

PAX INTERNATIONAL

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THE SITUATION IN THE "PROTECTORATE"

End of June, 1939.

The past four to six weeks have been a real lesson for those who know how to read current history. To put it shortly: they have shown that the Germans of to-day have not learnt anything since the time of the Prussian "Kürassierstiefel" (soldier-boot) and that the reaction to their methods of colonisation has remained the same.

In March there was great danger that by a clever demagogic policy the German occupants would fool the Czech people into sincere co-operation. There were many signs of it in certain circles.

However, the Germans are not only playing "trumps" in the political and economic fields, they are tactless enough to offend and insult the common Czech people on every occasion—much worse than anything of this kind under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

To show only a few examples of how Czech national feeling is offended.

While German soldiers shout German songs like the famous "Heute gehört uns Deutschland und morgen die ganze Welt" (To-day Germany is ours and to-morrow the whole world!) in the streets of purely Czech cities, the Czechs are not allowed to sing Czech national songs.

Wherever there are a few Germans in the tiniest village, "seignorial" rights are bestowed on them, large demonstrative gatherings are held, to which people in uniforms are drawn from the widest surroundings.

Under the pretext of holding a "cultural week" the City Hall in Prague was used for demonstrations and this symbol of Czech national community was . . . let us say "decorated"—with Swastika flags for 8 full days.

The Town Councillors installed by the Germans, aggravate Czech sentiment whenever and as much as they can. To give only one example: in Ceske Budejovice, where at least 75 per cent. of the population are Czechs, huge street signs in German have been posted up.

However, the Czech people are conscious—above these external things, however they may hurt—of the fundamental things that are going on. The Nazis make a systematic effort to rule over the whole country and people. The so-called autonomous Government is simply unable to exercise any legislative function, if it does not decree exactly what Berlin wishes at that moment. And the "National Community" which was intended to be a Czech totalitarian party and as such had been favourably looked upon by the Nazis and with deep mistrust by Czech

Left parties, is now being counter-acted systematically by the Nazis, as it showed itself less docile than they had expected.

And you may imagine what the Czechs feel, who have been told and who have begun to accept the idea that, at least, they owed the Germans the final achievement of their national unity, when they see that little groups of national traitors—those of Gajda and Vlastka—are being raised up so as to attack the united nation from the rear. The well-known provocations at Kladno and Nachod were only links in the chain of these methods.

The effect of these things and of the economic measures of which I am going to tell you, was startling. I believe that the Czechs to-day set a model of national unity and discipline and that, as *The Times* rightly said some time ago, they have become a people of rebels.

However, I do not believe this will result in a secret or open movement of revolt in the immediate future. But the *passive resistance* has reached a culminating point already and the general "Stimmung" is excellent. There are many signs of the spirit of revolt: People speak openly their minds even to strangers. Ex-soldiers from the Protectorate join the Polish Army in great numbers. Many press organs dare to write more openly than some time ago, although in this field things are not as advanced by far as one would wish. In many cases, especially economically, the antagonism between the different Nazi cliques which often bitterly complain even to Czechs about their lack of power in certain things, is being exploited by the Czechs.

Quite a strange story is that of the Jew Decrees of the Protector. It is significant that the first move in this matter had to be taken by him because, apparently, the Protectorate-Government was unwilling to take the initiative to make the decrees Berlin wished for. Those Czech circles who would have been quite prepared to be the heirs of the Jews are visibly disappointed to see that the Nazis have "skimmed the milk" and mean to do so further.

It is important to note that the definition of who is a Jew has turned out quite differently from what the Prague authorities wished. In Czecho-Slovakia, especially in the provincial cities, there were a great number of mixed marriages between Czech men and Jewish women, and the Jews living in the country had, for the most part, become entirely assimilated to the Czech surroundings. Now, suddenly, thousands of respectable Czech citizens become Jews overnight. It is quite impossible at this moment to reckon how wide this circle of newly-created

Jews is, but among Czech acquaintances I hear over and over again that this or that relative or friend has become a Jew by decree of the Nazis.

This fact, as well as the definition of the Jewish juridical status probably hits a considerable part of Czech industry and commerce. And one may well imagine that under the title of "Aryanisation", a "Germanisation" of Czech economic enterprises will set in, since the transfer of Jewish property is subject to the authorisation of the Protector, not to the "autonomous" Government.

