

## GERMANS AND T. CZECHS INVOLVED PROBLEMS

CZECHS AND GERMANS. By ELIZABETH WISKEMANN. Oxford University Press. London: Milford. 12s. 6d.

In her final paragraph Miss Wiskemann, whose survey of Czechoslovak conditions fully maintains the standards of accuracy and impartiality set by Chatham House, concludes that the problem of reconciling Czech and German political aspirations admits of no satisfactory solution. The Czechs have always recognized the rights bestowed on minorities under the Peace Treaties, and since President Benesh took office vigorous steps have been taken to see that those rights are respected. Such a policy, however, must needs fail to meet Herr Henlein's demands for protection, not for individuals, but for a racial group as a whole. What then are the alternatives? Miss Wiskemann notes that a reconstitution of the State on Swiss lines has been advocated by some of the Sudeten German leaders. She contends that it is not feasible because a division into Czech and German cantons cannot be made. Industrialism has mixed the populations. Moreover, as she cogently observes, "if the French and German Swiss were to develop hostile political ideologies, the Swiss constitution might operate no better than that of the Czechoslovak Republic." The same difficulty of drawing a linguistic frontier forbids the cession to the Reich of any considerable extent of territory. Wherever the boundary, there would be minorities on both sides of it.

The more one examines the Czech-German problem the more evident it becomes that there is no very clear distinction to be made between the cession of the mainly German territories of Czechoslovakia to Germany and the complete domination of Central Europe—Czech-speaking territory included—by the Germans.

This last solution is congenial to Nazi thought, and with her usual fairness Miss Wiskemann points out that there is a strong case to be made for a programme which "would bring unity of control, the proverbially efficient organization of the Germans, and the abolition of tariff barriers." On the other hand it would involve the abandonment of Masaryk's contention that it was a lesser evil for 3,000,000 Germans to live in a non-German State than for the 10,000,000 members of the Czechoslovak nation to have no State at all.

### ECONOMIC TROUBLES

Looking at the course of events since 1918, Miss Wiskemann observes that anti-German feeling was read into policies really innocent of it. For example, one result of the War was that the country's exporting industries, which were largely under German direction, no longer had the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire as their market. Suffering was inevitable, but many Sudeten German complaints were extraordinarily similar to those of the wealthy or ex-wealthy in any other country in Central Europe at the time. The property-owners of post-War Austria talked in almost exactly the same way, only the citizens of Vienna who had been rich blamed his government because it was Socialist and the German citizen of Brunn or Aussig blamed his because it was Czech. So, too, when the depression descended on the country, the Sudeten Germans pointed to abandoned factories as evidence of the malevolence of Prague. In Czechoslovakia as in Germany the depression contributed powerfully to the success of Nazi propaganda. Among those hardest hit were the lower middle-class men who had held administrative posts in large concerns, and this class, Miss Wiskemann points out, is peculiarly susceptible to chauvinist appeals. The last straw was provided by the new ideological influence emanating from Berlin. "It created a state of psychological war, fought with propaganda and the fear of actual war." This last fear continues to exacerbate the situation to-day. Not only does it lead to special precautions on the frontier with inevitable suspicion of the German-speaking members of the Czech State, but it tends to produce a centralization of all the processes of government quite incompatible with those devolutionary policies along which moderate men on both sides have been disposed to seek a way of compromise.

## ITALY AND THE BALKANS THE ANSCHLUSS AND AFTER

### GERMAN PREDOMINANCE

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT  
MILAN, JUNE 2

Italian policy in the Balkans was discussed at to-day's opening meeting of the National Congress for the Study of Foreign Problems at Milan, at which Signor Federzoni, President of the Senate, was in the chair. [Count Ciano's speech at the congress is reported on page 14.] Signor Gayda, editor of the *Giornale d'Italia*, who was the rapporteur, did not try to belittle the seriousness of the situation created by the Anschluss, which, he admitted, represented a great displacement of forces in the Danubian and Balkan States, particularly of economic forces.

It was believed in some quarters (he said) that Germany would now establish her pre-eminence there. The Danube seemed destined to become, by a link with the Main and the Rhine, the great waterway joining the Black Sea to the North Sea. He admitted that there was "a partial truth" in all this. On the other hand, the foreign policy of Italy had two vital points of interest, Africa and the Near East. Italy would never dis-  
interest herself in the Balkans. Would there then be a clash between Germany and Italy in that part of the world? Signor Gayda said "No." He was confident that the solidarity of Germany and Italy already manifest in all fields, would be operative also in the Balkans, but at this point he hastened to describe as "an absurd fable" the story that Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini had divided between themselves spheres of interest in that zone.

### LOST ITALIAN TRADE

The picture Signor Gayda drew of the position occupied now by the two countries in the Balkan markets was rather gloomy for Italy, which had lost much to Germany.

