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Robert G. Spivack

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***R**OBERT G. SPIVACK, who is secretary for the United States of International Student Service, writes here in his personal capacity from personal observation. Mr. Spivack is a frequent traveler to Europe and this year conducted a political study tour in England and on the Continent where he interviewed Dr. Eduard Benes. Mr. Spivack was a founder of the Save Czechoslovakia Committee and is a member of the Executive Committee of the American Youth Congress and the United Student Peace Committee. He is a member of the National Peace Conference.*

THE LESSON OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

By ROBERT G. SPIVACK

AS NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN alighted from his airplane at Heston airport, returning from Munich, he waved a scrap of paper on which was written:

“We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German naval agreement as symbolic of the desires of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.”

In a prepared statement read to the newsreelmen Chamberlain boasted that he had won “peace in our time, peace with honor.”

That is the Munich contract. In order to obtain Herr Hitler’s signature Mr. Chamberlain gladly sacrificed Czechoslovakia. In order to obtain Mr. Chamberlain’s signature Herr Hitler had only to growl.

From the table-talk at Munich peace was to come. Men of England acclaimed Chamberlain, as they put away their faultily constructed gas masks (but did not destroy them). The people of France cheered Daladier and the Socialists voted confidence in him. But most significant were the spontaneous sighs of relief that went up in Berlin and Rome as the brow-beaten citizens of those nations learned that the war,

for which their desperado leaders were preparing them, had not yet come.

Yet within two weeks of the Munich conference the following results were evident:

1. Hitler spoke at Saarbrücken and acclaimed Mussolini as the only "real friend" Germany has in Europe.

2. Neville Chamberlain demonstrated his trust in the words of his estimable colleague beyond the Rhine by insisting that British rearmament be rushed as quickly as possible.

3. Hitler openly interfered in British internal affairs by inferring that the overthrow of Chamberlain and the election of "an Eden, Cooper, or Churchill" would mean war.

4. President Roosevelt "viewing the events in Europe" finds it necessary to push forward American armament to an all-time peak. For this the isolationists have themselves to thank. They prevented the alternative: international cooperation.

5. In Palestine rebellion has broken out, inspired by Italian propaganda and German arms. The arch-imperialists have incited Arabs by appealing to their anti-imperialist sentiments.

6. Brazil and Germany have withdrawn their ambassadors as a result of continued Nazi interference in the internal affairs of the former nation.

7. Cardinal Innitzer was stoned in St. Stephen's Cathedral for urging Catholic youths to stand by their convictions.

8. The British press and radio have seen fit to "impose a self-censorship" in discussing Germany. "It would be senseless, so the contention goes, to antagonize the dictatorships unnecessarily at the present time," writes Ferdinand Kuhn in *The New York Times* on October 16, "especially since they are so sensitive to the slightest disparagement from abroad." Information from London indicates that Lord Halifax drops a hint here and there when a newspaper becomes a trifle outspoken. France is censoring her radio.

9. Germany and Italy continue to aid General Franco, notwithstanding a "token withdrawal" of troops from Spain. Wounded soldiers who probably could no longer fight, and did not wish to in the first place, make up the bulk of those returning home.

10. Japan opens a drive towards Canton, ignoring "stern warnings" by the British foreign office that interests of the Empire will be protected. Who is afraid of big, bad Britain?

THE TASK MADE HARDER

With the loss of Czechoslovakia there can be no denial of the fact that the cause of freedom has suffered a body blow. Pollyanna-isms have no place in an appraisal of the situation arising from Munich. But there is no time now to succumb to the forces of darkness. Hard as the job has become, the only alternative to continuing the battle is suicide. Those who prefer that way out may take it; but certainly those

who are to continue living have no time now for talk of surrender or for accepting the "inevitability" of fascism's triumph.

What has happened to Czechoslovakia is a grim story.

In a Europe which has grown blacker since Mussolini's "march" on Rome and Hitler's assault on German democracy there stood a beacon named Czechoslovakia.

