

What the Victory Means

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THE struggle between the British government and the British people—for it was nothing less—has resulted in an important though limited victory for the British people. The fall of Hoare and the appointment of Eden to the Foreign Office means that the whole line of world policy decided upon by the British cabinet cannot now be carried through immediately or in its present form.

Whether or not it means any more than this is not yet decided. But before we describe the next stage of the struggle let us be clear about how much is at stake, for what is at stake is not merely the question of the betrayal or support of Ethiopia, of loyalty or disloyalty to the covenant of the League. What is at stake is the peace of the world, for we now know that the British government was bent on nothing less than the complete destruction of every one of those barriers which stand in the way of fascist aggression.

A memorandum had actually been drawn by the British cabinet on what is called reconstruction of the League. The essence of this deadly document was that a controlling body was to be set up within the League. This body was to have all the power in its hands. It was to be composed of Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany. All the small powers and the Soviet Union were to be excluded from it. It is no doubt for a second whether this governing committee would steer? It would be straight for a German attack upon the Soviet Union.

Nothing else was the whole purpose of the plan, and I am informed that the far-sighted members of the British cabinet had now reached a full consciousness of this. They had decided that at all times must be so arranged that German attack the Soviet Union during the coming years. The main achievement of this was nothing less than a spontaneous, organized but very real People's Front arose in Britain in the last two weeks in order to reveal and to check this whole of our policy.

It is now clear that we now know all this is more than that this line of policy has at the moment checked, for I do not think that this deadly scheme for what is the reorganization of the League will be pushed for some months at any rate, whether we have gained any more substitution of Eden for Hoare than a few months of delay remains to be decided almost entirely upon the pressure of British opinion upon

the government is maintained. If the British government can now be pushed along a policy of real cooperation with the other League states, if above all they can be forced to fix an early date for the application of oil sanctions, if a solid alliance for mutual defense by the League powers against any counter attack from Mussolini is cemented, then indeed we shall be on the way to gaining much more, for then we shall be on the way to forcing our rulers to pursue a policy which can undoubtedly keep the peace of Europe for a considerable period by making it clear that aggression by fascist states lead only to their downfall.

But this decisive success has still to be achieved. It is far too early yet to suggest that the British government has been forced into the path of peace. Their headlong progress down the path to immediate world war has been checked but we have still to drive them to take the first step down the other path. I believe, however, that the appointment of Eden reveals that they are now distinctly scared of the weight of public opinion (as well they may be) and that we have the opportunity of pushing them much further—if only the pressure is not relaxed for a moment.

If anyone thought that either the government or their spokesmen in the press had undergone a real change of heart, if anyone thought that their change of policy represented anything more than a yielding to a force which they could not resist, the comments of the whole capitalist press over the week-end should have dispelled their illusion. Mr. Baldwin himself told us that neither he nor anyone of his cabinet colleagues had any conception that their endorsement of the Hoare-Laval deal was contrary to their pledges at the general election. I really believe that in one sense this is true. But if so it reveals a sort of moral idiocy, as they sometimes say in the police courts, which cannot be exaggerated. Moreover, other spokesmen of the government and of the governing class made it perfectly clear that they have simply been forced off their essential policy by an outbreak of public protest which they never dreamt would occur and which they do not begin to understand.

The Observer, for example, quietly proposes that Sir Samuel Hoare should be rested for a few months while the clamor dies down, and then reappointed Foreign Secretary. Mr. Garvin, the editor of The Observer, ends his article on the peace terms with the words "Resurgam"—"They shall rise again." "Scrutator," an influential writer in the other great bourgeois Sunday paper, The Sunday Times, says in so many words that nothing was wrong with the actual

peace terms; the only trouble was they were clumsily put over. "The vice," he writes, "of this particular plan was not inherent or absolute but relative to the lack of preparation of the public mind." The Daily Telegraph, the government's own especial press organ, says the same thing even more crudely. The betrayal of Ethiopia, says their leader-writer, was "inexcusably abrupt." The next time we betray somebody or something, say Ethiopia or the peace of the world for instance, we must do it more gradually and suavely.

Not only the cabinet but the ruling sections of the governing class who control the great newspapers have not the faintest conception of why public opinion arose and smote them. They have simply yielded to what they see to be an uncontrollable force. They regard popular opinion in this country as a sort of wild beast which on this occasion unfortunately got loose and must therefore be humored and temporized with for a little while, until it can be corralled once more. If and when that has been accomplished they will immediately revert to their former policy of the betrayal of world peace. If they were forced down the path of genuine support of the League and genuine coercion of the aggressor it will be at the point of the bayonet of popular pressure alone.

These cable dispatches by John Strachey appear weekly in The New Masses.

The Assumption of Song

Who have been to the Soviets carry
Always blue in the eyes of the steep steppes
Of snow.

Peal of Chimera from St. Basle.
Eye torn out of history
And the madness.

That glint on walls of ribald religion
Is not gold,
Is not love
In the curious beds of luxury.

We have done away
With progress, the phrase of billboard
(Tiara in the comb
Of my lady's hair).

Telescope the future of eons
With the hard impact of steeled fist,
Drunk with the power behind it.

The world of the proletariat
Moves like a song,
The Soviets singing.

NORMAN

The Underground Speaks

A Report from Germany

JOHN L. SPIVAK

WARSAW.

