

Apostles of Defeat

Bad Advice from Foreign Statesmen Out of Work



by ISABEL LUNDBERG

An able statesman out of work, like a huge whale, will endeavor to overturn the ship unless he has an empty cask to play with. — *old Italian proverb from the introduction to Machiavelli's The Prince*

THE UNITED STATES today has become, with scarcely anyone's being aware of it, the happy hunting ground of a flock of refugee statesmen, driven like birds to these shores by Europe's political storms. Far from being content, however, to accept the quiet sanctuary, these dislodged leaders are still waging political war against their enemies at home. Safe on foreign soil, they harangue lecture and radio audiences, issue statements to the press and, with whatever means come to hand, strive tirelessly to overturn the ship that they no longer command. Deprived of their native constituencies, they now exhort American audiences to join them in their struggle to return to office—to join, in the name of democracy, world peace, and progress.

In 1935, the year in which ex-Chancellor Heinrich Brüning of Germany made the first of two unpublicized visits to the United States, a *New York Times* editorial writer mourned:

Dr. Bruening is bound up with one of the great lost causes of our day. But people nowadays have little patience for lost causes. They like to describe the leaders of such causes as failures. Once upon a time there was moral grandeur in fighting to the last ditch. . . . Today people remind you that History accepts no excuses from leaders who fail.

The *Times* editorial writer may prove to have been right about history, but he was certainly wrong about the people of the United States. Since 1933 this country has been the mecca of political leaders who failed, and the American people have accepted every last one of their excuses. Indeed, far from having little patience for lost causes, America has become their champion. The success story, lovingly cherished by so many Americans, has gone into reverse.

THE FORUM

THEY'LL SHOW US HOW!

DR. BRÜNING was among the first of Europe's unemployed statesmen to rediscover America, but he was only one of many defeated German politicians to take refuge on American soil. After the annexation of Austria, Herr Schuschnigg was unfortunately prevented from leaving his country, so that we have not yet heard, from him, why his government fell. For another ex-head of state we had to wait for Czechoslovakia's President, Eduard Beneš, and after him for Premier Juan Negrin, of Spain. The King and Queen of Albania are not here yet; but, should they come, we shall then have the entire story of defeat in Europe, 1939, with alibis.

It is significant that, though all these nomad politicians reached America via Paris or London, none of them stayed in either of those agreeable capitals. With extraordinary unanimity they all headed for the United States — and not, it may be assumed, because America is lacking in politicians of her own.

But America is a great democracy — and so, we are told, were pre-Hitler Germany, pre-Munich Czechoslovakia, and pre-Franco Spain. Austria, of course, was fascist even before the fateful *Anschluss*. It is no longer recalled, however, that Chancellor Brüning was ruling by decree before he took his exit cue. And Czechoslovakia under President Beneš, it is responsibly charged, functioned more democratically for the Czechs than for her several minority groups. For Spain's claims to being a democracy, once the civil war started, there seems to be less and less supporting evidence.

There is, moreover, another and more vital point on which all the statesmen out of work are unanimous. Each is looking forward to a triumphant return to his native land — and

preferably his old job — once the “mad dogs” of Europe are again put back on their chains. And, make no mistake about it, there is not one of them who is not counting on the Americans to help him get back in the driver's seat. With no hope of achieving their former exalted status in America, already overburdened with headmen at the top, these gentlemen can look only to an overturn of *Führers* in their home countries as a way back to power.

Ex-Chancellor Brüning, in January, 1936, admitted, in reply to a question, that he hoped to return to Germany “in a day of restored prosperity and freedom.”

Ex-President Beneš, upon his arrival last February, referred in all his interviews to “his country, to which, he said, he fully expected to return.”

It was not ex-Premier Negrin but Julio Alvarez del Vayo, Spain's former Foreign Minister, who, in May, speaking in the Premier's absence, predicted “the speedy and inevitable rebirth of the third Spanish Republic.” And implicit in that rebirth was, of course, the restoration of the same republican officeholders to their old posts.

