was not even to begin.¹⁷⁶

The negotiations were prolonged, for the Directory members were divided into two parties. The Moderates, on the one hand, favored peace, while the Jacobins were in favor of war. On September 4, 1797, a coup d' état was effected by the army and the moderates were condemned to imprisonment, and the Jacobin elements, the war party, held power. Two new French negotiators were sent to Lille and asked Malmesbury if he would agree to restoration of all British conquests. When he said that this was beyond his powers, he was ordered to leave France in twenty-four hours.¹⁷⁷ By doing this the third British peace overture had failed and the conflict continued between the two powerful enemies, one who was master of the seas, and the other master of the land.

In summary, the victories of the French over the armies of the First Coalition in 1793 were followed in the years between 1793 and 1798, not only by more military victories, but by amazing diplomatic successes as well. The Peace of Basle was the first fatal diplomatic blow to the First Coalition, by which Prussia assumed an attitude of neutrality. The United Provinces, in her peace treaty of May, 1795, with France, not only withdrew from the Coalition but also allied herself to France and

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 402.

¹⁷⁷Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 279.

declared war on England. Finally Austria, after a series of disastrous defeats, signed the Peace of Campo Formio with France, by which France became the supreme power of Europe.

England's counteractions against the French diplomatic successes were met with complete failure in this period 1793-1798. Her sea victories over the French were of no material aid to the allied armies in the continent. England tried by all means not to let Prussia and Austria sign peace with France. She offered them subsidies and promised to satisfy their territorial ambitions, but her labors bore no fruit and her allies deserted her and signed peace with France without even consulting her. Seeing the failure of the First Coalition, England tried on three different occasions to approach France in order to negotiate peace.

These British peace overtures took place in 1795, 1796, and 1797. The major reason for all these overtures was the disability of England to beat France in the military field. The major purposes for the British government to extend these overtures were: her desire to end that costly and hopeless war; she hoped that by giving way to France in some continental questions she could gain some of her overseas conquests; and she thought that by these overtures she could gain more support of the British public opinion and hinder the activities of the British malcontents. All these three overtures were extended by the British government under a false assumption that France was on the point of breaking down, was bankrupt, and that she was eager to accept any British terms. Hence, under these circumstances, it is not strange to describe the British peace proposals

in the first and second overtures as being impractical for the situation and position of France. The failure of the third peace overture could be referred to the uncompromising attitude of the French. In fact, both sides desired peace if each of them could have his terms to prevail. Since that was impossible and a compromise was necessary, each of them felt that he could realize his aims by continuation of war. The British felt secure on their island under the protection of their fleet and could easily continue a long war. The French, on the other hand, were victorious on the continent and felt at the time that England could not stop their plans.

THE SECOND COALITION

Military and Diplomatic Developments

Following the Treaty of Campo Formio, the monarchs of Europe looked completely helpless in face of the French domination. This treaty dealt a decisive blow to the traditional system of Europe in general, and in Germany and Italy in particular. In Italy the partition of the Venetian Republic between France and Austria and the creation of Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics gave France a supreme position in northern Italy. France, also, by her new position in Italy, overawed the King of Sardinia and controlled the Adriatic. In Germany the changes were no less significant. France now was holding the left bank of the Rhine. Because of the strife between Austria and Prussia and because of the power of her enemies, France obtained a predominating position in the Rastadt Congress which was, according to the Treaty of Campo Formio, to arrange peace between France and the Holy Roman Empire.

The Rastadt Congress was opened in December, 1797. The principle of the integrity of the Empire acknowledged by the Campo Formio Treaty was abandoned, and the cession of the left bank territory to France was agreed upon. Although Salzburg was given to Austria by the Campo Formio Treaty, France opposed its cession. By playing Prussia and Austria against each other, she was able to secure the adoption of her policies by the Congress. The Congress, however, fell into endless arguments concerning the method of compensating the German princes for the loss of

their possessions to France and the problem of satisfying the ambitions of the two large German powers, Prussia and Austria, at the expense of other German states.¹⁷⁸

In November, 1797, the King of Prussia died and his son, Frederick William III, succeeded him. The new King did not regard the Treaty of Campo Formio with easiness, nor did he welcome the increasing French influence in German affairs. But he, nevertheless, distrusted Austria and feared the dangers that his country would be involved in if he were to abandon his father's neutralist policy established by the Treaty of Basle.¹⁷⁹ He always listened to the Duke of Brunswick, brother-in-law of George III, who saw with concealed dismay the progress of the French armies and their influence in Germany. Both Pitt and Grenville shared the belief of George III that Brunswick could be persuaded to exert his influence at Berlin for the purpose of overthrowing the Chancellor Haugwitz, to whose policy the Treaty of Basle was ascribed. Grenville thought that the young King might be made the chief instrument in forming a Quadruple Alliance--consisting of Russia, Austria, Great Britain, and Prussia--to relieve Europe of French domination.¹⁸⁰

The peace party at the Court of Berlin headed by Prince Henry was all powerful. The Chancellor, Haugwitz, was attached to this party. Thus the young King, although aware of the

¹⁷⁸John Holland Rose, "The Second Coalition," The Cambridge Modern History, VIII, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1934), p. 642. Hereafter cited as Rose, The Second Coalition.

¹⁷⁹Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 283.

