

## Austria's Vest-Pocket Chancellor

*The Success or Failure of Engelbert Dollfuss May Involve the Economic and Political Future of Much of Europe*

By STANLEY HIGH

This is the fourth article in a series based on personal observations by the writer

THERE are other statesmen in Europe, besides Adolf Hitler, who believe that God helps to make their policies. There is, for example, Engelbert Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor. Dollfuss's stature—fifty-nine inches over all—is proportioned to the size of the nation that he governs. But his cocksureness, his courage, his skill as a strategist are Napoleonic. He has literally lifted Austria out of the oblivion to which the Treaty of St. Germain consigned it and elbowed a place for it, again, on the map of Europe. And if you were to ask Dollfuss, himself, how he did it he would probably take you—if you deserved that much attention—around to his favorite Viennese church and point to the altar and tell you that "there is the answer."

Dollfuss, once his mind is made up, is one of the most stubborn politicians in Europe. But his stubbornness is from no mere mental twist. It is born, as he might tell you, of meditation and of prayer. And if that sounds like sentimentalism or grandstanding, you can count on it that neither his friends nor his enemies—and he has plenty of both—regard it that way.

## Seeks an Answer

When Dollfuss has a more-than-ordinary problem—his days are filled with them—he tackles it like other politicians, only with more energy and generally with more insight. If the answer does not come at his desk he picks up his hat and cane and slips around to the church. The answers he gets there are undoubtedly sometimes wrong. But he does seem to manage to get an answer. He thinks it is the right answer and he sticks to it. And however much or widely he is hated, he is never laughed at—either for his conclusions or for the faith which has helped him to reach them.

It was in May, 1932, that the Austrian President, Miklas, sent for Dollfuss—he was then Minister of Agriculture—and asked him to take over the impossible job of forming a government. Dollfuss asked for eighteen hours in which to make up his mind. He got it. That night—the whole of it—he spent in church: in fasting, meditation and prayer. The next morning he called on the President, accepted the job and did it.

Months later, however, the political and economic position of the country had gone from bad to worse. Dollfuss did not know either whether he could or whether he

wanted to hang on. Again he spent the night in worship—this time petitioning for some indication as to what he should do. There were no signs or portents that night. But three days later the Austrian Parliament committed suicide. That is, its three presidents—caught in a legislative jam—all resigned. There was nothing in the Constitution to cover the situation that their resignations created. But Dollfuss accepted



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## CHANCELLOR DOLLFUSS AND WIFE

*At the time the leader was recovering from wounds inflicted in an attempted assassination*

this as the sign for which he had been waiting. He jumped in, forthwith, in place of the Constitution. And ever since, as a quasi-dictator, he has been running the country without benefit of Parliament.

Now few Austrians have any idea just where their nation under Dollfuss is going. But all of them agree that, for good or ill, it is certainly on the way.

Of all the nations that made war, Austria was most comprehensively dissected by the peace. She was literally dismembered, carved up and left a place on the map scarcely large enough in which to die. Then,

strangely enough, the Powers suddenly emerged into the post-war world with the conviction that she must survive.

## Feared Austro-German Union

In particular, France and her allies in Central Europe looked with concern upon the possibility that an insufficient Austria should be joined to an already oversufficient Germany. The peace strategy was designed with a view to keeping Germany permanently "in her place." There was no place in such a strategy for an Austro-German union. And the nations which held this policy have paid for it. They have been on hand, from time to time, with the financial injections required to keep life in the nation's dismembered body.

These injections include a loan made in 1922-1923 through the League of Nations; an International Loan made in 1930, and a number of other advances made by the Bank of England and the International Bank at Basle. Recently a new loan was floated in England, France, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Switzerland. Most of the funds supplied by this loan will go to pay the interest and amortization charges on previously incurred debts.

The remarkable fact is not that these injections kept Austria alive, but, rather, that despite this accumulated indebtedness the financial state of the nation has improved during the last twelve months. It is probably true that the economic situation is at least 15 per cent. better than it was when Dollfuss took office. This is apparent from the figures on money in circulation, national bank rediscounts and trade balances. Austria, at present, has a national budget more nearly in balance than most—perhaps than any other—nation in Europe. The currency is stable. The trade balance has been improved through embargoes on imports and the levying of huge import duties. Unemployment has not shown much improvement, partly because this has been an excessively bad tourist season—thanks to Hitler's restrictions on German travel into Austria. And yet, from the standpoint of national economy, the budget for unemployment relief has been markedly cut down by eliminating parasites from the dole lists and by reducing the amount of dole paid to each person.

Now, there is hardly any question but that the vast majority of the Austrian people desire union with Germany. This

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# The American Rally Cry: "Keep Out of Europe!"

WHEN war seemed shudderingly near in the dark hours following Germany's sudden walkout on the Disarmament Conference and on the League, as with one voice newspapers throughout the country announced that it should be this nation's fixed resolve to "keep out of Europe."

The general conviction was that if and when war does come, "it will be a European

Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and from the Disarmament Conference in the light of what some called "Franco-British-American solidarity," but also because the Administration was under domestic pressure, editorial and telegraphic, to repudiate such assumption.

