

PASSAGES FROM THE ADDRESS ON "THE PEACE I WISH" BY MR. PAUL-HENRI SPAAK, BELGIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DELIVERED AT THE NEW BELGIAN INSTITUTE IN LONDON ON APRIL 9, 1942 AT 5.30 P.M.

Will Britain Assume the Role of Europe's Leader?

We must think about peace now. People must know why so many sacrifices are required of them. The last years of peace we knew were marred by unemployment and political strife. We must prepare a new future. This is the only justification for the war, and that idea must be present in the minds of the combatants if they are to put their hearts into the fight.

We must grasp the chances the end of the war will give us. It is going to be one of those rare periods in history when men and nations will be able to direct their own destinies and improve their conditions of life.

There can be no political solution without an economic one and vice versa. To an American newspaperman who asked me if I favoured the pooling of raw materials after the war, I answered, a little abruptly I am afraid, that, before transferring any of the Congo's copper to Germany, I should first like to know if she intended using it for shell cases or for her breweries' vats. Safety first !

But to those who talk about political and military alliance, adding "as to the rest, get along the best way you can", I should answer "no" without the slightest hesitation.

The formula of co-operation in war-time, but of isolation in peace, did not withstand the test of yesterday, and has no chance of withstanding the test of to-morrow.

For me the crux of the problem of the future peace is here, in England. All that matters is to know whether Gt. Britain will be able to, or willing to, assume the role of Europe's leader. As a Belgian, and a European, I hope that she will. It is, therefore, essential for Gt. Britain not to underestimate the moral and political part she has to play in this war, and the predominant part she will play in victory. For the last four or five centuries Gt. Britain has taken part in all our wars. The British have ten times, twenty times, shed their blood, because of Europe's quarrels. They have shed it with good will because they know perfectly well that all that concerns Europe concerns them too, and yet they often behave as if Europe meant nothing to them.

I must here defend the small and medium-sized states of Europe. In a Europe where economic life has become so arduous, the success of the small states was a revelation. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Luxemburg and Belgium, made a better job of it than many of their more powerful neighbours. The standard of living of their masses was higher amongst their industrial workers as well as amongst their peasantry. They had attained more political quietude, their social legislation was more advanced, and their intellectual and civic standards were at least equal.

The principle of sovereignty will have to be adjusted for the smaller states, but also for the big powers.

As to Germany, the reverse of what was done at Versailles will have to be done. We shall have to be ruthless as regards the political and military clauses, and reasonable as regards the economic clauses of the treaty.

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