¹⁸⁰Dropmore, op. cit., IV, p. 8.

dangers involved in the policies of this party, was not able to oppose it and, hence, he fell under its influence. The Duke of Brunswick tried to induce the young King to alter his father's policy manifested in the Treaty of Basle and to adopt a new line of policy to check the French influence by cooperating with England. He urged him to bring an end to the unwise policies of Haugwitz. The King's answer was that although he was deeply impressed by the rising danger to Europe from France's domination, he, nevertheless, believed that the circumstances and motivations which led his father to conclude the Peace of Basle still stood. He also stated that he still had confidence in Haugwitz and his policies.¹⁸¹ Thus, the British diplomatic activity in Berlin did not produce the hoped for results at this time.

It was a mistake to regard the Peace of Campo Formio as a definitive peace between the two powers concerned. The sphere of their interests was only artificially defined. Beside the fact that Austria signed that peace under the threat of French bayonets, and Austria could not feel happy in seeing France's dominance in Italy and Germany, Austria wanted time to reorganize her armies and to prepare for a future day. Austria did not believe that the Rastadt Congress could bring her any better prospects. Contrarywise, she was more alarmed in seeing the French at the Congress insisting on maintaining their policy of predominance in Europe. Such being the case, it was but natural

¹⁸¹Ibid., pp. 23, 25.

for Austria to send new overtures to England. Thugut suggested that England and Austria must first come to an understanding with each other on certain essential points in order to fix the basis for a Quadruple Alliance against France. These essential points to Thugut were: (1) Financial aid to Austria, which must be a liberal subsidy rather than a loan; (2) Great Britain's ability to continue this aid during the year 1799; and (3) the dispatch of a British fleet to the Mediterranean for the protection of Naples.¹⁸²

Pitt eagerly welcomed the prospect of a new coalition, but he and Grenville doubted that Parliament would agree to grant a subsidy to Austria. Lord Spencer, first Lord of the Admiralty, regarded it above the ability of the British Navy to dispatch a squadron to the Mediterranean at the present time. Hence, Grenville's answer to the Austrian proposal was that the British government would fully support the idea of a Quadruple Alliance. He agreed that England would take the risk and send a fleet to the Mediterranean if the King of Naples would open his ports to it, and if Austria would undertake to defend Naples against France. Grenville, however, declined to discuss the question of subsidy until the Emperor had ratified the Convention of May, 1797.¹⁸³ Grenville also asked the Austrian government, as a

¹⁸²Ibid., p. xix.

¹⁸³This convention was held in London between the Austrian Ambassador and the British officials and arranged the way by which Austria was to pay her loan of 1795 to England. The Emperor declined ratifying this convention, an act which irritated the British government and Parliament and was regarded as a refusal from Austria to fulfill her obligations.

sign of reestablishing confidence between the two countries, to disclose the secret articles of the Treaty of Campo Formio to England.¹⁸⁴ The British answer caused irritation in Vienna where Thugut did not expect such demands from the British. This was expressed in a letter to Grenville from Starhemberg, the Austrian Ambassador at London. This letter went on to say that if England would pledge to furnish Austria with the supplies necessary for the campaign and with an unconditional subsidy promising non-interference with Austrian military operations, then Austria would ratify that convention. Grenville's comment on this Austrian reply was that England could not accept this contrasting attitude of the British honor with Austrian bad faith.¹⁸⁵ Thus, this correspondence bore nothing except more distrust between the two governments and, as a result, their diplomatic relations cooled off for the time being.

It is then not wrong to say that England in the early months of the year 1798 seemed not to have the smallest chance of arousing the continent against France. Her finances showed only a slight recovery from the recent monetary crisis. Ireland, where signs of a rebellion were gathering, foreshadowed the gravest dangers. This danger was many times multiplied by fear of French expeditions to Ireland. This fear was materialized on August 22, 1798, when three French frigates landed seven hundred soldiers in the Bay of Killala. Immediately this small force

¹⁸⁴Dropmore, op. cit., IV, p. 8.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 250-252.

took possession of the town of Killala. Another French force arrived in the Irish waters in October but was scattered by the British warships. The French force in Killala was easily overcome by British troops and was obliged to surrender without being able to make a connection with the Irish rebels.¹⁸⁶ This was not all that embittered the strife between England and France. From October 31, 1796, the Directory had decreed a law excluding all British goods from all lands over which France had control and authorized the capture of such goods, even on neutral ships. Cotton and woolen goods, together with hardware, pottery, and refined sugar were to be considered as of British origin, and their importation was forbidden under threat of confiscation. The execution of these measures and efforts to impose them on Spain and Holland produced the utmost degree of anger in England.¹⁸⁷

Several developments took place on the Italian scene and added both to the French stronghold in the area and to the heating of the conflict between France and Austria. In northern Italy the French held supreme power, which was not counterbalanced by any matching power in central and southern Italy. In this area there was the feeble power of the Papal States in the center and the feudal Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in the south.

¹⁸⁶David C. Douglas, ed., English Historical Documents, XI, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955), pp. 892-893. Hereafter cited as English Historical Documents.

¹⁸⁷George Duruy, ed., Memoirs of Barras, translated Charles E. Roche, III, (London: Osgood, McIlvaine & Co., 1916), p. 172. Hereafter cited as Barras Memoirs.