Incidentally, one may hear quite amusing stories of the closely organised and planned economics. There are authorities and associations in Berlin, in Vienna and in the Sudeten-Gau, every one of which makes decrees and intrigues against the others, trying to win over the Czechs for its benefit. And one can never predict exactly which one will remain victorious. In one case, a party worked on the basis of a decree of the Ministry for Economics in Berlin which they had before them in photo-copy, but the "German brother", in the presence of the Czech discussion partners, declared with a smile that the said decree had been inhibited already, at the request of his group. Which proved to be true. . . .

Foreign affairs are being watched with great interest by quite a large public with the aid of those facts—very few—which are available.

Unfortunately, however, the Czech public is much too optimistic and counts on quick decisions, which would involve no effort on their part. I am afraid that this may lead to disillusionment with bad consequences, if the developments are slower than is believed to be likely.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

In response to the resolution passed at the Emergency Meeting of the International Executive in Paris, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has received the following letter from Dr. Benes, former President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic:

"I am deeply touched by your letter of May 25th and the resolution passed at the meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom against the recognition of the annexation of Czecho-Slovakia by German military force.

"It is gratifying to hear that your organisation is willing to help the cause of Czecho-Slovakia. There will be many ways of helping and I will be glad to call upon you when the necessity arises. Yes, the soul of the Czecho-Slovak people is alive and must be kept alive also in other countries. Particularly, the sacrifice which our people were forced to make for peace must be kept before the eyes of the world.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Dr. EDUARD BENES."

THE TRUTH ABOUT DANZIG

For years now, Europe has been in a state of unrest, one violation of law following close on another.

Every fresh action is well prepared with "catchwords" repeated thousands of times, and tossed about as it were in the crowds, where like kindling, they cause lasting disturbance, which is, of course, their object.

Hitler declared, as early as 1920, there are no lies and no exaggerations, however great and however stupid,

which will not be believed by the masses if they are propagated and repeated often enough. Said, done—and one must admit, successfully—the taking back of the Ruhr, the Rhineland occupation, the introduction of conscription, the "Anschluss" with Austria, the annexations of Czecho-Slovakia and Memel.

Now, perhaps for the whole of Europe, the Free City of Danzig is the decisive danger-point. And the catchword? "Danzig is German. Danzig wishes to come 'home' to the Reich."

What gives the pretext for this catchword? What is the meaning of "Danzig is German"? Does it refer to the people or to the State allegiance? As far as concerns the people, the Free City and the Hinterland have a population of 408,000 of which 96 per cent. are Prussian.

As regards the State allegiance the following facts may be noted. Danzig is first mentioned in 997, in the story of the mission of Adalbert of Prague. The town was founded by Slav nobles from Pomerania and was later ruled in turn by Pomerania, Poland, Brandenburg, Sweden, Denmark, and the Knights of Prussia. As one of the four chief cities of the Hansa League, Danzig allied itself with Poland in 1455, remaining a "Free City" till 1793; thus it was Polish for 338 years. After the Second Partition of Poland, Danzig was claimed by Prussia. At the Peace of Tilsit, 1807, it was again declared a Free City, under Polish-French guarantee. In 1815, in spite of its claim to independence, it went back at the Congress of Vienna, to Prussia. The once powerful Hansa town sinks to the status of a provincial town, while Stettin and Königsberg flourish and develop!

These are the facts about Danzig. In the Versailles Treaty, Articles 100-108, Danzig was not given to either Poland or Germany, but became again a Free City, and was placed with its Hinterland under the protection of the League of Nations.

Whether that was a happy solution we will not now discuss. Suffice it to state that it was possible for the Third Reich to pursue in Danzig, under League protection, the same disturbing propaganda as in Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Memelland before "Anschluss" and annexation.

So Danzig became the prey of nationalism, and owing to the weak and wavering attitude of the Western Powers, millions of Europeans are to-day anxiously asking: "Will Danzig be a second Munich?" H.

U.S.A.

The U.S.A. Section has set an example which others might well follow. It has appointed a correspondent specially responsible for sending articles and news to "Pax." The correspondent, Mrs. John A. Baker, was recently able to give a broadcast talk in Connecticut, describing a gathering of members of the Women's International League. The work for refugees was discussed, and the broadcast told how the group assumed corporate responsibility for the affidavit for a family of children—another example which may also well be followed in other centres.

Those wishing to counter prejudice against the admission of refugees will find useful data in a pamphlet, "Refugees—the Facts," published by the American Friends' Service Committee.