A nation, like the United States, consisting of many peoples, it arose from the ashes of the World War to blossom forth in twenty years as a full-fledged and relatively prosperous republic. Inhabited by a hard-working, self-sacrificing, idealistic people, its Germans, Slovaks, Magyars, Czechs and others lived side by side with a minimum of difficulty and antagonism. Loftier than most political leaders of post-war Europe towered Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, statesman, philosopher, democrat, who believed that social problems would only be solved in a free nation. "The first President of our nation was the son of a little worker," Eduard Benes told this writer, "the second President is the son of a little peasant," he added proudly.

A simple people, the Czechoslovaks had faith that by acting decently, observing their pledges, and living righteously they could withstand all the attacks of sabre-rattlers outside and demagogues within the nation. Not so airy-minded that they expected respect if they were a meek nation, a strong and well-equipped army was formed, to defend and not to in-

vade. But the only opportunity for democracy to survive, Benes told us, was for it courageously to meet its problems, never to slur over them, and thus make itself strong. The sensational characteristics of the new republic lay not in gay night clubs, nor exciting politics, but in the cool determination that it had a job to do, a function to play in society. "You will not find anything to write about us," Karl Capek once told John Gunther. But it was in these things that there was so much to be said. It was an unflinching will to remain a free people that kept alive their fight for freedom in the middle ages, through the Austrian Empire, and finally out of it grew the republic.

CZECHOSLOVAK MINORITIES PROBLEM

Gilbert Murray, in a letter to *The Times* of London (May 18, 1938), says:

"Up to a short time ago Czechoslovakia was acknowledged to be both the most successful and the best governed and conducted of the states created or emancipated by the Great War. . . . During the four years in which I was intimately concerned in the protection of minorities by the Council of the League [of Nations] I have no hesitation in saying that the minorities in Czechoslovakia were the best treated in Europe, and that I never found Mr. Benes other than fair-minded and ready to help. The situation seems to have deteriorated of late years, owing partly to economic distress, intensified by the German exclu-

sion of Czech goods and partly to the fear inspired in the ordinary population by the aggressive policy of the Nazi government.

“A sharp distinction should be made between (a) the honest relief of the Sudeten-Deutsch grievances, advocated by Jaksch, the German Social-Democrat leader, and (b) the Nazification of the Sudeten territory, largely by means of terrorism, which, whatever Henlein’s own wishes may be, seems to be the object of the German government. The first is both desirable in itself and compatible with the continued existence of Czechoslovakia, the second is neither.”

The total number of Germans living in areas with a German majority is 2,495,633. These areas are divided and do not touch upon each other. Germans are in the majority of eight different areas unconnected with each other and separated by bands of territory inhabited by a majority of Czechs or one of the minorities. Therefore it must be recognized that the German minority cannot be geographically divided from the rest of the country. Nevertheless the Germans have been united on certain minority rights and have presented them from time to time.

Under the constitution adopted in 1920 equal civil and political rights were guaranteed to all national groups, free use of maternal language in private and business contacts, in religious life, in the press, and business meetings. National groups were guaranteed equal cultural and educational facilities.

The Electoral Law, adopted at the same time as the

constitution, granted equal and universal suffrage. The minorities were allotted numbers of deputies and senators according to their numerical proportions in the state; *e.g.*, the German minority was allotted 72 deputies out of the 300 forming the Chamber of Deputies, and 87 out of the 150 Senators.

THE GERMAN-SPEAKING MINORITY

Since June, 1919, members of the minorities have been able to take part in, or, if they are in the majority, control the administration of the communes in which they live. Out of a total of 15,734 parishes and communes in the country, 3,466 have an absolute majority of Germans, and on the basis of proportional representation in all of these communes, administration was exclusively or mainly in German hands. Out of the 239 district councils in the republic 50 have a German majority, and in the case of the provincial councils, the Germans were represented according to their numerical strength. Thus, in the provincial council of Bohemia, there were 37 Germans out of 120 members.

These councils appointed and controlled their own police forces except in the large towns; they appointed their own magistrates and officials; they handled all questions of public health, social services and relief and supplied the buildings and the materials for the schools.

It is interesting to find that in the large German

towns, such as Karlsbad, which have also a large Czech minority, all the officials were German.

The Language Law of Czechoslovakia gave the widest latitude in the use of minority tongues in courts, schools, and all phases of administration.