Now if we are not to seem like the most depraved barbarians, we must naturally do what our distinguished guests expect of us. And what they expect is fairly explicit. “In the approaching battle for the victory of the spirit against the sword,” cried ex-President Beneš from Chicago last March, “the United States has a very great role to play. Be ready for that conflict and be strong — O people of democracy!”

Stripped of all patriotic mumbo jumbo, the program is this: America is to help oust the dictators abroad while endeavoring to maintain democracy at home. And the joker in this prize package is that the very men who fell down on the job in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Spain are all here to give us their advice. We haven't enough amateur prophets, true and false, but we must throw open our forums and our presses to European political leaders whose policies have proved disastrous, yet who have the presumption to lay down a course for the United States to follow.

CRUSADERS ALL

THERE MIGHT BE less objection to these itinerant peddlers of propaganda if they stuck to their excuses, but that, with a rare excep-



APOSTLES OF DEFEAT

tion, they are not content to do. Nor, again with slight reservation, are they in the least press-shy.

Ex-Chancellor Brüning must be credited with being one of the exceptions. In the two years before his permanent appointment to Harvard's Graduate School of Public Administration in 1939, Dr. Brüning lectured widely, but little of his addresses save the titles reached the metropolitan press. To his student audiences at Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, and Harvard, he presented all the objective reasons for republican Germany's defection, neglecting, modestly, his own role in his government's fall. Of the future, as reported in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, "he was evidently convinced that liberal governments in Europe have too much competition from absolutism, and small chance of survival now or at any time in the near future."

It is unfortunate that Dr. Brüning, almost alone among his colleagues in exile, subscribes to that temperate view. The rest seem to hold to a mystic belief in the power of the "democracies" (chiefly the American) to change the prevailing color of the shirts being worn along the Rhine, the Danube, and the Tiber.

Albert C. Grzesinski, Prussian Minister of the Interior from 1926 to 1930 and twice Chief of Police of Berlin, the second time from November, 1930, to July, 1932, came to America from France in 1937. As Police Chief of Berlin, Herr Grzesinski proved singularly unsuccessful in stemming the Nazi tide; yet he concludes his book, *Inside Germany*, with this impassioned plea:

When will the great and powerful democracies put a halt to pan-German arrogance disguised by the new cloak of Nazism. . . . Not words and diplomatic gestures . . . but only deeds and the determination not to retreat one step further, will check Nazi aggression. It ought to be understood that the widely advertised successes of Nazism resulted not from its own strength but from the weaknesses of others and, above all, from the vacillating and confused policies of the democratic powers.

Toni Sender, Socialist member of the Reichstag from 1920 to 1933 and an implacable foe of war and warmongers in Germany, is another convert to the Stop Hitler (at all costs) movement in America. When Czechoslovakia was, in Mayor La Guardia's phrase, being "kidnaped," Miss Sender, in the column she contributes to a left-wing journal, suggested

pointedly: "The fascists are highly vulnerable and it is reasonable to doubt that they could long endure a war." Two weeks later she wrote:

All those who appreciate the value of freedom and civilization are interested in more rapid action and a readiness to commitments by the big powers for the sake of a stop-fascism front. It must be shown that democracy can act.

Would it be impolite to ask, "For whose benefit?"

The same "pro-democratic" line is being laid down by other Reichstag deputies now exiled in America, among them the former Social Democrats Gerhard Seger and Wilhelm Sollmann. Having no corresponding party framework here within which to function, these leaders without followers must and do agitate independently for a new crusade to make Europe once more safe for democracy — and for themselves.

Austria, as Martin Fuchs, former personal aide to ex-Chancellor Schuschnigg, makes clear in his *Showdown in Vienna*, made no move to check Hitler's inroads elsewhere:

While the plebescite struggle was raging in the Saar district [January, 1935] official Austria remained neutral. . . . There was thought to be a great difference between the situation in the Saar district which had belonged to Germany up to 1918, and independent Austria.

Yet exiled Austrian politicians look to the "democracies" to do what they never attempted.

René Kraus, Catholic and monarchist, member of the Press Department of the Schuschnigg government, announced, on setting foot in America in April, 1938: "War is not going to come within the next year, but no world peace can be secure until the democratic powers form an alliance to stop Germany."