THREE strong muscle-men were throwing one another about in what I immediately suspected was a funny act when I walked into the smoke-laden Alkazar cabaret on Reeperbann in the St. Pauli district in Hamburg and found a vacant table at a corner of the dance floor. The place was crowded with men and women, some in evening clothes, and a good sprinkling of Nazis in black and brown and the greenish grey of the air forces despite the Nazi Party prohibition to men in uniform frequenting night clubs.

It was ten thirty and though I had been told to be there at eleven o'clock, I arrived a little earlier lest all the corner tables be taken. I ordered a liqueur and sat there sipping it and wondering whether I was on a wild goose chase. Two months before in Paris I had met some Communist refugees who had fled Germany when heads began to roll and I had expressed a desire to be put in touch with the Communist underground movement. I knew I was making a dangerous request, dangerous not so much to me but to the Communist who would meet me, should I be followed. But, everyone expects the Communists to seize control of Germany when Hitler collapses, yet few, even among the best-informed refugee circles, know the actual Communist strength and what they are thinking of doing in such an event. The activities of the underground movement is so befogged with rumors and patently exaggerated assertions that some real information from an official source seemed to me worth the risk.

So far as I was concerned, should we be caught, I should either be ordered out of the country or given a taste of a Nazi prison, but for the Communist it meant years in prison and possibly death. So I was not surprised when I was told that I would be given an answer to my request on the morrow.

On the next day I was asked when I expected to be in Germany.

"I don't know, but approximately within two months."

"Very well, then. On ——— (giving a date) you be at the Alkazar cabaret in Hamburg at eleven o'clock. Take corner table if one is vacant or as near to a corner table as possible if they are all taken, and wait there. A comrade will get in touch with you."

"A cabaret!" I said, a little surprised.

"Yes; it is better than for a stranger to go to a home or for someone to call on him

at his hotel. For one meeting of this nature it is best. There is music and that drowns the sound of voices and then people are more interested in their partners and the performers to pay much attention to others at the tables. There are many reasons why a cabaret is best for a meeting like this."

"You're running the show," I agreed. "How long do I wait? I'm not much good at this Edgar Wallace stuff."

They did not smile at my lightheartedness. "Wait two hours," they said seriously. "If no one gets in touch with you then, be there again on the following night, same time and again the night after. It is best to allow three days. We don't know what difficulties the person who will get in touch with you may have, to get there at a specific time."

So here I sat in this sumptuously furnished cabaret heavy with the scent of wines and perfumes and expensive tobacco, uncertain whether to feel like a conspirator or a fool. An appointment made two months ago to meet a person I did not know and who did not know me sounded a little silly, but it had the thrill of mystery, so I sat there smoking and sipping the liqueur and wondering whether anyone would really show up.

"Just be sure you are not followed," they had impressed on me in Paris and I made so sure, by walking, driving along deserted streets and changing taxis for two solid hours that the thought of going through that procedure again for possibly two more nights was very disturbing.

Pleasure seekers kept strolling in with Aryan women on their arms. There were very few women with dark hair I noticed. The place was pretty well filled and I looked at my watch, feeling a little foolish for it was eleven-thirty and no one had appeared. Six beefy girls, with the whole dance floor to themselves, were raising tired legs in what I assumed was a dance. At an adjoining table was an S.A. man, an officer of high rank who was having a grand time flirting with a really gorgeous blond of the tea-and-cabaret type. They had taken their table about a half hour earlier and their proximity caused me a bit of uneasiness for if whoever was to get in touch with me saw him there, the chances of his appearing would be slim. I had agreed to be there for three successive nights and I gave myself up to brooding over the whole matter when the Nazi officer, after searching his pockets for a match turned to me and politely asked if I had one.

"The waiter is not around," he explained apologetically.

I offered him my cigarette lighter and he lit the blond's and his own gold-tipped cigarette.

"You are a foreigner?" he asked, returning the lighter with profuse thanks. "English?"

"No. American."

"A wonderful country," he smiled. "One day I should like to go there to see it for myself."

He was apparently trying to be pleasant to a foreigner alone at a neighboring table, but all he succeeded in doing was to make me uncomfortable. Hope that my appointment might be kept went glimmering, for if the Communist saw me talking with the Nazi officer he would certainly not make himself known.

"You are waiting for some one?"

"No," I said casually. "I had nothing to do tonight so I thought I'd spend a little time here."

"Ach, so! Well, why not join us?" .. invited me cheerfully.

He wouldn't listen to my protests. He rose, clicked his heels and introduced himself and the beautiful blond.

"My name's Spivak," I muttered.

The waiter brought a bottle of wine. The music played a soft waltz and couple strolled out onto the floor.

"To the new Germany," said my clinking glass against mine.

WE DRANK to the new Germany decided that I might just as well vage something from the evening by with him since my appointment for evening at least was now ruined, I was startled by a voice saying in English

"I believe we have an appointment here."

It took me a moment or two to realize that it was the Nazi officer who was talking. Luckily the lights had been dimmed for the dance. I don't know what my expression was, but the beautiful Aryan of the perfect tea-and-cabaret type laid in a soft, well-modulated voice and the officer grinned boyishly.

"I beg pardon?" I said.

"An appointment for eleven o'clock night at the Alkazar, arranged by friends in Paris?"

I looked at him again. He smiled slowly, his boyish grin growing more pronounced.

"You want to know something about underground movement in Germany?"