GERMAN SCHOOLS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

German-speaking people, while only 22 per cent of the population, had 35 per cent of the educational facilities of the nation. The Germans had a proportionately greater number of elementary, secondary, teachers' training and technical schools and colleges than the Czechs themselves. For the school year 1934-35 the schools and pupils were as follows:*

	<i>Czechs</i>	<i>Germans</i>	<i>Hungarians</i>	<i>Poles</i>
Elementary	10,417	3,283	807	90
Number of Pupils..	1,242,486	342,424	100,115	9,737
Higher Elementary ..	1,423	443	13	11
Number of Pupils...	328,835	87,153	2,695	2,605
Secondary & teachers' training	247	83	6	1
Number of Pupils...	99,672	28,848	4,156	576

In addition the Germans had a university, two technical colleges and 193 public technical schools.

But the Germans have always been dissatisfied with the fact that their language has not had the same

*Statistical material prepared by Miss Dorothy McConnell, Secretary National Women's Committee of the American League for Peace and Democracy, from reports issued by the World Committee Against War and Fascism.

legal standing throughout the country as the Czech language. Furthermore they have wanted the complete control of the education of German children in their hands.

In spite of their complaints, the German population gave no indication of wanting to become a part of Germany. They are not immigrants from Germany. They have lived for generations in the towns where they now live. They were merely interested in securing greater rights under the form of government that they possessed. This feeling was capitalized by Konrad Henlein soon after the world depression struck Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia was affected by the depression in the most distressing manner. Practically all the output of its industry was designed for export. The German population have always lived in the most industrialized sections of Czechoslovakia and are the ones who own and work in the factories to a large extent. Their distress was further intensified by the exclusion of Czechoslovakian goods by Germany. Factories were idle, the number of unemployed grew rapidly, and the factory owners were thrown into panic. It was a time of apprehension and a time for the Nazi principles of the Sudeten German Party to find good soil for seed. An "ideology" which had, up to this time, found few supporters began to be promulgated throughout the Sudeten area.

Added to the propitiousness of the times for the growth of the S.D.P. (Sudeten German Party) were

the methods of the party under the leadership of Konrad Henlein. The methods were almost exactly those employed by Hitler's adherents in the early days of his rise to power.

HENLEIN'S NAZI METHODS

A boycott became extremely effective in the areas where the S.D.P. was strongest. Non-supporters of the S.D.P. had not only their places of business boycotted but they were warned to leave their lodgings. A particularly vehement boycott was carried on against the many cooperative societies of workers. The techniques closely followed the German boycott against the Jews. Cooperative buildings were placarded. Shopping in cooperative stores was strictly forbidden to members of the S.D.P. Persons shopping in cooperatives were watched and warned by letters. These petty persecutions probably had more effect in breaking the morale of many of the cooperative societies than the more violent persecutions.

Other workers' associations were "persuaded" to join the S.D.P. and become supporters of it. In one case—a Hairdressers' Association—a motion was put to join the S.D.P. The chairman and one of the members spoke against it. The result was that a boycott was immediately invoked against them and both were run out of business. With the economic distress growing more acute daily it is easy to understand why there were so many "unanimous" decisions of workers' associations to join the S.D.P.

A man applying for work was always asked if he were a member of the S.D.P. The S.D.P. member got the job.

Nor did the boycott apply only to workers' associations, stores and individual renters of lodgings. In Kaaden an order went out from the S.D.P. headquarters that members of the S.D.P. were not allowed to give away kitchen waste, generally used for the goats kept by the poor in the town, unless the poor were supporters of Henlein!

Combined with the boycott was a very effective propaganda campaign—usually painting the opportunities of life under the Hitler regime in very glowing colors indeed. Nazi Germany was portrayed as a government under which there was no unemployment and the wages were high. Some of these propaganda campaigns over-shot themselves. In one case a group of Sudeten brick-layers were so impressed with the stories of Germany that they crossed the border for work. They returned with the report that while they had found work they had found working conditions much worse than in Czechoslovakia. This and other similar stories made the rounds so that underneath the propaganda there has always been a touch of skepticism on the part of the Sudeten Germans.