THE CZECH FOREIGN LEGION

NOT, HOWEVER, until the Czechoslovak contingent arrived did Americans get a real taste of political agitation, European style. Czechoslovakia was, to be sure, one of Austria's neighbors, but, when Austria was about to go under the hammer, the *New York Times* correspondent reported, on March 14, 1938:

Official circles, public opinion, and the press in Czechoslovakia are showing remarkable calm and restraint in their views on the situation in Austria. Besides, while Austria has no allies and practically no army, Czechoslovakia has defenses, alliances, and an army that could hold its own until it received support.

It was only when the tramp of the goosesteppers could be heard in Prague that President Beneš let loose an advance guard of screaming emissaries.

First to arrive was Vojta Beneš, the president's elder brother, who was both Senator and Minister of Education in the Beneš cabinet. He announced himself, on September 26, 1938, as "an unofficial ambassador of good will to the American people."

Next, on January 6, 1939, came Jan Masaryk, Czech Minister to London, who had been out of work since the previous October 14.

Colonel Vladimir Hurban, Czech Minister to the United States, was already on the scene.

At "Save Czechoslovakia" rallies (under dubious auspices), at Advertising Club luncheons and Rotary Club dinners, at organized protest meetings of Czechs and Slovaks, Messrs. Beneš and Masaryk put on their act.

"I call on you brothers, from the Atlantic to the Pacific," cried Senator Beneš in October, "to stand by us."

"Unite," entreated Jan Masaryk in January, "against the works of the devil going on in Europe."

The Senator, who, by the way, had learned how to work on American audiences when he was here in 1915 and 1918, agitating for Czech autonomy, recalled "your heroic farmers, who stood in the American Revolution before the army of the British General Gage."

Said M. Masaryk:

To compare the treatment allotted to our Germans by my father with the treatment which Henlein and Company are dishing out to the Jews and antitotalitarian citizens of Sudetenland — it is as heaven compared to hell.

As Senator Beneš so eloquently put it, "Czechoslovakia was crucified as Christ was crucified."

Inflammatory as was the language of these ambassadors of "good will," it paled to the feebleness of a candle once ex-President Beneš flung open the furnace of his wrath. This was the man who, while still in Prague, had said: "I do not wish to criticize. Nor must you expect from me a single word of recrimination in any direction. History will be our judge." When, however, the capitulation of Czechoslovakia was followed by its inevitable occupation, M. Beneš, having shaken the brown dust of the Continent from his feet, became the avenging angel of a democracy that in retrospect rapidly assumed the proportions of a Utopia.

The partition of Czechoslovakia, he said, addressing "the conscience of the world," was "a new, shocking, international crime." On March 17, at a time when press and radio were creating hysteria enough over here, M. Beneš dispatched his famous message, protesting a "great international crime," to President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Chamberlain, Premier Daladier, and Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs Litvinoff. The language of this message, later cabled to the League of Nations, is typical of the melodramatic breast beating in which former President Beneš has publicly indulged since his coming to America:

Before the conscience of the world and before history, I am obliged to proclaim that Czechs and Slovaks will never accept this unbearable imposition on their sacred rights . . . and I entreat your government to refuse to recognize this crime and to assume the consequences which today's tragic situation in Europe and the world urgently requires.

Ten days later, in a message read at the Volunteer Christian Committee to Boycott Germany rally, in New York, he said:

I am pleading that the forces of democracy, freedom, and decency shall give combat to the forces which have already ranged themselves on the other side. . . . There are methods short of actual bloodshed which should prove effective.

Admitting that the Republic of Czechoslovakia had been "temporarily" annexed, he added, "Temporarily, I say, because I know my people, and I understand that the spirit of freedom is not dead. At the right moment you will see that this is true."

Not content with jumping on the economic-

APOSTLES OF DEFEAT

boycott wagon, regardless of the boycott's effect on the foreign trade of the nation that is his host; not content with uttering, oracle-like, disquieting references to "the right time" and "when the time comes," ex-President Beneš revealed himself the veteran propagandist that he is before the pro-Soviet Third American Writers Congress, in Carnegie Hall, New York, on June 2. Here for the first time he resorted to the atrocity story:

Czech families spend nights in the woods, not daring to sleep in their own beds for fear of Nazi pogroms. And German peasants, excited by the Nazis who have come from Germany for that purpose, brandish scythes and cry, "The bloody night is coming!"

