

EUROPE FACES FAMINE

BY HENRY ALBERT PHILLIPS

HAVING covered most of the continent, I felt that I had come face to face with the famine that looms over Europe. Though the war was only in its initial sparring stage, food stringency was already everywhere evident, and to a trained economist the harbingers of hunger were depressingly numerous. Be they belligerents or neutrals, non-combatants or soldiers, no people can wholly escape.

In the fertile heart of Transylvania, that Rumanian-held part of Hungary, I was the seven-day guest on a once-great estate that had been cut down to a thousand acres. My host's economic existence, as well as the subsistence of the surrounding villages and towns, depended entirely upon agriculture.

"A year ago, I would have sent a car to the station for you," he apologized, shaking his head at the antiquated family barouche. "But you see, all private motor cars have been commandeered. They have taken my farm motor truck too. Yesterday they requisitioned my tractor. To haul artillery, they said.

They hinted that we could use wheelbarrows — to haul manure, to draw the plows, to bring in the harvest. But whom do they mean by 'we'? All the able-bodied farmhands, farmers and peasants were taken into the army long ago. A few of us older men are left to carry on, with the help of the women folk, the cripples and the children. God knows how. This time next year, there will be nothing to eat."

I visited six of these reduced Rumanian estates and everywhere heard the same complaints. I made my way northward, over the broad plains of Bessarabia, where a Russian army was anchored deep in the mud across the border. Trenches had been dug zigzag for miles through the vast wheatfields on both sides. Armies were encamped, ready to come to death grips. This was in part the area wherein Germany had contracted to raise millions of tons of soya beans for a fat-starved Reich. Later, I crossed over and traversed the broad, well-watered valleys of Bukovina, also part of Rumania's granary. It not

only furnished bread for Rumania, but this region was scheduled to furnish at least 12 per cent of Greater Germany's livestock, meat, wheat and barley. I found the entire region in a state of helpless confusion, engrossed in the transportation and protection of Rumania's treasured oil on its way to the Reich. The single-track railway was taxed to capacity, putting it out of commission for local or export transport of foodstuffs.

At Cernauti (formerly Austrian Cernowitz), I came upon the scene of an even graver threat. The border wall had broken down under pressure of more than a hundred thousand starving Polish refugees. They still remain in Rumania, daily devouring thousands of tons of the precarious rationed food. In the meantime, threatened by an offensive on three sides, Rumania has had to call out her last able-bodied man, mobilizing an army of nearly two millions. Here is one of the principal "feed-boxes" of Central Europe, rendered agriculturally impotent. Hunger follows not far behind.

Throughout Yugoslavia I observed a similar predicament: A nation of many nationalities — Turk, Bosnian, Croat, Herzegovinian, Montenegrin and Serb — wallowing in wartime in a morass of

Oriental lethargy and inefficiency, no longer able to lean upon the paternalism of the Austrian Empire of 1914. In Skoplye (formerly Uskub), 50,000 soldiers were garrisoned in idleness while the surrounding fields were for the most part bare and deserted. At Sarajevo there was another enormous army post. Mobilization alone occupied everybody's attention. Nobody seemed greatly concerned about planting or cultivating or the future harvest, as though they had been half-starved for centuries and it didn't much matter. It was much the same in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. Each seemed to think the other would take care of it.

I found Italy taking the situation more seriously. Mussolini was thundering, "It will be an Armageddon of wheat! A bad harvest will be equal to the loss of a campaign!" He was right, but a prolonged look over Italy's barren topography was none too reassuring. Only 20 per cent of her land is cultivable, including 2,500,000 hectares added by Il Duce's costly reclamation projects. In peace or in war, Italy's colonies contribute little or no sustenance. The scanty food supplies of the Balkans were being carried off wholesale by the hungry and greedy belligerents on both sides. Italy is caught in the pincers

of this economic war. I saw bakers' rolls and restaurant portions shrinking from month to month. Food prices increased 10 per cent in a single week. Frightened hoarders began to create havoc with reserves; by February, 33,000 of them had been arrested and severely penalized.

Spain was the starkest spectacle of all. The opposing armies of a year ago had already scavenged the country like locusts, leveling olive and orange groves and killing every living thing that could be eaten. Replacements of herds of milch cows could not be had at any price, even if the people had had the money. Whole villages were without either milk or bread for days at a time. Spain will be a beggar for a long time to come.

