

Three views of the 'peace with honor:'
by a disillusioned Englishman, a stand-
ard bearer for President Eduard Beneš,
and a sad but relieved Frenchman.

'Peace *with* Honor'

I. FRANCE TAKES STOCK

By ALEXANDER WERTH

From the *Manchester Guardian*, Manchester Liberal Daily

AFTER Daladier came back from Munich, large crowds, including ex-servicemen's delegations with their banners, assembled in the Champs-Élysées and the Place de l'Étoile to see him rekindle the flame on the tomb of the Unknown Warrior. And as the hundred thousand people present sang the *Marseillaise*, one felt that there was in the hearts of all these people—or most of them—a struggle between two different emotions—gratitude because France had been spared a terrible war and an intense anxiety for her future.

After the joy and the relief of the first few days after the Munich agreement, the time has come in France for taking stock. 'Apart from England we have got nobody left' is a phrase more and more frequently heard in Paris today. Together with Czechoslovakia France has lost the Polish

alliance and probably also the Russian alliance, and treaties bearing her signature have lost much weight. Even the *Temps* has admitted that 'the Polish and Russian alliances have lost much of their practical meaning.'

What is more, it is widely felt that even the British alliance is no longer what it used to be after Mr. Chamberlain's talk with Herr Hitler on September 30. It was a severe blow to France and not least to M. Daladier himself, who apparently had not expected anything like that at Munich. It is probable that a similar Franco-German declaration 'may shortly' be made, but no one in France can have any illusions about the value of such a German promise to France. But the Anglo-German declaration is considered here to be of much more than academic interest. It is believed to be the first clear indication of that new

British policy which has already brought about the resignation of Mr. Duff Cooper.

Although the Anglo-German declaration is not a legally binding document, it has been remarked in Paris that it is in effect something like a non-aggression pact, and the question is asked how such a bilateral non-aggression pact can be reconciled with Britain's guarantee to France and Belgium. Whatever the answer to this, it is strongly felt that the Anglo-German declaration clearly marks a weakening of the Anglo-French alliance as the keystone of Britain's Continental policy.

In this connection M. de Kerillis quotes a remarkable statement which 'one of the most eminent British Conservatives' (one guess is Mr. Winston Churchill) made to him a fortnight ago:—

The Czecho-Slovak affair may have much graver consequences than is imagined. For three centuries British policy has been based on the balance of power in Europe. We have always fought against the hegemony of any one Power. But this policy was possible only because we always had a strong point of support which we used as our basis. In reading your papers, in looking at your reactions, we are for the first time beginning to wonder whether such a point of support exists any longer. It is therefore possible that the time will come when we may be obliged to break away from our traditional policy, and instead of resisting against the dominating Power in Europe we shall endeavor to come to terms with it.

M. de Kerillis adds: 'It is only fair to say that he did not add "At your expense." But nevertheless his words have worried me greatly; and I also remembered *Mein Kampf* with the

isolation and destruction of France as Hitler's ultimate aim.'

Altogether since pondering over the Anglo-German declaration, the French papers are no longer as enthusiastic about Munich as they were. No doubt *Paris-Soir* is still collecting money for 'a villa in France with a river where he can fish' which is to be presented to Mr. Chamberlain, and the President of the Paris Town Council has asked Mr. Chamberlain to visit Paris and to receive the gratitude of the Paris people. But many of the papers are now in a state of confusion.

Two of the writers most responsible for the shocking anti-Czech campaign of the past weeks—namely, M. Charles Maurras in the *Action Française* and M. Bailby in the *Jour*—admit that far from being a victory Munich was a terrible defeat for France; but they try to cheer themselves up by going, the one for the French Communists and the other for Moscow—all of which is a little illogical after M. Maurras had treated Herr Hitler as 'the mad dog of Europe' and had deplored the ever-growing strength of this 'mad dog.'

II

The isolation of France is keenly felt and the question persistently asked after the Anglo-German statement is: 'What is England's policy going to be?' If it is to be the four-Power pact, then France can clearly play in it no part except that of England's satellite, with no will and no initiative of her own; and in any case this four-Power pact can produce nothing good for France and Britain, it is felt here.

Already the first result of the four-Power pact agreement at Munich has

been to strangle Czechoslovakia. The second result was Poland's ultimatum to Czechoslovakia—a move which showed that four-Power pact decisions will either not be observed at all or else be violated only at the expense of France, England, and their friends. In any case the four-Power pact, which had always been regarded by France as a dangerous heresy, is Signor Mussolini's most cherished invention—which alone is enough to make it suspect.