There was a powerful republican faction in these areas which, with the guidance of the French agents and diplomats, was aiming at the establishment of a republican state. The French Directory wanted to spread her influence southward and to conquer Rome in order to stamp out the Papacy and capture its rich treasures which might be a remedy for France's bankrupt finances. On February 15, 1798, as a result of republican demonstrations around the French embassy at Rome which the Papal horsemen tried to disperse, a member of the French legation was mortally wounded. The French army at once marched to Rome and it surrendered without resistance. Thereupon, the Pope was forced to leave Rome to Tuscany, and Rome was proclaimed a Republic.¹⁸⁸

Even more disastrous to the good fame of the French Republic was the occupation of Switzerland. Bonaparte, in Paris, recommended such a step to the Directory. A reason for intervention was found in the agitation which took place in that country during the closing months of 1797, and this led a few of the natives to call on the French for intervention against the Swiss oligarchy. In the last week of January, 1798, French troops entered Switzerland and occupied the country without any serious resistance. Plunder followed as in the case of Italy, and eight million francs were taken from the Swiss treasury and were contributed to the Egyptian expedition waiting now in Toulon. A republic following the French model was established in Switzer-

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 175.

land under the name of Helvetic Republic.¹⁸⁹

Due to the weakness of the French Navy, Bonaparte advised the Directory against the plan of invading England. Instead he recommended the conquest of Egypt, and this was discussed a long time without making a final decision. The conquest of the fertile Egypt was to Bonaparte only a preliminary step for attacking India and establishing a French empire in Asia and Africa. In Bonaparte's mind such conquest would surely open new markets for French goods and meantime would ruin the backbone of the English strength--their commerce. Another reason for the Egyptian expedition was that the Directory wanted to send away those military men--Bonaparte in particular--whose ambitions could not be satisfied in the now quiet European scene, for their stay in France might be dangerous to the civilian democratic regime of France.¹⁹⁰ Under the warm sun of the summer Bonaparte set sail from Toulon on May 19, 1798. On June 12th he captured Malta and proceeded to Alexandria, which he surprised and easily captured. At the end of July, Bonaparte had won the Battle of the Pyramids and entered Cairo victoriously.¹⁹¹

Important consequences followed the French landing in Egypt. One of these was the Battle of the Nile. England, without yet knowing about the Egyptian expedition, had dispatched a squadron

¹⁸⁹Louis Adolphe Thiers, History of the French Revolution, translated, Frederick Shoberl, IV, (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1845), pp. 250-251.

¹⁹⁰Barras Memoirs, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.

¹⁹¹Rose, The Struggle, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

to the Mediterranean under the command of Nelson. When he heard about this expedition, Nelson searched for it in all possible directions. Finally when he found the French fleet lying at Abuokir Bay near Alexandria, he attacked it promptly and won a crushing victory on August 1, 1798. Out of the thirteen French sails of the line and four frigates, only two ships and frigates were able to escape, the rest being either sunk or captured by the English.¹⁹² This victory of Nelson's not only shut Napoleon up in Egypt but also established the British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

Another area that enkindled the war in Europe was in Naples. The news of the Battle of the Nile threw the Royal family of Naples into a higher pitch of enthusiasm and into daring schemes against the French in Italy. They now decided to expel the French from Rome, in spite of the warnings from Vienna and London advising against such an ill-planned scheme. They were encouraged in their plan by Nelson and the British Ambassador at Naples, who had a strong personal friendship with the Neapolitan Royal family.¹⁹³ Hence, on October 23, 1798, the Neapolitan army crossed the borders and attacked Rome, and the French evacuated it because of their inferior numbers. But this victory of the Neapolitans was short-lived. On December 9, 1798, the French attacked Rome and won an easy victory over their enemy, driving them back to Naples. In December the Royal family fled

¹⁹²English Historical Documents, *op. cit.*, pp. 890-891.

¹⁹³Rose, The Second Coalition, *op. cit.*, p. 651.

from Naples to Sicily, and on January 23, 1799, the French occupied Naples and established the Parthenopean Republic.¹⁹⁴

The rupture with Naples made the French Directory decide to pursue vigorous action in northern Italy. They had long wanted to settle things with Piedmont. Looking at a European war as certain, they now sent their troops to Turin, using as a justification for this action the disorder in that Kingdom as a result of the republican agitation. Charles Emmanuel IV, King of Piedmont, was obliged to abdicate his throne on December 9, 1798, and to retire to the island of Sardinia. An indemnity of 10,300,000 francs was imposed over Piedmont, an action which caused widespread revolt and weakened the French position in northern Italy.¹⁹⁵

These French acts in Italy, Switzerland, and Egypt brought widespread reaction in the European capitals. Austria saw the balance of interest established by the Treaty of Campo Formio altered to her great disadvantage. As a result of the conquest of Egypt, Turkey declared war against France on September 11, 1798. Paul I of Russia, who had much hatred for the Revolution which was now coupled with the endangering of his interests in the Ottoman Empire by the French, reversed the policy of his mother and concluded an alliance with Turkey on December 23, 1798.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴Barras Memoirs, op. cit., pp. 366-367.

¹⁹⁵Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 654.

¹⁹⁶Brinton, op. cit., p. 230.

Rise and Fall of the Second Coalition

The relations between England and Austria had been strained after the conclusion of the Campo Formio Treaty when Austria deserted the First Coalition. Suspicion and distrust clouded their relations in this period and prevented any open discussion for improving them. What irritated England most was that Austria showed signs of disinterest in paying back her loan of 1795 to England. The events of the year 1798, however, made both sides agreeable to an understanding with one another in order to cooperate against their common foe--France.

