

The Sacrifice of Austria

HOW FAR WILL BRITISH ACQUIESCENCE GO?

By R. Palme Dutt

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“WHEN the territory of the Reich contains all Germans,” wrote Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, “and if the Reich avows itself unable to support them, from that necessity of relations will arise its moral right to acquire foreign territory. The plough will then give place to the sword and the tears of war will prepare a harvest of the future world.”

Today this issue has been brought a stage closer by Hitler's military coup in Austria. Hitler's mailed fist has descended on the Austrian people. All Europe is asking what will follow. This is the first direct military conquest of another state by Nazi Germany. All the previous successive coups, the repudiation of the military and naval clauses of Versailles, the introduction of conscription, and the armed occupation of the Rhineland, were carried out within Germany. Now the power of the German armies has been directly used to annex a neighboring state.

In 1934 when Hitler made his first attempt to conquer Austria by the murder of Dollfuss, two Italian divisions were dispatched to the Brenner Pass. The British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, declared in the House of Commons on July 30, 1934 that the British government “fully recognized the right of Austria to demand that there should be no interference with her internal affairs,” and the British-French-Italian declaration of February 1934 was reaffirmed, that the three governments take a common view as to the necessity of maintaining Austria's independence and integrity in accordance with the relevant treaties.

Today Hitler's coup has met with complete passivity and acquiescence from the democratic powers under the domination of Britain. When the British Foreign Secretary Eden was questioned in the House of Commons as to the previous pledges with regard to “the integrity and independence of Austria,” he replied that “My recollection is that what I stated was that His Majesty's government desired in Central Europe as elsewhere peace and good understanding.” Questioned further as to Czechoslovakia, he extended an open invitation to further German expansion by refusing to recognize any obligation and declaring only that “this country has always had the friendliest feelings towards the Czechoslovak nation and is fully aware of the treaties which bind Czechoslovakia to other great powers.”

Undoubtedly Britain played the decisive role in making Hitler's coup possible. When Schuschnigg was summoned to Berchtesgaden, he appealed to Britain and France. The French general staff took an extremely serious view of the situation and is understood to have

urged a stand, pointing out that the German conquest of Austria would not only cut off Czechoslovakia but place the iron and steel resources of the Alpine Montana at the disposal of the Reich, in addition to those of Bilbao already conquered. The British ambassador in Paris communicated with London. The instructions came back from the British cabinet to refuse to join in any joint action urging Schuschnigg not to go, and to refuse to join in any joint action to stop the German drive. Thereby Austria's fate was sealed so far as the great powers are concerned, although the resistance of the Austrian people is still to be reckoned with.

What underlies this change from the situation of 1934? Undoubtedly it reflects the worsening of the international situation and the cumulative outcome of the continuous abdication of the democratic powers. The victory of the extremist war elements in the German crisis of February 4 has had its speedy sequel and has for the moment justified the estimate made by these elements of what Germany could with impunity attempt in the immediate situation. It reflects at the same time the relative weakening of Italy through the difficulties in Spain, in Ethiopia, and in its economic situation.

The surrender of Italy in Austria means certainly that compensation has been promised to Italy in the shape of stronger support in Spain. The coup in Austria is therefore the counterpart of an intensified fascist offensive in Spain, the outcome of which is no less momentous for the future of peace in Europe. Heavy supplies of bombing airplanes are being poured from Italy into Spain at the same time that the British government is making a great show of new negotiations with Italy for the withdrawal of volunteers, and even proposing a new loan to Italy. The battle for democracy and peace is more than ever a single battle throughout Europe.

But this extreme intensifying of fascism's offensive does not therefore mean that fascism is advancing along an inevitable course from strength to strength. On the contrary, this sharpening of the fight is in part also the reflection of the strengthening of the democratic forces, especially in Spain. The victories of the Spanish people's army at the close of the last year and the opening of this year, and the prospect of the collapse of Franco, have faced fascism and reaction with new and critical problems. They saw correctly that from this point might come the turning of the tide, the collapse of the myth of fascist invincibility, and the sweep forward of the cause of the people's front through Europe. Hence the at-

tack on the people's front in France, an attack directed by British finance immediately following the fall of Teruel. Hence the eagerness of Britain to find a basis of agreement to extend new loans and credits to Germany and Italy. Hence the crisis of February 4 in Germany.

The conservative elements among the general and the industrialists were for a more cautious war policy, for the retreat from Spain, and for weakening the bonds of the triple pact. In order to reach close understanding with Britain, the extremist elements sought to solve the situation by an intensified offensive while bullying and intimidating Britain into acceptance and support. The latter policy won. The coup in Austria and the intensified offensive in Spain have followed.

In this situation, Britain, rather than face the possibility of the victory of the democratic forces in Spain and Europe, has deliberately opened the gates to Nazi expansion and domination of the continent of Europe. Well might the old liberal minister of wartime days, Lord Crewe, ask in the House of Lords what the war of 1914 was fought for. It is universally recognized that if Hitler's conquest of Austria is allowed to go through, it will not stop there. In his interview with Schuschnigg Hitler declared that he regarded himself as the ruler of the eighty million Germans in Europe. The same methods as in Austria are intended to carry forward German domination, without open war but in fact by military power, into Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Holland, and Belgium—and then? “*When the territory of the Reich contains all Germans . . . the plough will then give place to the sword, and the tears of war will prepare a harvest of the future world,*” with its base established in central Europe and across the Pyrenees.