Hungary is an outstanding example of the plight of a food-producing neutral caught in an economic trap. Formerly it was the granary and partial meat-producer for the Austrian Empire. It not only raises sufficient wheat and meat to feed itself, but it depends for other necessities on the profits from its food exports. For some years 90 per cent of these exports have gone to Germany. Even before 1940 Hungary was showing indications of serious economic difficulty. It began with the

bad 1939 corn crop, which adversely affected the turnover of cattle and pigs. The influx of 100,000 hungry Polish refugees has not helped the situation. So, we find the usually well-fed Hungary going hungry itself as early as February, regulating the output of bread and fixing two meatless days a week. Here again we have an agrarian country with nearly a million men, largely farmers, pinioned under heavy arms. It is hard to say just how many of the country's 14,000,000 acres of prime wheatland will lie fallow, with breadlines from one end of Europe to the other.

Holland and Belgium had long been under a stiff regime of rationing. With a million and a half men under arms, they were looking about hopelessly for ways and means to keep from actual want. The Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia had already come under the control of the Soviet Union, and the hungry Russian Bear was gobbling up their extra hogs, poultry and butter.

With Great Britain and Germany both trying by force to prevent sea trade with the enemy, Scandinavians find themselves between the devil, the deep sea and starvation. Despite the fact that more than half her population is on farms, Sweden falls short of being

self-supporting. More than three-fourths of Norway is unproductive, mountainous rock. Denmark is thrifty and normally does a lively trade in butter, bacon, eggs and fodder, in which both belligerents and nearly all neutrals are deficient. Nevertheless, reports have come from Denmark that the government has been seizing private stocks of food and coal! Finland's tale of devastation and threatened starvation is already familiar history. In the World War Norway lost 60 per cent of her ships; Denmark, 32 per cent. The alarming feature of Scandinavia's agrarian problem is the fact that crop efficiency falls 50 per cent without the stimulus of Chilean fertilizers, from which Europe has been practically cut off.

II

In the past, fighting nations relied on their non-combatant neighbors for nourishment. What impressed me most deeply as I went through Europe, therefore, was that this time the neutrals are not only unable to sustain those engaged in killing but uncertain of sustaining themselves. Neutrals are in the same mad-doghouse as non-neutrals, bullyragged and threatened by war on every side, forced to abandon normal life and making ruinous

outlays for armaments. The able-bodied man-power of the neutrals have joined the uniformed "unemployed," just loafing and eating their heads off.

The headwaiter of a Berlin café told me, "We are very sorry to announce that the goulash is all gone — but in its place for the next few days we have nice rabbit stew, sir." The whole of Germany seemed to be raising rabbits for food, jumping the production from 8 to 20 millions. Germany's rationing system was "all according to plan." In pursuance of its two Four Year Plans, the Reich had been on short rations for years before the war. The object of these Plans was to attain self-sufficiency and avoid being again starved out by an Allied blockade.

Germany got the jump on all Europe, in the organization of a gigantic Food Front, seven years ago. When the drive began the Reich was only 70 per cent self-sufficient in foodstuffs. Housewives began saving every morsel of garbage for the national piggeries. Hitler *Jugend* raised rabbits, dug tiny kitchen gardens, and collected "fats." The *Arbeitsdienst* boys cleared, drained and cultivated wastelands into food-growing acreage. Scientists invented new fertilizers, farm machinery, and diets.

Farmers were trained in intensive agriculture, discarding handwork in favor of machinery. Farm labor shortage had been acute. Since 1914, a million erstwhile peasants have sought the city factories. Last August I saw the bumper harvests being feverishly gathered all over the Reich with the aid of university students, Hitler Youth and the Labor Service army.