In the early days of the coming to power of the Henlein party the Czechoslovakian government did not interfere. It was alarmed at the growing aggressiveness of the Nazi government across the border. At the same time it laid special emphasis on the pro-

tection of all the rights of the minorities under its constitution and electoral laws.

Meantime Hitler was arousing his own people to the "distressing" plight of their fellow-Germans across the border. In February, 1938, before his triumphal march into Austria, he said in a speech in the Reichstag:

"Over ten million Germans live in two of the states adjoining our frontiers. . . . We cannot dispute the fact that as long as Germany was feeble and powerless, she simply had to endure these persecutions of Germans across her frontiers. Just as England looks after her interests which cover a large part of the world, so also will the Germany of today look after her, in comparison, restricted interests. And to these interests of the German Reich belongs also the protection of those fellow-Germans who live beyond our frontiers and are unable to ensure for themselves the right to general freedom, personal, political and ideological."

The surrender of Austria occurred shortly after.

By April Konrad Henlein at the S.D.P. Congress at Karlsbad declared that no solution of German minority rights would be acceptable unless it was based on the following principles:

1. Full equality of status for Czechs and Germans.
2. A guarantee for this equality by the recognition of the Sudeten Germans as a legal body incorporate.

3. Determination and legal recognition of the German areas within the state.
4. Full self-government for the German areas.
5. Legal protection for every citizen living outside the area of his own nationality.
6. Removal of injustices inflicted since 1918 and reparations for damages caused thereby.
7. Recognition of the principle: German officials within the German area.
8. Full liberty to profess German nationality and German political philosophy.

These demands were immediately opposed in the majority of the Czech papers, which recognized them not as an attempt to find a satisfactory solution of the minority problem, but as an attempt to disrupt the Czechoslovakian government in the interests of Hitler Germany.

It was agreed by the government that Premier Hodza, while rejecting Henlein's demands, should open negotiations with the Sudeten German Party on modified terms. The Czech coalition parties unanimously expressed their desire to satisfy the demands of the various minorities, subject only to the sovereignty and integrity of the state and of its democratic structure.

On May 20 Premier Hodza announced that the government had drafted a complete solution of the whole minority problem which would cut deeply into the existing state administration. But the government was determined to fulfill its obligations both to the country and to Europe. Czechoslovakia wished

to settle the question of the relations between the various nationalities on her territory in the principles of justice.

On May 22 the first of the municipal elections was held in Sudeten-German towns and counties. The elections were held at a time extremely favorable to the S.D.P. Austria had been annexed, Germany stood ready across the border to step in in case any incident occurred. German propaganda broadcasts were humming across the border continuously.

SUDETENS LOYAL TO CZECH STATE

Until this time there had been no hint of a plebiscite of the German-Sudetens concerning the cession of their area to Germany. Henlein had said some time before:

“The welfare of the Sudetens is indissolubly bound up with the welfare of the Czechoslovak Republic. We stand in principle and unanimously for loyalty to this state. For more than a thousand years Germans and Czechs have lived together in these lands, and always their fate has been common in times of distress and in times of prosperity.”

Even immediately before the elections there was no hint of secession by Henlein and his followers. The Henleinists were attempting to use the elections to show the international public that the entire Sudeten-German public stood for Henlein. What followed the elections is now history.

It was a decent people that Neville Chamberlain sacrificed. It was a growing, virile, clean young state that was offered on the altar by the corrupt action of the Prime Minister of a once "Great" Britain. It is too much to expect that two men like Chamberlain and Daladier, who would betray the interests of their own nations for selfish class interests, could understand what Czechoslovakia symbolized. Moreover, it is folly to talk of their "crawling by airplane" to Hitler. They went as partners.

But the full price of the treachery has not yet been paid and the pity is that it will not be the Cliveden set or the 200 families of France who will do the paying. It will be paid by the peoples of many countries.