Fascism calculates to isolate France once again. The same technique is to be employed. Alsace-Lorraine provides the pretext. The object of the offensive is proclaimed not at France but at the people's front, “Marxism.” The allies of Hitler within the gates, Flandin and Tardieu and Doriot, have already declared their willingness to cooperate and shown it in the conspiracy of the Hooded Men. It is noticeable that in the last few weeks the Nazi press has begun an active offensive campaign over Alsace-Lorraine.

How far will British acquiescence go? Formerly Britain drew the line at the west over France and Belgium. This is no longer so certain. Belgium has already been thrown over. British reaction would probably gladly cooperate with the Nazis to overthrow the people's

front and establish an imposed Right government on France.

In this way, they will hope to see their dream realized of a four-power pact of united reaction in Europe, cutting off the Soviet Union. Only the more far-sighted see the alternative possibility that what they are preparing is a powerful and dominating German imperialism to confront the British empire. *Britain under the national government is drawing closer and closer into the Berlin-Rome axis.* This fact must be faced, and the facing of it is the first necessity for the British peo-

ple in order that they may understand the fight they have to wage in their own interests and for the peace of the world.

The democratic forces can still defeat fascism. The overwhelming superiority is on their side if a united stand can be achieved. The victories of democracy in Spain, even in spite of the crippling ban on all support from the democratic states, have shown what could be achieved if full coöperation were realized. But the time for realizing that coöperation grows shorter. The coup in Austria, alongside the renewed offensive in Spain and the Far

Eastern situation presents the gravest crisis yet reached. It is still possible by withholding financial and economic support from Germany, Italy, and Japan so long as they carry forward their aggression in Spain, Austria, and China, and by organizing material support for the Spanish and Chinese peoples, to break the fascist offensive before it reaches its outcome in world war.

Will the peoples react in time to the need of the urgent measures that must be taken? This is the issue that faces above all the peoples of Britain and the United States.

Ballad of the Spanish Civil Guard

By Federico Garcia Lorca

TRANSLATED BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Their horses are black.
Black are their iron shoes.
On their capes shimmer stains
of ink and wax.
They have, and so they never weep,
skulls of lead.
With patent-leather souls
they come down the road.
Wherever they pass they spread
silences of thick rubber
and fears of fine sand.
They go by, if they wish to go,
concealing in their heads
a vague astronomy
of abstract pistols.

Oh, city of the gypsies!
On the corners, banners.
The moon and pumpkins
preserved with gooseberries.
Oh, city of the gypsies!
Who could see you and not remember you?
City of grief and of musk
with towers of cinnamon.
When the night that came
nightly came nightly,
the gypsies in their forges
made suns and arrows.
A horse with a mortal wound
went from one door to another.
Glass roosters crowed
toward Jerez de la Frontera.
The naked wind turns
the corner in surprise
in the night-silver night
that nightly comes nightly.

San José and the Virgin
loose their castanets
and come looking for the gypsies
to see if they can find them.
The Virgin comes dressed
in her village finery

of chocolate paper
and necklaces of almonds.
San José swings his arms
under a silken cape.
Behind comes Pedro Domecq
with three sultans of Persia.
The half moon dreams
an ecstasy of cranes.
Banners and torches
invade the roof-tops.
In the looking glasses sob
dancers who have no hips.
Water and shadow, shadow and water
toward Jerez de la Frontera.
Oh, city of the gypsies!
On the corners, banners.
Put out your green lights
for the Civil Guards are coming.
Oh, city of the gypsies!
Who could see you and not remember you?
Leave her far off from the sea
with no combs for her hair.

Two by two they come
to the city of fiesta.
A rustle of *siemprevivas*
invades their cartridge belts.
Two by two they come.
A night of double thickness.
To them the sky is nothing
but a window full of spurs.

Fear ran wild in a city
that multiplied its door.
Through them came forty Civil Guards
bent on pillage.
The clocks all stopped
and the cognac in the bottles
put on their November mask
to invite no suspicions.
A flight of screams unending
rose among the weather-vanes.
Sabers cut the air

that the horses trampled.
Through the dusky streets
old gypsy women
flew with drowsy nags
and crocks of money.
Up the steep streets
the sinister capes mount,
followed by fugitive
whirlwinds of scissors.

At the Gate of Belen
the gypsies gather.
San José, full of wounds,
shrouds a young maiden.
All through the night
stubborn guns sound sharply.
The Virgin treats the children
with drops of small saliva.
But the Civil Guard
advances sowing fires
where imagination burns
young and naked.
Rosa de los Camborios
sobs on her doorstep
with two breasts cut away
and put on a platter.
And other girls flee
pursued by their tresses
through the air where the roses
of black dust explode.
When the roof-tops are no more
than furrows on the earth,
dawn rocks her shoulders
in a long profile of stone.

Oh, city of the gypsies!
As the flames draw near
the Civil Guard goes off
down a tunnel full of silence.
Oh, city of the gypsies!
Who could see you and not remember you?
Let them look for you on my forehead,
game of the sand and the moon.