Three days before the Polish War began, Walter Darre, Minister for Food and Agriculture, announced that the Reich had 8,600,000 tons of grain reserves, not including the current crop. The normal annual consumption, however, exceeded 25,000,000 tons! Argentina used to be the Reich's major source of wheat. Now Germany must rely on the Balkans, the bulk of whose fields will remain unplowed. Because the war has closed the most important fishing grounds, the demand for meat has rapidly increased. Fats are the Reich's most urgent need. She would rely on Norway for whale oil, but Norway says she cannot risk or spare whaling ships in these times. The universal shortage of fodder was being felt in the curtailing of both beef and butter imports. The Chinese supply of oil seeds was cut off by lack of transport facilities. In the days just preceding Ger-

many's breakdown from hunger in the World War, consumption had reached one-third less bread and flour, one-quarter less meat — but about one-tenth less fats — than normal. It was the lack of fats that undermined the nation. Today, Germany faces the same calamity within the year.

Despite superhuman efforts, the Nazis failed to make the grade of self-sufficiency, being able to show only 80 per cent. Every day of their gigantic war effort reduces this percentage. Nature has dealt the Reich a terrific blow with the worst winter in a decade. Enormous reserves of potatoes, turnips, carrots and cabbages were spoiled by the excessive frost. The canned goods reserved for an emergency have already been allotted to the army. The great food-yielding areas of conquered Poland, ravaged by armies, hold only millions of starving Poles. The formerly busy food ports of Hamburg and Bremen are blockaded. The shifting of large peasant populations to unfamiliar terrains is making a serious mess of rural efficiency. Finally, the Germans have begun to feel the full effects of the badly hit hog market of 1938 and the hoof-and-mouth disease that wiped out one-third of their cattle breeders. Only a miracle can rescue the Third

Reich from a repetition of 1918.

What about the helping hand of Germany's expansive ally, Soviet Russia? Potentially, Russia is the richest country in the world. But it is the most unreliable. The weakest point in its economy is transportation. The greatest wheat country in the world, the Soviet Union has the longest continuous breadline in the world. With vast spaces and resources, it runs a close third to India and China in its record of famines. Not always a shortage of grain, but of flour, due to neglect in the upkeep of modern mills. The winter of 1939 began with a shortage of potatoes and milk. The flock of German experts have arrived too late to prevent general undernourishment or another Russian famine next winter. At the beginning of the year news began to seep out about the worst food shortage since the famine of 1932-33. Peasants were flocking to the cities: always a sinister symptom. Police were searching passengers on trains to stop the drain of food from the cities. Only by starving millions of its own citizens (not an impossible contingency) could Russia help feed Germany this year. But a starving and collapsing Russia will be nearly as dangerous to Hitler as a lost offensive.

III

Like Germany, France and England have become increasingly industrial nations, with diminishing rural and peasant populations. Of the three, the French are by far the most frugal. By the same token, they cannot reduce their limited diet much without endangering public health. The French grow most of their food supply, on thousands of tiny farms. Oil seeds and cereals are staples which they must import. During the World War France was partly occupied for four dreadful years. She could then rely on Spain and other neighbors for *soupons* to ward off actual starvation; today she cannot.

Despite France's experience, she has been slow to follow Germany's policy of immediate and rigid domestic economy. She did not proclaim meatless days until January. Food rationing cards did not appear until March. Meanwhile, 200,000 Spanish Loyalist refugees and 100,000 others from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany and Austria are gnawing away at her food supplies. As a candid official warning put it: "France is daily producing less and eating as much — in some cases more — than before. Our stores of food are alarmingly low." On the eve of spring

planting, a survey of women available for the fields revealed that 30 per cent, or 500,000 of them, were already at work in munitions factories, compared with only 400,000 in the World War. At once, 80,000 Poilu peasants were selected from the army, but the High Command put its foot down, afraid that an offensive might break in the spring. Now it has been decided that 70,000 field workers shall be brought from the colonies. Where will they get nearly a hundred empty ships to carry them? Isn't it likely that in their comparative inefficiency they would not raise more than enough to feed themselves?

Thus the skulking enemy, scarcity, is already stalking behind the lines.

Britain began rationing early, but with the confident feeling that the blessed Empire would always look after her. After six months of governmental dawdling with food supplies, David Lloyd George brought the British partly to their senses. "The grim specter of hunger is on the horizon!" he warned them. Their food position, he added, was worse than in the World War when, if the Americans had not come to their rescue, they would have been starved out. He cautioned them not to expect much from the neutrals. "We are

dependent for 60 per cent of our food supplies from outside sources!" he roared in the press. "There are five million more mouths to fill than in 1918 and one million tons less of shipping capacity! The enemy is sinking twice as much shipping today as in the first six months of 1914! Every man and woman and every acre of soil in England is needed for victory!" His harangue led to 3,000,000 acres of aristocrats' grassland being plowed under.