The cost to Czechoslovakia has been a dear one. Not only has Germany received the Sudeten area, which never was hers and whose people in large part had no "home in the Reich" to which they wished to return, but other vultures have quickly come to claim a portion of the prostrate body. Poland took Teschen. Hungary is still negotiating with one hand on a gun. An "autonomous" Slovak state within a state has been set up by reactionaries who go to Berlin for advice. The Left political parties are threatened with repression at Hitler's insistence. Thousands of bewildered emigres from the Sudeten areas do not know in which direction to turn. With a straight face Sir Neill Malcolm has asked Prague to care for them. "In the name of humanitarianism I appeal to you," he told

General Syrový. "Humanitarianism," was the reply, "that is a strange word."

The hearts of democratic Czechoslovaks are heavy. Nor is it their voice which says that free Germans must be returned to the concentration camps. It is not the men of liberty who ask Hitler to "mediate" the differences with Hungary.

"We wanted to sing with the angels," a Prague journalist commented, "but now we must howl with the wolves." Bitter, tired, disillusioned there is no difficulty in understanding their feelings, yet the Czechs have known misery before, have often had to fight for their freedom. They are not yet dead. Fascism may rule the economic and political life of the nation; Hitler may decide the new borders, but in the minds of its people the values for which they have long struggled are lasting; and to them Eduard Benes is yet President of Czechoslovakia.

THE PRICE TO BE PAID

The ten items listed earlier show clearly enough how real the peace of Munich is. There is now evidence to believe that the war scare which occurred during the last two weeks of September, 1938, was a phony.

When he resigned from his Cabinet post, Alfred Duff Cooper revealed that Germany was encouraged in her demands, because at the same time that the British navy was being mobilized, words were being

poured into the ears of the Reichsfuehrer that it was all camouflage, that Great Britain did not mean business. A United Press dispatch from Berlin revealed that Marshal Goering was worried nonetheless because he knew that in a real test of strength Germany could not stand up against England, France and the Soviet Union. One German general added: "We would have to fight in the air, by sea, on the land, and our own people." Mussolini was ready to play Italy's historic role as a vacillating ally.

But most significant is a dispatch from the Rome office of the Associated Press on September 15. It met the censor's approval.

"ROME, September 15 (AP)—Reports that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had talked with the Premiers of Italy and France before meeting Adolph Hitler raised the question tonight whether four-power talks might develop to ward off a European war.

"In these circles an attempt to solve the Czechoslovakian crisis through an accord among the four great European powers seemed possible.

"A usually reliable source said Chamberlain telephoned Premier Benito Mussolini to determine his attitude before flying to talk with Hitler at Berchtesgaden."

This item was buried in the midst of more sensational news about war preparations, babies in gas masks, and Mr. Chamberlain's Nazi salute. But for those who believed that all the dramatic gestures, the

three airplane flights to Hitler, the tearful speech in the House of Commons, interrupted by Sir John Simon, were spontaneous this should be revealing. In gangster terminology, which seems appropriate, it was a frame-up.

But if the British Tories played a malodorous role that of the French politicians was no less so. From evidence that newspapermen are discussing abroad it appears that behind the scenes George Bonnet was doing his best to weaken the resistance of his own people.

In the first place he is said to have discussed with Litvinov the possibility of joint action by the Soviet Union with England and France. Litvinov assured him that his nation would stand by its agreements. But Bonnet returned to the French Cabinet and declared that Litvinov had refused to give commitments. This occasioned Litvinov's brilliant speech in the League assembly where he made the Soviet position clear.

At another date Bonnet asked the French general staff for a report on the Soviet army. While the first two pages were critical, the remainder of the document was full of high praise. Bonnet is said to have sent only the first two pages to the Cabinet.

At still another period Bonnet remarked that General Gamelin was afraid of the Siegfried line and that France would be stopped there. Actually Gamelin had remarked in nearly these words, "We could go through

the Siegfried line in three weeks as if it were molasses."

Unexpected developments have already taken place to plague Great Britain for her part. First the Irish and then the South Africans demanded plebiscites. Then the German foreign office let a hint drop that possibly an aerial parity of one British plane for three German planes would be equalizing the injustices of Versailles! This must have riled the Tory government, added to the ingratitude of the Saarbrücken speech in which Hitler did not even consider Chamberlain as one of his friends. But they cooked the meal—they must eat it.