In 1937, for instance, exports from Yugoslavia to Italy had fallen from 23 to 9 per cent. of her total trade, and Yugoslav imports from Italy had decreased from 13 to 8 per cent., while Yugoslav exports to Germany had increased to 35 per cent. In spite of that Italy, according to Signor Gayda, still had many possibilities, particularly if she organized her trade better and intensified her intercourse with the Danubian and Balkan States. Much, of course, would depend on her political relations with those countries. With Hungary, said Signor Gayda, the Rome Protocols remained intact. Italy's relations with the Yugoslavs were excellent. Italian policy with regard to Albania was for long misunderstood. She did not aim at making Albania a jumping-off point for her expansion in the Balkans. She believed in the formula: The Balkans for the Balkan peoples. As for Bulgaria, Italy always supported her just claims.

With Rumania, Greece, and Turkey, her relations were not yet what she desired them to be. Greece and Turkey seemed always inclined to follow the policy of Great Britain, but now that Italy and Great Britain had come to an agreement Signor Gayda hoped that Italian relations with these two countries would gradually improve.

The discussion which followed, turning on several aspects of the problem—naval, economic, political, and commercial—confirmed the widespread impression of the predominant position acquired by Germany since the Anschluss in the Danubian and Balkan States. One well-informed speaker was even more pessimistic than the rapporteur with regard to Italy's possibilities of regaining her former position in those countries.

## A CONFEDERACY FOR PEACE

### MR. CHURCHILL'S APPEAL

### ASSURANCES TO GERMANY

The belief that the present crisis will pass and that war would be averted was expressed by Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking last night at Chingford. "We have had an anxious week-end," he said, "and I do not think it will be the last we shall experience in the near future. I remain hopeful of a peaceful solution on this occasion, because I have good reason to believe that the kind of plans which Herr Henlein described when he was over here would not be unacceptable to the Government of Czechoslovakia."

It would be a great responsibility for any outside Power to prevent a settlement being reached which would save the Sudeten Deutsch from being the first victims of war, and would give them an opportunity of playing an honourable part in the life of Czechoslovakia, he went on to say. If the present crisis passed and war was averted—as he believed it would be—that would be due to a rudimentary and emergency form of collective security; the firm attitude of France, supported to a very considerable extent by Great Britain, and to an extent they could not tell by Russia and Poland, and, above all, the determination of the Czechs to fight in defence of their country might prevent violence and the bloody seizure of Czechoslovakia.

High authorities considered that Germany was not ready for a major land war. There was a shortage of food and of raw materials. The German Army was not fully officered. In these circumstances, unless the rulers of Germany went mad, we should have a further breathing space. But what was going to happen next year and in 1940? The German Army would be much stronger relatively than that of France, and the British Air Force was not catching up. Indeed, at the present time we were falling farther behind. Unless, therefore, we could gain other Powers to the side of peace, "disaster might occur." We should require a much stronger team in the future. More peace-seeking nations would have to act as special constables on the threatened beat of Europe.

Why should we not gain other Powers? Why should we not band together all the States of the Danubian and Balkan into stronger confederacy for peace? In order to do this it would be necessary for Britain and France to make common cause with them. Any one of them was attacked. Why should we run more risk in doing this than we did at present? It would be far better to have firm arrangements with a large body of well-armed nations all obliged to defend one another against an aggressor than to drift from one crisis to another. This would be real collective security and not a sham. It was, in his belief, the safest and perhaps the only road to a lasting European peace.

### SUPPORT FOR COVENANT

Asking the country to support the Covenant he denied that it was an encirclement of Germany. It was, he said, encirclement only of an aggressor. To form a war combination against a single State would be a crime, but to form a combination of mutual defence against a potential aggressor was not only not a crime but was a moral duty and a virtue. They asked no security for themselves, they were not prepared freely to extend aggressive designs let her join the club and share freely and equally in all its privileges and safeguards. If Germany were the victim of unprovoked aggression from the East she would according to the Covenant of the League, be entitled to receive the fullest aid from all its members. Even if Germany did not join the League he saw no reason why assurance of the most decisive character should not be offered by France and Britain to help Germany in every possible way if she were the victim of an outrage. The aim of real collective security was a foreign policy which involved a country in no commitments more entangling or onerous than those which the country had undertaken, and it gave it the only possibility of reasonable security.

Parliament was to discuss air armaments again this week, and there ought to be better explanations than had been offered so far to the condition of the Air Force, and as to the solemn pledge given by Lord Baldwin that we should maintain our parity with a nation that could get at us should be broken. This was not a case for the Opposition to make party capital against the Government nor for the Government to shield incompetence and misdirection—all ought to put count before party. There should be a fear to resolve to lay aside every impediment, to sweep away every obstacle that stood in the path of our regaining our national security. At present this country was shielded by the strength of the French Army—a strength which the Germans were overtaking month by month. This country still had its Navy, new, happy, more supreme in European waters. The British Air Force, which ought to be overhauling them by leaps and bounds, was not in that position at present. If we were to place ourselves in security from the anxieties we must throw ourselves into the business of national defence with something of the vigour, and concentration which dictator countries showed.