British farms could not feed the country two days a week on short rations. The bulk was coming from the Dominions, far overseas. Food resources had become so low by February that persons over six were being rationed only a pound of meat a week (including four ounces of bacon or ham or the despised doctored mutton called "macon"), four ounces of butter and twelve of sugar. Meanwhile, precursors of undernourishment were piling up on England's isolated isle. Increasing numbers of British merchantmen were being withdrawn as food carriers, or being sunk by the enemy. Normal trade routes were no longer accessible, and the convoy system sapped whole fleets at a time and doubled the length of delivery time.

In 1938, Britain imported 12 per

cent of her foodstuffs, chiefly dairy products and bacon, from Denmark and Norway. Trade with those countries has been partly severed. India, which bountifully contributed foodstuffs during the World War, is carrying on an effective campaign of non-participation. The West Indies, a source of food in 1914, are themselves half starving. British fishermen are running short of boats and men and the former staple supply of seafood is dwindling. The Minister of Agriculture has suggested that Britons catch eels in their home lakes and eat them. Reports of crews of foreign vessels refusing to sail for England despite huge bonuses are becoming more frequent. In the first four months of the war, commodities rose 28 per cent in price — 70 per cent above 1914 levels. Even meagre amounts of food were gradually receding from the reach of the million and a half unemployed and the vast army of unemployables on the dole.

Thirty million men are under arms in Europe. It requires the full time of two other workers to keep each man-at-arms supplied with sustenance, clothing and ammunition. Thus ninety million able-bodied are forced out of the orbit of peaceful production. All normal

life is unavoidably thrown out of adjustment. Above all, the normal planting and production of foodstuffs, their transportation and distribution must suffer. European agrarian economy has always been a tight squeeze under the best conditions. Now man-power and horse-power and fuel for mechanized farming are all being siphoned off for purposes of destruction.

After an acknowledged “best harvest in years,” peoples are already facing breadlines throughout Europe. What will it mean a year from now, if this war of extermination really gets going? The total war will furrow the fields with shells instead of plowshares, will sow them with corpses instead of corn. Military occupation will only be a signal for sabotage, arson and pillage. Morris Troper, European director of a great American charitable organization, on arriving in America recently told the press, “Europe threatens to become one of the greatest famine areas of all time.” He was summing up my own impressions after months of observation, and the impressions of numerous other observers.

Europe faces famine! And because man is born with the instinct of self-preservation, revolution is sure to follow. What kind of revolution no one can guess.

FREEDOM AND THE COLLEGES

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

BEFORE discussing the present status of academic freedom it may be as well to consider what we mean by the term. The essence of academic freedom is that teachers should be chosen for their expertness in the subject they are to teach, and that the judges of this expertness should be other experts. Whether a man is a good mathematician, or physicist, or chemist, can only be judged by other mathematicians, or physicists, or chemists. By them, however, it can be judged with a fair degree of unanimity.

The opponents of academic freedom hold that other conditions besides a man's skill in his own department should be taken into consideration. He should, they think, have never expressed any opinion which controverts those of the holders of power. This is a sharp issue, and one on which the totalitarian states have taken a vigorous line. Russia never enjoyed academic freedom except during the brief reign of Kerensky, but I think there is even less of it now than there was under the Tsars.

Germany, before the war, while lacking many forms of liberty, recognized pretty fully the principle of freedom in university teaching. Now all this is changed, with the result that with few exceptions the ablest of the learned men of Germany are in exile. In Italy, though in a slightly milder form, there is a similar tyranny over universities. In Western democracies it is generally recognized that this state of affairs is deplorable. It cannot, however, be denied that there are tendencies which might lead to somewhat similar evils.

The danger is one which democracy by itself does not suffice to avert. A democracy in which the majority exercises its powers without restraint, may be almost as tyrannical as a dictatorship. Toleration of minorities is an essential part of wise democracy, but a part which is not always sufficiently remembered.

In relation to university teachers, these general considerations are re-enforced by some that are especially applicable to their case.