Using such time-worn devices as, "You all must have heard," and, "I hear that," M. Beneš played skillfully on his audience and finally, in rhetorical conclusion, demanded:

Is it possible that a nation which undertook such sacrifices for the peace of the world, endeavoring thereby to save other nations from catastrophe, offering as the price the pieces of its own body, can this nation be abandoned now to the violent and inhuman procedure of progressive assassination, spiritual destruction, and material demolition? Can the world of the free spirit permit this? I refuse to believe it.

But who, his listeners are entitled to ask, first "abandoned" little Czechoslovakia to this "spiritual destruction and material demolition?"

Who, indeed, but M. Beneš himself?

In this same provocative speech, M. Beneš admitted that "the Czechoslovak people were prepared to defend themselves by arms to the last breath."

Why were they not allowed to? Who withheld the desperately awaited call to arms?

The tragic truth is that M. Beneš, for reasons of his own, chose to reserve his frenzied oratory for Americans.

SPANISH REPUBLICANS CHEERFUL

LIKE ALL THE OTHER APOSTLES of defeat who preceded them to the United States, the exiled leaders of the "popular front" in Spain refuse to accept the reality of a situation in which they no longer play the dominant role.

No sooner had the *Normandie* docked, last May 1, than Juan Negrin, wartime Premier of Spain prophesied "that the 'fascist regime' of General Francisco Franco could not last long because the Spanish people would not submit to fascist domination." Declaring he had come

to the United States as a private citizen (M. Beneš made the same avowal when he landed), ex-Premier Negrin "announced his willingness, however, to give the benefits of his wartime experience to those who still have to face the same adversaries."

Luckily Señor Negrin did not seem to feel that America was in any immediate danger, for he indicated his intention, after a sojourn in Mexico and Europe, of returning to this country, possibly to lecture. Before his departure, however, the former Premier dropped one of those pregnant warnings that are now part of the standard impedimenta of traveling ex-presidents, ex-premiers, and ex-chancellors. Said he:

If other countries realize that they are fighting for their own existence against the Axis, they will be victorious. But if every day they give up something, first Austria, then Czechoslovakia and Spain, then next perhaps a Balkan country or Danzig, they will be lost.

Señor Negrin said no more, publicly; but he left Spain's former Foreign Minister del Vayo behind to propagate the new "faith."

Like M. Beneš, who in April and again in June saw Europe "just now in a great new fight for democracy and freedom," Señor del Vayo dwells in a modern land of Oz, his glasses colored by the three thousand miles of ocean between him and the grim reality of Spain. "The Spanish people," he predicted early in May, "will rise to a new life of freedom and liberty." And, as for the refugees — their future is just as bright. Señor del Vayo told his Madison Square Garden audience on May 22:

What I want to do is to draw your attention to the plight of the half-million Spaniards who have lost their homeland — lost it momentarily — sure though they are to reconquer it again.

A LITTLE JOB FOR US TO DO?

THE CONSTANT ITERATION of words like "temporarily" and "momentarily" by these politicians in eclipse is no accidental concurrence.



THE FORUM

Clearly the notion the speakers intend to convey is that their successors in high places are just holding on by the grace of the Almighty and through the lack of a united "democratic front." It will take, they imply, only one good push to loosen them from their niches, and then we can all go home.

Who but a fool, after all, would admit his cause was irrevocably lost, so long as there was the possibility that with outside help it might be saved — and, with it, his personal career? Even the Russian politicians who were lucky enough to be exiled instead of "tried" look forward to a brighter day in the land of the hammer and sickle — if somebody else can be won over to the task of unhorsing Dictator Stalin.

On the second of two visits he made to America in 1938, Alexander Kerensky, ousted Prime Minister of the second Provisional Government in Russia in 1917, warned:

It is the duty of all true democrats and lovers of liberty . . . to bring moral pressure upon the rulers in the Kremlin, to the end that the liberation of Russia from the ruthless dictatorship that keeps her people in subjection and makes it impossible for them to co-operate effectively for world peace may finally become a reality and thus serve as a mighty contributing force to the triumph of freedom and civilization.