"RACE—WHAT THE SCIENTISTS SAY"

By Caroline Singer

In her foreword Caroline Singer, a member of the W.I.L.P.F. in New York, says:—

"Manifestations of racial, or religious, intolerance have many causes . . . Ignorance is, however, the common cause . . . And Knowledge is, therefore, the major cure. Knowledge is also a bulwark of Democracy since the ignorant—even the well-meaning ignorant—are easy prey for rabble-rousers, themselves ignorant, unscrupulous or tragically abnormal. With this in mind and also the fact that, owing to misinformation, or lack of information, many genuinely unprejudiced persons innocently employ the language of intolerance, this small handbook has been compiled. It is authoritative in so far as the statements—concerning language, culture and race—have been approved by:" (follow the names of three prominent American anthropologists).

Then the author sets out to explain the following terms: Aryan, Semitic, Hebrew, Jewish. She states that in speaking of "Aryan" one is not referring to a race, but to a group of languages to which Yiddish as well as the language of the Moslem Kurds on the Turkish Highlands belong. When employing the term "Semitic" one is also referring to a group of languages which include Arabic as well as Hebrew. The paragraph on "Hebrew" and that on "Jewish" is particularly interesting and enlightening, showing that Hebrew was for the Jewish religion what Latin was for the Christian, i.e., the official language. In time it became the language of all Jews in Palestine and thus they became known as "Hebrews". The term "Jewish" refers to religion only. The author points out that it is absurd to classify Americans by religion—religious freedom being one of the sacred principles of American democracy—but, if this procedure is adopted, everybody must be classified in this way and no group be singled out. She finally gives the scientist's definition of "Race" showing that there exists hardly any individual of "pure" race and that there is no evidence that the intellectual capacities of any one race are superior to those of any other.

These few references prove what an enlightening and useful handbook this is for all those who are combatting ignorance and intolerance. The illustrations of the booklet, made by the author's husband, underline and hammer in the main arguments.

The booklet is selling widely in the United States and it deserves to be made known also in other English-speaking countries.

Copies at 5 cents each can be secured at the National Office of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in the United States, 1734 F. Street N.W., Washington D.C.

L. B.

OUR CANADIAN SECTION

Our Canadian Section was recently invited to a meeting to co-operate in a plan originated by a private group for registering Canadian women for national service. It is planned to carry out the registration by a door-to-door canvass, using "an extensive questionnaire." The replies to which "will be tabulated and stored in the files of the sponsoring Committee." An

article in a magazine explaining this states: "It is expected that most women approached will be willing to co-operate, though if canvassers find anyone hostile to the scheme, or openly disloyal, that information, too, will be filed."

Our Canadian Section responded at the Meeting by presenting a statement quoting from the 'Call' recently issued by the Emergency International Executive and adding:—

"The Canadian Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom does not believe that Peace and Democracy can be defended and maintained except by non-violence.

"We believe that all Canadian women should urge our Government to take the lead in calling a world economic conference to consider and remove the causes of international strife, as was proposed by Canon Raven, Chaplain to the King, when addressing a meeting in Toronto recently.

"We believe that all Canadian women should urge our Government to prohibit the shipment from Canada of all materials to be used for war purposes.

"We urge that this Provisional Committee and whatever organization may be formed out of it, shall devote its time and energy to constructive projects in order that all the people of Canada as speedily as possible may be placed upon a self-supporting and self-respecting basis.

"We believe that the best and most patriotic contribution that Canadian women can make to the defence of Canada, in face of the present world situation is to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the task of making Democracy work at home."

In reporting this, the Canadian Executive Committee say: "We know there are many other organizations and individuals who are in substantial agreement with our position. For instance, a very strong letter expressing opposition to the whole plan of registration of women was sent to the Committee by Mrs. Grace Knight, of Edmonton, Alberta, National President of the W.C.T.U. This letter, as well as others in the hands of the Secretary expressing disapproval, was not however read to the meeting. We are aware also of the fact that the entire membership of some of the organizations officially supporting the registration, is not in accord."

We strongly uphold our Canadian Section in their action. Such registration is, as is affirmed in a letter on the same proposal from the Toronto Women's Committee for Constructive Action, "registration of women for war service." It assumes the inevitability of war; it feeds the fear-complex; and "the registration and tabulation of a population" places a dangerous weapon in the hands of opponents of democracy.

We would add a word of warning to the Sections about the completing of questionnaires at the request of self-constituted investigators. The number of such questionnaires, asking often for intimate 'internal' information, is on the increase. Unless the bona-fides of the enquirers are assured, and the object clear and agreed with, they are best left unanswered.