As long as Germany had not officially resigned from the League and the Disarmament Conference, there was hope in Geneva that she might return to the fold after the November 12 elections for the Reichstag. These elections, as is everywhere noted, can have only one result—a victory for the Nazis—because Chancellor Hitler has suppressed all the other political parties.

The German resignation, like that of Japan, Geneva Associated Press cables pointed out, can not become effective for two years, and even then the Reich may not withdraw if the League decides she has failed to fulfil her obligations under the Covenant. Officials said Germany's claim that she was not receiving fair treatment was "sheer nonsense," and added that, whatever Germany must allege concerning disarmament, she had enjoyed absolute equality as a member of the League.

International circles meanwhile saw in reports that the United States was studying the question of recognizing Soviet Russia, a new basis for hope that Russia would be induced to enter the League. France, it was believed, might urge such a step.

Yet even after Germany had officially resigned from participation in League affairs and disarmament discussions a calmer spirit came over Europe. Rushing headlong toward the abyss of war, some one remarked, Europe's statesmen realized of a sudden their madness and turned back.

The political atmosphere was not disturbed even by the blunt declaration of Chancellor Hitler in a Berlin speech that "Germany is determined in the future to attend no conference, enter no league, agree to no convention, and sign nothing, as long as she is not treated equally."

## The Bid for Support

He made a bid for the cooperation of political opponents at home, according to a Berlin Associated Press cable, and issued as a slogan for the Reichstag election campaign the sentence: "We simply refused to be treated as a second-class nation."

He offered to his opponents an all-round reconciliation in return for their support on November 12 as an opportunity for Germans to affirm their loyalty to the Nazi régime. This move, we are told, was regarded as highly significant, and as foreshadowing an even closer welding together of the whole Third Reich of the Hitlerites.

As if to reassure the ring of nations around Germany of his peaceful intentions, Chancellor Hitler, in an interview with a British newspaperman, at Berlin, denied Germany was preparing for war, and emphasized a desire to come to an understand-

ing with France. As summarized in a Berlin Associated Press cable, the Chancellor's statement stressed these points:

"The present German Government works neither for a monarchy nor for a republic, but exclusively for the German people.

"Wherever we look we see nothing but privation, misery, unemployment, decay and destruction. To remove all this is the mission we chose for ourselves.

"The claim uttered abroad that the German people are preparing enthusiastically for war is a misunderstanding, inconceivable to us, of the meaning of the German Revolution.

"We leaders of the Nazi movement served almost without exception in the trenches. I would like to see the trench soldier who prepares enthusiastically for a new war.

"We are training our youth primarily for a fight against the danger of Communism. Our youth in the labor camps and the Storm Troop formations are not being equipped with military knowledge which they might feel inspired some time to use."

In considering Hitler's dramatic withdrawal at Geneva, the majority of American newspapers treated him reproachfully and with sharp rebuke. But they were also fair enough to see that something must be defensible in the Hitler attitude. Apart from partisans whose minds or emotions are incorrigibly fixed, said the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, his addresses must favorably impress opinion, at least in neutral countries, with what is valid in Germany's case. When he asserts that faith was broken with the German Republic in the imposition of peace conditions that were a repudiation of the Wilsonian terms he stands on the strongest moral ground. The Versailles Treaty was formulated in a spirit flagrantly violative of the spirit which Wilson, with the ostensible acquiescence of the allied governments, this daily argued, promised the German people would govern their treatment by the victors if Germany became a Republic.

The *Detroit News* thought the situation not insoluble, unless the great Powers of Europe, the United States agreeing, choosed to make it so. Indeed, the solution is "considerably clearer than Hitler's mustache," according to *The News*, which claimed that "it lies in genuine disarmament, in so far as this means the abolition of offensive weapons." Let France keep her expensive forts if they give her comfort, but why, asked this newspaper, should she have half a million men under arms, with every facility for invading a neighbor. What need has Great Britain, or the United States of 35,000-ton battle-ships? Why not look the German proposal in the face, instead of throwing a villain's rôle upon Germany, without considering the evidence? And *The News* concluded: "There is only one certain avenue to peace, and that is the abolition of the things that make war possible and easy."



THE ROAD BACK —?

—Duffy in the *Baltimore Sun*

scrap without benefit of our men or money."

Simultaneously was cabled throughout the world the declaration of American policy given at Geneva to American newspaper correspondents by Norman H. Davis, Ambassador-at-large and chief of the delegation representing the United States at the Disarmament Conference. He made it clear that our representatives were at Geneva "solely for disarmament purposes," and that while a possibility existed of successfully carrying out such negotiations, "we will gladly continue to do our part." Yet, he added, "we are not, however, interested in the political element or any purely European aspect of the picture."

Behind this definition of American policy, Theodore C. Wallen explained in a Washington dispatch to the *New York Herald Tribune*, was a determination of President Roosevelt to emphasize to his own people, as well as to the world, that for all America's active association with the European search for disarmament and economic formulas, it remained uninvolved politically.

A clear-cut disavowal of political entanglements was considered the more necessary, Mr. Wallen further reported, not only because French newspapers were discussing