In the view of French observers the alternative to a four-Power pact policy in Mr. Chamberlain's mind is an Anglo-German policy. This at least would have the 'advantage' of robbing Italy of her ambition to play the balance-of-power game hitherto played by England. In either case, however, France, it is felt, would be in an extremely precarious position. Under the four-Power pact she would be the reluctant and helpless 'fourth partner;' under the Anglo-German policy she would be even more at the mercy of England's and Germany's good graces, with nothing to fall back on except the more than doubtful friendship of Italy (the cultivation of which, by the way, is now being again advocated by the press of the Right, but this time without the old conviction).

No doubt the policy of Anglo-German friendship would not be directed against France but against Russia. But ultimately such a deliberate aggrandizement of Germany's power would hardly save France—or England for that matter. And the question is also asked whether Mr. Chamberlain, while no doubt considering the Rhine frontier essential to British security, will not expect

France to foot the greater share of Germany's colonial bill.

Altogether there are few Frenchmen who doubt that if such a policy is pursued it will result in the isolation of France, to be accompanied, or followed, by the isolation of England. A patriotically-minded Frenchman like M. de Kerillis, who fears the worst, holds that France can now be saved only by a complete reorganization and the creation of what he calls an 'Authoritarian Republic.'

The internal consequences of the Munich Pact in France are still incalculable. The idea of building up a tremendous defense machine now that all allies have been lost has gained ground; and with it all sorts of theories about an authoritarian régime, a military dictatorship, a totalitarian financial system and what not. Among the working class, on the other hand, there is profound disgust with the 'Republican régime' as it has functioned in the last months and a great loss of loyalty to 'democracy.'

Looking back on the Czech crisis some interesting new reflections and suggestions have been made—one, for instance, is that Herr Hitler was bluffing to the bitter end. Germany clearly could not afford to fight against a vast coalition (a point that was later blatantly admitted in Field Marshal Göring's paper).

Secondly it is whispered that the Munich meeting was in reality discreetly suggested to a certain important person in Rome by a neutral diplomat—who was clearly acting on Germany's behalf. If so, Munich was much less of a triumph for Mr. Chamberlain than is commonly supposed.

Finally the reflection is made that

if Herr Hitler was really prepared to go to war with France and England he would not have acted as he did this time: he gave them several weeks to

prepare for war. But his favorite war theory, on the contrary, is that the war should start 'like a bolt from the blue.'

II. EUROPE'S TRAGIC HERO

By A. L. EASTERMAN

From the *Daily Herald*, London Labor Daily

I RETURN dazed and bewildered to England from the torn remnant of the great little country that, only recently, you knew as Czechoslovakia.

I hear the joy-bells still ringing in these British Isles.

Peace on earth, goodwill to all men.

Farewell, once again, to all that.

Glory for the Big Four at whose magic touch the grim accoutrements of war and disaster have disappeared. Haloes and bouquets and triumphal processions. What honor can be too great to demonstrate the fervent gratitude of a war-scared people miraculously rescued from the embroilments and catastrophe of war?

When we can bring ourselves to wipe away the tears of joy which have clouded our eyes these last emotional days, our vision will, perhaps, become a little clearer and when our emotion of thanksgiving has run its course, as it must, perhaps our minds will begin to put things in a more real perspective. We shall ask ourselves, I hope, to whom, in truth, the crown of glory should be awarded for the boon of peace which has been vouchsafed to us. I shall venture the answer which will be given, not in the narrow limits visioned today, but by the more rational verdict of history.

If any single man gave peace to Europe and the world, it was not

Neville Chamberlain, it was not the flamboyant Cæsar of Fascist Rome, it was not the raucous, thundering Führer of Nazi Germany. It was a little man who sat calm and dignified in tragic isolation on the hill overlooking Prague, the staunch democrat in the ancient palace of the Bohemian kings, the custodian of the liberties of the Czechoslovak people.

To Eduard Beneš, President of the dismembered Czechoslovak Republic, the crown of glory should be given; to him and him alone the world should kneel in humble thanksgiving, for he and he alone saved the continent of Europe from overwhelming catastrophe.

Pause and think just a little what this man has done—and sacrificed—for the peace of the world. One single word from him, one false move, one hasty act, one moment of anger at the taunts of his enemy or at the betrayal by his friends, and Europe would have been aflame.

Beneš did not utter that word, nor did he return insult for insult or pour scorn on deserting allies. In these three dread weeks following Hitler's first tornado of violence and abuse and threats to march against Czechoslovakia, the Czech people rose to heights of patriotic fervor unparalleled, in my view, in the world's history.