Count Cobentzl, who took the place of Thugut as a Minister for Foreign Affairs, went to Petersburg to encourage the Czar to bring closer relations between the two Courts. He tried to convince the Czar to help in regard to two points: (1) To prevail on the King of Prussia to guarantee the neutrality of all Germany, so as to leave the Emperor free to employ his own forces in Italy and Switzerland, and (2) to obtain a promise of an adequate subsidy from England before ratifying the financial convention of May, 1797.¹⁹⁷ Relative to this negotiation Count Woronzow, the Russian Ambassador at London, was instructed by the Czar to discuss with British officials the points of difference between England and Austria. In August, 1798, Grenville told the Russian Ambassador that unless Austria ratified the convention of May, 1797, the British government could not secure

¹⁹⁷Dropmore, op. cit., IV, pp. 293-294.

the approval of Parliament for any new subsidy to her. If Austria would make the ratification, then England would enter into negotiations with her concerning the military operations in Switzerland and the Mediterranean and would cooperate in employing the subsidized Russian army.¹⁹⁸ Objections to Austrian subsidies were not limited to Parliament, for some of the Cabinet were also not agreeable. The Minister, Lord Loughborough, wrote to Pitt on October 5, 1798, concerning this, saying that the Austrian request for British subsidy without ratifying the convention of 1797 "is irrational and unjust."¹⁹⁹

England still distrusted the Austrian policies. Grenville wrote in this regard on October 4, 1798:

The Councils of Austria are still wavering and irresolute, and if the insolence of the Directory is so far humbled by this last blow,²⁰⁰ as to induce them to hold out fresh lures to Vienna of acquisitions in Italy, I would not answer for it that the Austrians might not catch at bait, though they see the hook, which it no longer conceals.²⁰¹

The British answer to the Czar concerning his effort of mediation did not please him. Hence, he postponed cooperation with England until she was prepared to enter into agreement with Austria. From her side England felt that the state of affairs in the two Courts at this time was still not favorable for a successful negotiation. The best thing for England to do, therefore, was to wait until the other two Courts changed their

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 298.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 335.

²⁰⁰The Battle of the Nile.

²⁰¹Dropmore, op. cit., IV, p. 335.

attitudes. Grenville wrote to Pitt in this regard on October 28, 1798, that the victory of the British fleet in the Mediterranean still had no important effect at Vienna. Britain had to wait for better proposals from Vienna.²⁰² Thus the whole plan of a new coalition, which England was eager to see, was threatened to fall to the ground. Count Woronzow saved cutting off the negotiations by sending his master a dispatch assuring him that it was not in the hands of the British government, but rather in those of the Parliament to grant a subsidy to Austria.²⁰³ Paul, however, was always eager to cooperate with England, and he became more eager after the French occupation of Malta and Egypt.

The Maltese affairs touched Paul more than anything else. The Order of St. John of Jerusalem,²⁰⁴ as now reconstituted and settled in Paul's palace, had proclaimed him as their Grand Master. He was, therefore, interested in Malta. England, exploiting this point of weakness in the Czar, at once recognized his new title. This eased many difficulties standing in the way of an Anglo-Russian Alliance. During July, 1798, Paul made an overture to the British government for an offensive alliance. Pitt, in a letter to Grenville dated August 18, 1798, eagerly welcomed the Russian proposal. He said in this letter:

²⁰²Ibid., p. 354.

²⁰³Ibid., p. 447.

²⁰⁴A military society established in the thirteenth Century as a part of the Crusades efforts in the Holy Land. After their expulsion from the Holy Land they established themselves in Malta as a basis for their operations. They continued in Malta till Bonaparte expelled them from the Island.

If I thought there could be any hesitation or difference of opinion on this subject of the answer to be sent to Russia, I should not lose a moment in coming to town. But I am persuaded we shall all agree most cordially in going as far as meet this overture as our pecuniary resources will allow.²⁰⁵

He continued to say that if Russia would furnish the field with 60,000 men, Great Britain would engage herself to pay 300,000 pounds at the time of ratification and 100,000 pounds per month later on. At the end of the war an additional allowance of 50,000 pounds or even 70,000 pounds per month would be paid for a period during which the agreement would be in operation.²⁰⁶ Negotiations continued and finally ended with the signing of the alliance on December 29, 1798. This agreement bound the two powers together in a close alliance with the general aim of bringing France into her pre-Revolution boundaries.²⁰⁷ This agreement required England to pay the sum of 225,000 pounds as preparation money, and to pay a monthly subsidy of 75,000 pounds. After the conclusion of peace, further payment at a rate of 37,000 pounds per month would be paid. Russia on her side would furnish the campaign with 45,000 troops.²⁰⁸

In the King's message to Parliament about this Anglo-Russian Alliance he said:

His Majesty thinks proper to acquaint this House that he had, some time since, concluded an eventual engagement with his good brother and ally, the Emperor of Russia, for employing 45,000 men against the common enemy, in such manner as the state of affairs in Europe

²⁰⁵ Dropmore, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 283.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 283.

²⁰⁷ Rose, *The Second Coalition*, *op. cit.*, p. 648.