The people of France are paying even more and they know the blackmailers have not yet made their final demands. Daladier, in fear that the rising indignation of the people would scrap his handiwork, as it had the Hoare-Laval Pact, has established a semi-dictatorship. Typical Nazi campaigns against Jews are in motion in Alsace. Many secrets of the Maginot line have been divulged to the Germans by the seizure of the Czech fortifications which are on the same pattern. A strong and willing Czech army has been destroyed. The Franco-Soviet Pact has been scrapped, leaving France without any real military ally. The post-war agreements made with the small nations in Central Europe are worthless, since "to be a friend of France is a dangerous thing," as one member of the Chamber of Deputies puts it.

DILEMMA OF THE DEMOCRACIES

Without any basis for real or lasting peace, Great Britain and France have reduced themselves to second-rate powers. When Hitler beckons they must come. When he scowls they must cringe.

“It is the dilemma of the democracies of Europe that the very sincerity of their desire for peace has encouraged the German government to make full use of the nuisance value of a threat of war,” *The New York Times* commented.

What has happened since Munich demonstrates that what Hitler calls “peace” and what democratic peoples call “peace” are two different things. What the democratic peoples have not yet learned is that the mere absence of war is not peace. What they are learning is that the gift of Czechoslovakia to fascism has created more problems than it has solved. By strengthening those governments which include military conquest as an integral part of their philosophies, war has only been postponed and perhaps made inevitable.

The first lie to come out of Munich was the thesis that “permanent peace” had been established. The second and more deadly is the notion that the ultimate triumph of fascism is now assured.

Two more lessons are clear since Munich.

THE LESSON LEARNED

First, and one which we shall do well to remember,

is that the German people by their demonstration of relief show that they do not follow the war machinations of their rulers with the blind devotion we are so often told they practise. In his *The Coming Victory of Democracy*, Thomas Mann pleads with his readers not to do anything which will strengthen the present masters of the Reich if they really want to help the German people. The most certain way to help the German people is by refusing to provide Hitler with raw materials and credits which he still needs from abroad. Now more than ever an embargo and boycott against Germany can be potent. But second, and of greater importance to Americans, is the other lesson which Munich has taught.

It became evident rapidly enough that Munich does not mean peace; and in the Gallup poll published on October 14, 60 per cent of the people of the United States indicated that they realize this fact. If this is true, why is it?

The reasons are many and complicated. Yet they can be simplified. First, in fairness to President Roosevelt—who is being thanked by Mr. Chamberlain with such malicious intent that it seems like a “kiss of death”—it must be understood that the four-power conference at Munich was not what Roosevelt had in mind when he sent his notes to Hitler and the other governmental heads. In his second note Roosevelt made clear that he wanted a conference in “neutral territory” and with all the countries “particularly interested” present. Whatever Munich is, it is not neu-

tral territory. One might add without being accused of bias that Czechoslovakia, at least, was one of the "particularly interested" parties. One might even go so far as to suggest that Soviet Russia was as much concerned as Italy. What happened at Munich was not the Roosevelt plan.

Yet the idea which the President put forth is worthy of further serious study and action. For the only method of stopping the costly, even disastrous trend in rearmament is by such an attempt of all nations to discuss and settle disputes under international law. The President should be urged to go further along this line.

There is a second point.

From the shabby treatment of Czechoslovakia there has arisen a storm of indignation throughout this nation which can now be crystallized into a concrete program, designed to restore some order in international relations. The radio coverage of the recent events has demonstrated adequately that in this world there is and cannot be any isolation. Polls of popular opinion show that the American people are clearly on the side of the democratic nations. It was a dirty deal, most people agree.

Very well, what is to be done about it?

Since the Czechoslovakian people were abandoned the press of this nation has struck an almost unanimous note. Papers so removed from progressive thought as *The New York Herald Tribune* have been shocked and outraged. Dorothy Thompson who "prefers to

be called a conservative" has seen the issue with unusual clarity. Her columns have been brilliant and bitter. On September 22 she wrote:

"Do you prefer death by dismemberment or death by the sword—answer 'yes' or 'no.' President Benes and Premier Hodza asked permission to think a moment and made the shocking proposal of asking to have the case referred to the Court of International Justice in the Hague. . . .