## IGNORANCE AND ABUSE

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### IRRITATING SPEECHES

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—A few years ago we were on the whole friends with Germany, Italy, and Japan. But during recent years many of our people, mainly from the Labour Party, have subjected the leaders of those nations to interference, reinforced with guttersnipe abuse.

If the advice of that party had been followed we should certainly have been at war with Italy, and probably also with Germany and Japan—over 200,000,000 warlike people. That would have been something more than a calamity, especially as the Labour Party, by opposing rearmament, did all that they could to weaken our nation. And yet it is the leaders of this very party who hold meetings in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere. One gets up and says that Signor Mussolini is a cheat and cannot be trusted. Abuse of Herr Hitler is unending. What is the use of making speeches full of cheap abuse? It only angers Germany, Italy, and Japan. Peace cannot be attained by singing hymns of hate, as both Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini have clearly shown. Such methods drive us straight to war. Peace can be attained only by trying to understand the other side's point of view far better than we have tried up to date.

The Labour Party want us now to guarantee the independence of Czechoslovakia, and many others consider themselves bound by their moral standards to insist on the same demand. That would be to put our heads into a veritable hornets' nest. The last War was caused by trying to encircle Germany and prevent her expansion in Europe. The same attempt to encircle her will assuredly bring another war. We cannot stop a virile nation like Germany from expanding. Our interests in Central and Eastern Europe are not so great that we should put them to the terrible arbitrament of modern war. Certainly we, France and Britain, need to defend each other, as well as Belgium, Holland, and Western Europe generally; but it should not be beyond our power to persuade France that we cannot accompany her into Eastern Europe. After Czechoslovakia, what next?

Our first duty is to our own people. The interests of Britain itself and of the British Commonwealth of Nations in other parts of the globe are vast, and there are many things in them to put right or improve. Let us devote ourselves to these almost innumerable interests and not interfere with others. We have already vast obligations to our Indian and African fellow-subjects and those in Palestine. Surely it is a higher moral code to seek to fulfil these existing obligations rather than to risk them by taking on fresh ones.

It is not our business to help every nation on the earth. We do not understand their real conditions, and in any case we are not strong enough. Foreign policy is a highly complicated mechanism, difficult to understand, but ours of late has been in large measure directed by spasms of popular clamour. The free expression of opinion is, no doubt, a part of the democratic system, and where it is directed to internal problems is usually excellent. But where it is directed towards foreign nations, reinforced by abuse and based largely on ignorance, it does nothing but foster international hatred, especially among those nations that do not adopt democratic standards. It is a powerful force driving towards war.

I am, &c., CHARLES  
Edgcombe, Crowthorne, Berks.

## FASCISM "BECOMING UNIVERSAL"

### A CONTRAST WITH BOLSHEVISM

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

MILAN, JUNE 5

The Congress for the Study of Foreign Politics ended its work yesterday with a discussion on the constitutional changes in post-War Europe. Twenty-one reports had been presented on the subject, and they were summarized by Signor Pavolini, a member of Parliament.

Of all the changes which have taken place, the Russian Revolution (he said) is the last episode of a historic cycle which is now closing, while Fascism is the opening chapter of the new history. The only other revolutionary movement which is anti-liberal and anti-democratic is Fascism. Signor Mussolini was an interventionist in 1914 only because he foresaw in the War the revolution, and when this came he created, with the formula of the authoritarian, totalitarian, and corporate State, the model Constitution for the new century.

But the true difference (Signor Pavolini continued) between Bolshevism and Fascism consists chiefly in this, that the Russian experiment does not make proselytes and does not expand beyond the frontiers. After more than 20 years no other country has turned Bolshevik. Fascism, on the contrary, is becoming universal. To-day 150,000,000 men live in authoritarian and totalitarian States. The Third Reich was a derivative of Fascism; and partially Fascist are Japan, Turkey, Portugal, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, and Greece.

But the world must understand Fascism for what it really is. Nothing irritates Fascists more than being considered as preservers of order. Fascism has nothing to do with the old order. As stated in the current issue of *Critica Fascista*, the review edited by Signor Bottai: "We (the Fascists) and we alone are the disorder, the creative disorder." Nothing, again, irritates Fascists more than being sympathetically looked upon and even imitated out of fear of Communism. The leading Fascist review, *Gerarchia*, founded by Signor Mussolini and now edited by his nephew, wrote in its April issue:—

"Now, and up till now, we, with our example, have been useful to the propertied classes of the world and to all the frightened people who saw in Communism, not the extreme expression of democracy, but the diabolical herald of the social problem. All these good people must be convinced—and shall soon convince them—that the social problem has passed to our shoulders and that it is safer to fear us than Communism."

A resolution was passed expressing satisfaction at the results obtained by Fascist foreign policy, which would allow of a more confident collaboration in view of a new European rearrangement based on the conception of hierarchy, order, and justice affirmed by the revolution of the Blackshirts.