²⁰⁸ Hansard's Debates, XXXIV, p. 1043.

at that period appeared to render most advantageous.²⁰⁹

Thus, one of the large powers had now come to the side of England in her fierce struggle against France. This alliance made the British hopes for forming a coalition against France run high. Russia, in particular, because she had no territorial ambitions to gain from the war, was trusted by both the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. Since the Russian army was expected to act in the West with a Prussian force, Grenville cherished high hopes of inducing Prussia to take up arms for the liberation of Holland. Cooperation with Prussia almost necessarily involved alienation from Austria. Accordingly, since Austria was still maintaining her suspicious reserve, Grenville turned all his energies to bring Prussia to an understanding. Hence, Grenville dispatched his brother Thomas on a special mission for the purpose of arranging an Anglo-Russo-Prussian Alliance. But the influence of the French party at Berlin was prevailing and the King of Prussia decided to stand aloof and Thomas Grenville's mission failed.²¹⁰

In the closing month of the year 1798, when a continental war seemed eminent, Grenville sent proposals to Petersburg for the purpose of making plans to face the expected consequences. The proposals stated that Prussia should be persuaded to intervene, but this could not be expected before operations had begun to expel the French from Holland. Grenville wished that the

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 1042.

²¹⁰Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 290.

general aims of such a coalition be specified and those of each member stated. He wanted by this to avoid contradiction in aims--a situation which had contributed to the failure of the First Coalition. Grenville asked the Czar to formulate the articles of the proposed Quadruple Alliance in order to present them to the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. Grenville, however, suggested the following as leading provisions: the reduction of France to her limits before the Revolution, the independence of Switzerland, the union of Holland and Belgium under the Prince of Orange, and the restoration of the Kingdom of Sardinia and the integrity of Germany. The proposals continued to state that Austria should be contented with the recovery of Lombardy, and the King of Prussia should be asked to state what acquisitions he had in view. In order to obtain the necessary cooperation between Austria and Prussia, the Czar would guarantee to each the observance by the other of the condition agreed upon in the proposed treaty.²¹¹ Grenville's letter of proposals ended by saying to Whitworth:

His Majesty has been induced by his entire reliance on the sentiments and principles of the Emperor of Russia to enable you to open yourself thus fully and confidentially on all the different points which respect the final settlement of Europe. But important as these details are, it is still more so that some adjustment should be made by the powerful intervention of the Emperor of Russia, who can alone quiet the jealousies of Austria and Prussia, and by his guarantee give to those powers a confidence in the mutual execution of their engagements to each other.²¹²

²¹¹Dropmore, op. cit., IV, pp. 327-329.

²¹²Ibid., p. 380.

On December 30, 1798, the Czar replied to Lord Grenville's proposals. He said that he had spared no effort to form a strong coalition against France--(1) By offering to mediate between England and Austria, a matter in which he still hoped that England would agree to subsidize Austria; (2) by sending an army to support the King of Naples;²¹³ and (3) by asking the King of Prussia to join hands in forming a Quadruple Alliance with the following conditions: Russia would aid him with 45,000 troops and England with 900,000 pounds for executing the campaign of Holland; the union of Holland and Belgium; and the liberty of the Prussian King to enlarge his domains at the expense of France. Austria, the Czar continued, had consented to these provisions and he had encouraged Austria to take the initiative in opening the campaign. The Czar also suggested that the Pope should be restored to Rome.²¹⁴

The Anglo-Russian Alliance of December, 1798, was a successful basis for further closer cooperation between the two countries as well as for the formation of the Second Coalition. In January, 1799, England joined the Turkish-Russian Alliance. The Turkish and Russian fleets worked jointly in the Eastern Mediterranean against the French in the Ionian Islands and the Adriatic. This enabled the British fleet to concentrate its

²¹³When Naples was endangered by the French, Paul sent an army to help her and which was to pass through Austrian territory. But this army, in fact, did not reach Naples when it was capitulated by the French. It was not until 1797 that the Russian troops were sent to Italy.

²¹⁴Dropmore, op. cit., IV, pp. 427-429.

operation in the western part of that sea and around the coasts of Egypt. Both powers, Russia and England, had concluded treaties of assistance with the King of Naples. The Russian troops marched to Galicia and waited for the opening of hostilities in order to assist the King of Naples.²¹⁵ Upon hearing about the Anglo-Russian Alliance, the French Directory, through her plenipotentiaries at Rastadt, threatened to leave the Congress if Austria would permit the Russian troops to pass through her territory. Also, the Directory tried to make overtures to Russia to win her over and to prevent the creation of a new coalition which now seemed serious. They offered the Czar a plan for partitioning the Ottoman Empire, an idea which interested many of the Russian Ministers, but the Czar was resolved to act on the side of England and rejected the French plans.²¹⁶

These events of the year 1798, the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Alliance, and the serious steps which the Czar was taking by marching his troops assured the Austrian government that her problems with France must be settled by the sword and that she would not stand in the field alone. She was resolved now to go to war and take advantage of the Russian military aid. On January 31, 1799, the French plenipotentiaries at Rastadt warned the Austrian envoy that war would ensue if they were not informed within fifteen days of the retreat of Russian troops from Austrian territory. The Austrian government returned no answer.

²¹⁵Rose, The Second Coalition, op. cit., p. 648.

²¹⁶Barras Memoirs, op. cit., p. 387.