THE NETHERLANDS

The following telegram was sent recently by our Dutch Section to Her Majesty The Queen of the Netherlands, who sent a friendly acknowledgment:—

“The Dutch Section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom express with deep respect their full adhesion to the interchange of ideas between your Majesty and His Majesty The King of the Belgians. They believe this to be a real contribution towards finding a concrete form for the removal of the obstacles which hinder the reconstruction of the world, and thus to serve effectively the high ideal of peace.”

WOMEN’S SILENT PEACE PROCESSION IN HOLLAND

The Hague: The 61st Annual Women’s Peace Procession took place this year in Rotterdam on the eve of Goodwill Day. Delegates appointed by local organisations all over the Netherlands took part in the silent procession through the streets. Messages of support were received from 22 countries.

Delegations to the Permanent Court of International Justice, the Foreign Ministry, and the Burgomaster presented a Resolution in favour of the settlement of international problems by a Conference based on methods of peaceful negotiation. The text of this Resolution was also communicated to the Queen of the Netherlands.

BUREAU INTERNATIONAL DE LA PAIX

Le XXXIIIe Congrès Universel de la Paix se tiendra à Zurich, dans la Salle du Grand Conseil, du 21 au 27 août. La séance solennelle d’ouverture aura lieu le 21 au soir et aura, comme il est de tradition, un caractère d’une grande manifestation à laquelle seront conviés tous les amis de la Paix. L’ordre du jour, qui n’a encore qu’un caractère provisoire, est ainsi libellé:

1. Les événements qui mettent la paix en péril et les solutions qu’ils appellent.
2. Les conditions actuellement indispensables à l’organisation d’une paix juste et durable.
3. La Société des Nations et ses perspectives d’avenir.

Nous n’avons point besoin de recommander ce Congrès à l’attention des membres de nos Associations, qui entretiennent, nous nous plaisons à le rappeler en cette circonstance, depuis toujours des relations d’amitié avec le Bureau International de la Paix. Nous savons qu’y participeront des personnalités de premier plan et que les problèmes qui y seront discutés sont de ceux qui préoccupent également tous les pacifistes, quel que soit le drapeau autour duquel ils se groupent.

Ceux de nos membres qui ont l’intention de répondre à l’invitation qui leur est adressée faciliteront la tâche du Comité d’organisation en s’annonçant dès à présent, ce qui ne les engage nullement d’une façon définitive, auprès du Secrétaire général du B.I.P., M. H. Golay, rue Charles Bonnet, 8, Genève.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, September 3rd-8th, 1939—Zurich, Switzerland

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Sunday, September 3rd: Chairmen’s Meeting and Committee Meetings.

Monday, September 4th: 9.30 a.m. Opening of Executive Committee Meeting.

1. Political situation: Action at Geneva Headquarters since April, 1939.
2. Reports of National Sections (10 minutes) on their activities in connection with the political and economic situation in their countries since April, 1939.
3. Administrative Report.
4. Report on World Campaign in support of Initiative on the lines of President Roosevelt’s Message.
5. Activities of Standing Commissions and Referents (since September, 1938).
6. Jane Addams International Peace Fund.
7. W.I.L.P.F. Representatives’ Work in International Federated Bodies (since September, 1938).
8. Treasurer’s Report—Finance.
9. “Pax International.”
10. Maison.
11. Resolutions on Political Situation and others.
12. Next (Xth) International Congress.
13. Next Executive Meeting.
14. Miscellaneous.

The Meeting will take place at the Kurhaus Rigiblick, Krattenturmstr. 59.

MAISON INTERNATIONALE

The Maison Internationale in Geneva has received some lovely and very useful gifts from the Roanoke (Virginia, U.S.A.) Branch of the W.I.L.P.F., namely, pillow cases, bath towels, toilet towels and colourful little table covers. Warm thanks to the generous donors!

The Maison (12, Rue du Vieux-Collège, Geneva) is open to guests during the summer. All those who know and love the old house with the shaded garden will certainly like to stay in it when they come to Geneva. Rates for room and board on application.

A PEACE YEAR BOOK

The 1939 Peace Year Book, edited by the National Peace Council of Great Britain, will be published in a few weeks. Price 1/-. Copies from National Peace Council, 39 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

NOTICE!

Unless circumstances make it necessary there will not be an August issue of “Pax.”