"When Lord Halifax read of what had happened in Austria it is said that this Christian gentleman beat his brow and said: 'It is horrible! Horrible!' I wonder what he is going to say next week.

"I wonder what the 'British people, one in mind and conscience' as the *London Times* so wittily says, with their righteous feeling towards minorities are going to do with the hordes of refugees who will try to trek their way out of Czechoslovakia, penniless and desperate . . . ?

"Great Britain is a great empire and I have no doubt that with her sympathies for the oppressed she will take them all in!

"And I hope that Mrs. Chamberlain will pray for them to that peculiar Anglo-Saxon God of the upper classes who, just like the rain, bestows his favors on the just and unjust, according to the balance of power."

Or in different vein but with the same disgust, the *Portland Oregonian* asks:

"Was it necessary for Chamberlain to make a personal appearance to get the German dictator to accept exactly what he has been demanding all

along? . . . Surely a telegram would have served as well—a telegram well within the ten-word limit. One reading ‘Take what you want’ surely would have prevented the outbreak of war, it being the intention to capitulate in practically all particulars to German arrogance. . . .”

Even *The New York Post*, which carried two editorials during the crisis saying “Thank God for the Atlantic Ocean,” has seen the simple truth that Munich has left all the old tensions and merely created additional problems. But the *Post* goes on to draw completely false lessons from the results, so false that even its own editorial and news columns contradict them. After being completely revolted by the results of the sell-out they also give thanks that we of the United States have had nothing to do with it. They conclude that we should now learn to stay out of Europe’s affairs, because they are not our own.

But their deep concern for what has happened gives the lie to the thesis. The complete triumph of Hitler on the Czech issue has given encouragement to every sabre-rattler externally and internally. Our own fascists can say with good reason: “Why bother arguing with labor around a conference table? Beat the hell out of strikers, that’s the only way to handle them. After all, those tactics are winning in Europe.” American isolationism, praising heaven for some salt and water, is the exact counterpart of Chamberlain’s isolationism from the affairs of Czechoslovakia.

The excitement and disillusionment of the crisis

have caused others also to become bewildered, even to doubt the value of a program of concerted peace action. Yet what took place between the powers was the exact opposite of concerted action for peace. Instead it was the natural outgrowth of continued concessions to the aggressors. The long tedious routine was repeated as in China, Ethiopia, Spain and Austria. Not once did the non-aggressor nations stand firmly to protect the weaker states, not once did they apply embargoes against the fascists, nor did they ever give material aid to the aggrieved. Nor did the United States; and to that extent the pious denials of the *Post* are meaningless and we become parties to the crimes by our inactivity.

THE U. S. AND CONCERTED PEACE ACTION

This is the lesson of Munich. Had the United States played an active role, had we translated our moral indignation into concrete action, we would be in a better position to criticize the British and French, but, more important, to have save Czechoslovakia. With our political and economic strength clearly against the aggressors the cause of world peace would unquestionably have been aided. As it has been we have become dupes of the war-makers who have momentarily conquered by dividing the non-fascist states.

What was true before Czechoslovakia is even more true today. Capitulation to the fascists does not promote peace. The United States cannot stand aloof.

The basic weakness of the aggressor nations is their internal economic weakness, and large sections of their people want a chance to rid themselves of the tyrants who rule them. It has been the failure of the democratic peoples to insist that their governments recognize these facts which has caused so much to be lost to sheer bluff.

If these facts are true, then the alternatives are equally true. Embargo the aggressors. Insist that the government of the United States take a lead in calling a halt to the retreat of democracy. Continue the work for peace, recognizing that it alone is the thing which Hitler, Mussolini and their satellites fear in the end.

For the moment Czechoslovakia has been lost, but the people of China and Spain are still heroically fighting on. They need our help; they must not be relegated to "howl with the wolves" also. Freedom is too dear to allow the gloom which followed Munich to translate itself into defeatism. So long as these people are determined to resist, we dare not become resigned. Already Neville Chamberlain has turned from Prague to Spain. Here is clearly the crux of the new European situation; we dare not fail these valiant soldiers who fight today that we need not fight tomorrow.

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