Hence, on March 1, 1799, two French armies crossed the Rhine and Austria declared war on March 12, starting by that act the war of the Second Coalition. This Coalition now included Austria, Russia, England, Portugal, Naples, Sardinia, and Turkey. On March 25, while the French envoys at Rastadt were still negotiating with smaller German states, the Austrian Archduke Charles won a great battle over the French at Stockach. On April 8, the Austrian Emperor launched a declaration dissolving the Congress of Rastadt.²¹⁷

For the arrangement of the operations of the campaign an alliance was concluded between Austria and Russia for the purpose of dispatching 60,000 Russian troops and the fierce fighter Suvoroff to assist the Austrians in northern Italy. This expedition, however, was delayed until the end of March, 1799, when it entered Vienna. At once a dispute arose between the two governments about the command of the operations. Austria wanted the Russians to be merely instrumental in her hands and for her aims. Another Russian army, commanded by Korsakoff to operate on the Rhine and subsidized by British money, marched westward at the end of April, 1799. Dispute again took place between England and Austria in regard to the employment of this army. Austria pointed to the Palatinate while England wanted to invade Switzerland as a preliminary to an Austro-Russian invasion of the French province, French-Comte. Finally, the British opinion on this point pre-

²¹⁷Rose, The Second Coalition, op. cit., p. 655.

veiled.²¹⁸

In the military field in Italy, Suvoroff, the Commander of the allied forces, defeated the French in a series of battles and drove them out of Milan and Turin. The French, who were hampered by the risings of Italian peasantry, were obliged to evacuate all of Italy and to take the defensive at Genoa.²¹⁹ As a result, the Roman, Cisalpine, and Parthenopean Republics fell. Paul I now ordered the restoration of the King of Sardinia to Turin, an action which upset the Austrian Emperor who was looking for the annexation of all of northern Italy. The Emperor wanted to get rid of Suvoroff in Italy. He suggested to London that Suvoroff be transferred to Switzerland as a preliminary for the invasion of French-Comte. To secure the acceptance of the Czar, Grenville first made the proposal to him, and when Paul agreed, Francis II expressed his approval of Paul's wish. Suvoroff, who was planning to attack Nice, received the new instructions with indignation. He was ordered to break the French defense in Switzerland, to find subsistence in the central area of that country, and to join Korsakoff near Zurich. Such a plan was far from being practical or wise. It ignored the many difficult problems which Suvoroff was required to overcome.²²⁰ It signified one of the serious mistakes of the masters of the Second Coalition where the civilians drew military plans on paper

²¹⁸Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 291.

²¹⁹Barras Memoirs, op. cit., pp. 416-418.

²²⁰Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., p. 212.

to be forwarded to the armies for execution.

Switzerland was to see the most dramatic disasters of the allies brought by their jealousies. Suvoroff was slow in his progress, while Korsakoff was defeated by Massena at Zurich. Another Austrian corps sent to help Suvoroff was also driven out of Switzerland by the French. Suvoroff, with his almost starving men, forced their way and captured several French posts and entered Lindan in the central area of Switzerland. He refused, thenceforth, to cooperate with the Austrians and retired to his winter quarters on October 30. Thus, the plan which, with intelligent cooperation between the two Russian armies and that of the Archduke Charles, might have laid Switzerland at the feet of the Allies, led to failure in achieving their planned objectives and ruined the hopes of the Coalition.²²¹

The autumn of 1799 was disastrous to the Allies, not only in Switzerland but also in Holland. On June 22, 1799, Pitt made a convention with Russia for a joint invasion of Holland. On the part of England the principle object was the capture of the Dutch fleet in the Texel and the destruction of the naval depot, which deprived France of any naval aid from Holland, while both the allied powers hoped to follow up the Archduke Charles' successes by threatening the French frontier. Russia promised to supply 17,000 troops to be subsidized by England, while England would send 13,000 men. On August 27th a British force of 10,000

²²¹Rose, The Second Coalition, op. cit., pp. 661-662.

men landed on the Dutch coast. The Dutch seamen, who were attached to the House of Orange, rose against their officers and surrendered to the British. Thirteen ships were thus captured by the British. The British and Russian troops, however, were not able to make any advance on land, and they were shut up on a little strip of land on the coast. The invasion failed, and the British troops were withdrawn to England while the Russian troops were stationed in the channel islands.²²²

This failure of the allied forces in Switzerland and Holland angered the Czar. He accused Austrian policy, under Thugut direction, as being dictated by the anxiety of acquiring Piedmont. He was irritated by the support which Thugut had received from the British government in regard to his plan in executing the war. He believed that his troops were sacrificed in Switzerland to Austrian selfishness, and that they were not well treated in the Dutch campaign, and that they were badly provided for in the channel islands. In December, 1799, he wrote to his Ambassador at London that he intended to recall his troops and to abandon the Coalition. He further said that he would, however, during the winter of 1799-1800, leave them in their present quarters, hoping that those in the channel islands might be used against the Biscay coast of France in the spring, as it was previously planned. He said that he would remain in the Coalition on the condition that Thugut would be dismissed and Austria would renounce her system of excessive acquisitions. Thugut was not

²²²Hunt, op. cit., pp. 430-431.

dismissed and England, planting her hopes on the successes of the Austrian armies, was not able to ease the Czar's fury. Thus, the Czar abandoned the Coalition, an act which was the fatal blow to its very existence.²²³

Soon the Austrian armies proved to be no match to the French under the leadership of Bonaparte, who landed on the southern French coast on October 9, 1799. He at once set to work and overthrew the Directory and established himself as First Consul with almost dictatorial powers. England tried to face the conditions by backing Austria to whom she granted a subsidy of 2,000,000 pounds on June 20, 1800.²²⁴ But nothing was to stand in the way of the genius and ambitions of Bonaparte, who, as he had brought Austria to her knees in 1797, had decided now to repeat the same story. In the middle of June, 1800, he won the decisive victory of Marengo in Italy over the Austrians and forced them to sign the separate peace of Luneville on February 9, 1801. Thus, the Second Coalition was torn to pieces, and England was again forced to face her formidable enemy alone.