The signing of the nonaggression pact between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany found M. Kerensky no longer in retirement in Paris but newly established as a resident of New York City.

It is surely in the best American tradition to accord these exiled statesmen the refuge they seek from the dictators abroad. Two of them have already assumed academic posts in this country: ex-Chancellor Brüning at Harvard

and ex-President Beneš at the University of Chicago. A third, the former Spanish Ambassador to the United States, Fernando de los Rios, has accepted appointment, effective this fall, to the Graduate School of Political and Social Science of the New School for Social Research, in New York City.

With the announcement of ex-President Beneš' call to Chicago, the *New York Times*, speaking editorially, expressed its satisfaction in

the presence on the faculties of American colleges of teachers who have made history and played a leading role in Government . . . as the lights go dim in Europe. . . . No one is better able to draw lessons from current events and deliver straight-from-the-shoulder talk to democrats than a visiting professor direct from Prague.

That, in the light of the visiting professor's subsequent verbal incendiaryism, would seem to be a questionable statement of fact.

Frankly, it may be doubted whether a single one of these defeated politicians, in college or out, has anything to teach us — except the lesson of his own failure. In fact, if the lights are not to "go dim" in this country, too, it is time we began to scrutinize the warnings and admonitions with which we are being peppered by these self-appointed guardians of democracy.

It is only fair to ask: Are these unemployed statesmen interested primarily in democracy or in jobs? Is their goal the defeat of fascism or a return to power by, to borrow a phrase, "a policy that expects salvation by foreign bayonets"?

We may discover, in letting ourselves be stampeded into a new holy war to "save democracy," that we have followed the counsels of defeat and from the wisdom of failures reaped failure.

Next month:

an anonymous personal-experience story,

'My Career on the WPA'

Guinea Pigs Left March



by **STANLEY HIGH**

UNTIL ABOUT 1927, the American consumer—male and female—was isolated, anonymous, and generally peaceable. Today he is an army with banners. Already more than eighty organizations are instructing, warning, and mobilizing him.

Twenty departments and agencies of the federal government lend him their aid. Through 2,500 home-demonstration agents of the Department of Agriculture, seven million farm women have been made consumer-conscious. The *Consumers Guide*, published by the same department, has a biweekly circulation of 135,000. The Consumers Project of the Department of Labor has more than fifty publications on its free list. Lest the schools be overlooked, the Office of Education, in the Department of the Interior, maintains a Home Economics Education Service.

Consumer's Research, which tests and grades products for the benefit of its three-dollar-a-year subscribers, has a subscription list of fifty thousand. Consumers Union, which does the same things for \$2.50, has a membership of 88,000. Consumer buying based on the recommendations of these and similar organizations is said to amount to several million dollars a day. Membership in consumer co-operatives jumped from 328,000 in 1933 to 677,000 in 1936.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, the Parent-Teachers Association, the American Association of University Women, and a considerable

list of other general organizations have also begun to shoulder the consumers' burdens. Consumer co-operatives have won the support of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and, more discreetly, of the National Council of Catholic Women. Support has been supplied for the intellectual wing of the movement by the establishment, through the aid of the million-dollar Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, of the Institute of Consumer Education, at Stephens College, Missouri.

By 1938, courses in consumer education were compulsory in two thirds of the nation's high schools. Nearly three hundred thousand college students gave some curricular consideration to consumer problems. Twenty-four State departments of education included consumer classes in the curricula for their States. Forty-five teachers' summer schools gave courses in the proper instruction of the youthful consumer.

The literary spread is equally impressive. One compilation cites 303 articles, books, and pamphlets of recent origin and makes no claim to exhaust the list. *Your Money's Worth*—the book which blew the first bugle—sold more than a hundred thousand copies and is still selling. *100,000,000 Guinea Pigs* has gone through thirty-two editions to a total of nearly three hundred thousand copies. *Skin Deep*, *Partners in Plunder*, *Counterfeit*, *\$40,000,000 Guinea Pig Children*, and a sizable library of other volumes were all widely read. Many of them are still required or recom-