In summary, England seemed to have no chance in arousing the continent against France in the early months of 1798. Prussia insisted on staying neutralist, while distrust and complications prevailed over the Anglo-Austrian relations and prevented any fruitful cooperation between them. By the end of the year 1798, important events happened that turned the tide to England's

²²³Rose, The Struggle, op. cit., pp. 295-296.

²²⁴Ibid., pp. 296-297.

advantage. One of these important things was France's new conquests in Italy, Switzerland, and Egypt. These actions aroused the European powers, particularly Austria and Paul I of Russia. The latter was especially concerned about Malta, which Bonaparte had occupied, and believed that the French Revolutionary principles should be stamped out by force. This attitude of Paul was skilfully exploited by the English diplomacy. As a result an Anglo-Russian treaty of alliance was signed in December, 1798. Austria, on the other hand, became convinced now that France's ambitions could not be satisfied, and the balance of interest had been altered to Austria's great disadvantage by the new French actions of aggression. Also, the Anglo-Russian alliance and the British naval victory in the Battle of the Nile assured the Austrian government that she would not stand alone against France, and her chances for winning the war had become more promising. The Russian troop movements on Austrian territory excited France, and war broke out in March, 1799.

The allied armies were able to achieve important victories in the year 1799, and to threaten France itself; but soon the allies were to receive a series of crushing defeats. These defeats were, in the first place, due to differences between the allies in their aims and military operations. Russia accused Austria of mistreating the Russian troops and, by trying to achieve selfish aims, disregarding former agreements between the allies. Therefore, Russia withdrew from the war in the winter of 1799-1800.

The return of Napoleon to France in October, 1799, and his

assumption of power gave France new strength to cope with her enemies, who were much weakened by the Russian withdrawal. It was but natural then for the allies to be defeated by Napoleon and for Austria to seek a separate peace with France. This peace was realized in February, 1801, by the Treaty of Luneville which marked the full collapse of the Second Coalition.

CONCLUSIONS

A traditional concern of European politics of the eighteenth century was the balance of power. In the event that a power became much stronger than the other powers, the weaker felt insecure and tried to undermine the strong by various means. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century France was recognized as the largest single power in Europe. Her expansionistic ambitions alarmed her neighbors who, on different occasions, joined forces in order to hinder French acquisitions. England, although unable to match France's power on the continent, was able, however, to build strength and prestige in her overseas territories. England emerged in this period with the largest colonial empire and her navy stood first in the world. This naturally brought the enmity and jealousies of the other maritime powers, Holland, Spain, and France, with whom England shared a long history of rivalry for sea supremacy.

England, with long experience in the maintenance of her security and interests, came to definite conclusions. In the first place, she decided to maintain sea supremacy and to hinder the joining of other maritime powers against her. In the second place, she attempted to satisfy her territorial interests in the overseas areas and not on the continent. This gave her the advantage of being trusted by the continental land powers, who could feel safe in asking for her help against other continental powers. In the third place, Great Britain felt that her security could not be maintained if a single power became predominant on

the continent. Therefore, England attempted to maintain a balance of power on the continent. In the event that a power would try to dominate, England at once would join her opponents in order to force that power to relinquish such schemes. In the fourth place, she was particularly concerned about Holland. The Dutch shores are very close to the southeastern coast of England. Hence, if a large power would control Holland, then England would be in permanent danger. Also, the harbors of Holland are deep and protective; thus large fleets could be embarked from them. This would place England under a continuous threat of invasion. Furthermore, the rivers meeting the sea in Holland are navigable for a long distance and are of great commercial importance to countries in central Europe. Therefore, the power controlling Holland would have great influence in that area.

Understanding these basic tenets of British foreign policy is the backbone for understanding the role of British foreign policy toward the continent in the period of revolutionary wars. England's outlook on the revolution was twofold. On the one hand, she believed that the revolution might bring political reforms and changes to the French pre-revolutionary expansionistic policies. On the other hand and more important, England believed that the revolution would disable and undermine France's strength. Hence, in regard to both considerations, the revolution seemed to be favorable to the British policies, and England, therefore, had no desire to intervene in French internal affairs. But the revolution proved both of the former points false. The

French revolutionary armies defeated both Austria and Prussia and then they occupied the Low Countries. This latter act could not be overlooked by England, and naturally, she at once decided on war. England primarily did not go to war in opposition to the revolution's principles but rather for political reasons concerning her security.

The British line of policy in regard to the first Coalition could be considered as a major reason for its collapse. The British proved to be ignorant about France's ability to wage war. This led them to the false proposition that France could be easily defeated and that the war would be a short one. This incorrect judgment led to some serious defeats for the allies. England, misled by that idea, directed her energies to conquering the French colonies, leaving the main burden of the continental campaign to the Prussians and Austrians. This faulty policy of the British did not only weaken the allied military efforts in Flanders, but also brought complaints and mistrust of England from her allies, who accused her of abandoning the common cause in favor of achieving selfish aims.

The British peace overtures to France in the period between 1795-1797 cannot be considered as proof of sincere British desire for peace. Contrarywise, the terms of peace proposed by the British in the first overture in 1795 could be regarded as one of a country who thought herself victorious in the war. The impractical terms were composed on the false view that France was exhausted by the war and that she was ready to accept any terms. Pitt, however, secure in the overtures, gained support for his

war plans at home.

The formation of the Second Coalition was due to a combination of, first, French acts of aggression in 1798-1799, which made the silence of the other powers no longer possible, and second, to the skill of British diplomacy. Undoubtedly, the adherence of Russia to the Coalition signified that skill of the British. Russia was not eventually endangered by France nor did she have any significant territorial ambitions to derive from that war. She, nevertheless, was a decisive factor in the first successes of the Coalition and then for its failure. Again, as it was in the case of the First Coalition, there was no concrete cooperation between the different allied plans and military operations. The difference in aims also contributed to the failure of the Second Coalition as it did in the First. In this case it was mainly due to the selfishness of the Austrians who tried to exploit the allied victories in Italy for themselves, disregarding the wishes of the others. However, some of the blame for this failure could be attributed to the British. The British, as was the case with Austria, mistreated the Russian troops, and their campaign in Holland in 1799 was a debit to their military operations.

In both Coalitions the British loans and subsidies played an important part in the formation and conduct of their military operations. It could be said that without British money it would have been difficult for the idea of the Second Coalition to materialize. Hence, Pitt's administration would rightly be appraised as being able, in spite of heavy war efforts, to

maintain the economy of the country in such a way as to enable her to supply not only her military forces but those of her allies as well.

Another significant point which could be mentioned about British diplomatic activities in the period under discussion was the clearness of England's main objectives of the war in the minds of British policymakers, as well as the firmness and determination of these politicians to achieve these objects in times when they seemed to be as far as the stars to the common man. Most distinguished of these men were Lord Grenville, Pitt, Lord Auckland, Lord Malmesbury, and Whitworth.

It can be finally concluded that England in her struggle against revolutionary France depended upon two major means: diplomacy and her navy. If these means, up to 1799, were not successful enough to cope with revolutionary France, they, nevertheless, would be able eventually to win a final victory over France in 1815.

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THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE
FIRST AND SECOND COALITION 1792-1799

by

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The rivalry between England and France had been violent throughout the eighteenth century. This rivalry was caused by the desire for supremacy and predominance which signified most of the major European wars of the eighteenth century. England tried to build up an empire in overseas territories, while France divided her energies between colonial activities and the attempt to dominate the continent. On the other hand, the British foreign policy regarding the continent was to maintain a balance of power by which no single European power would be permitted to dominate the continent. If any continental power would attempt to dominate the continent, England would at once join forces with the power's opponents.

By the Treaty of 1763, England lost the United States and much of her prestige in the councils of Europe. England, however, was able to counterbalance the French rising strength and her Family Compact by concluding the Triple Alliance of 1756. The English statesmen believed that the Revolution would weaken France. England, therefore, assumed an attitude of neutrality when war broke out between France and the First Coalition of 1792 with Austria, Prussia, Spain as its major members. This attitude of England was soon changed to a hostile one when Demouriez defeated the allied armies and followed by occupying the Low Countries. As a result, England believed that her security was threatened, and that the balance of power had shifted for the advantage of France. England, therefore, at once joined the First Coalition in the Spring of the year 1793. The First Coalition soon proved to be a failure because of the differences

in the aims of the Allies, misjudgment of France's strength, and the misconduct of the Allied military operations. England, who wrongly thought that the war would be short, spent much of her energies successfully attacking the French colonies. Her navy was able to maintain its supremacy over that of the French. When the Coalition members deserted, England continued fighting alone with her fleet as the only protector against a French invasion.

The purpose of the British peace overtures to France between 1795-1797 was to obtain peace and still maintain her overseas conquests. If these overtures failed, however, Pitt's government would gain more support for its war effort. The overtures failed as a result of the impractical proposals of the British and the uncompromising attitude of the French.

The Second Coalition was the basis for the Anglo-Russian Alliance of December, 1798. Russia was to furnish troops, subsidized by England, for the war against France. Distrust prevented the conclusion of a similar treaty between England and Austria. Prussia continued to remain neutral. The acts of aggression of France in Italy, Switzerland, and the Mediterranean, the Anglo-Russian Alliance, and the British victory in the Battle of the Nile convinced Austria of the necessity of her entering the war against France. On March 12, 1799, war broke out and the armies of the Second Coalition met with success in Italy and Germany, but they failed to defeat France. This was due to the distrust between Austria, Russia, and England which was increased by the selfish demand of Austria to annex all of northern Italy, a demand contrary to the previous

plans of the Coalition. The Coalition further lacked cooperation between its armies. Russia withdrew from the war in January, 1800, an act which was a decisive blow to the Coalition. The Second Coalition finally collapsed in the total defeat of Austria by Bonaparte in 1800.