

THE UNDERGROUND REPORTER



Czechoslovakia Fights Back

By Milč Kybal

MARCH 15, 1939 came as a sudden blow to the Czech common man. For one thousand years he had distrusted the Germans too much to believe Hitler's "*Ich will keine Tschechen,*" but after Munich he thought his nation had lost so much that no more could be asked of her. Only the day before had he read that some politicians in Bratislava had declared Slovakia independent. Then they were there—German troops marching in a blizzard through the black streets of Prague—their tanks and trucks and motorcycles swarming all over the country.

That day the underground movement was born in Czechoslovakia; in no other way could the nation react to the occupation. Since Munich, no Czech had resigned himself to the loss of what some people abroad called the Sudetenland. It had been theirs from the dawn of Czech history. Sometime, somehow it would have to be won back. Now, with

the Germans holding all of the country the task would be harder. A certain feeling upheld the people's faith; a world war would soon break out, which would finally shatter the forces of evil and bring about freedom again.

The whole nation, united into a single block by the adversity of fate, clung to these hopes with the same stubbornness that on so many other occasions had saved it in the past. The Germans failed completely to grasp the psychology of the Czechs. Under these circumstances, the Protectorate the Germans declared over Bohemia and Moravia was accepted by the people only as a makeshift solution preferable to direct annexation; it was to serve solely as a means of facilitating Czech resistance until the day of final reckoning should come. The ideal of the Republic never disappeared from the nation's will and mind; on the contrary, it was stronger than ever.

The Czechs set to work right

away. The first job to do was to spirit away politically prominent men who sooner or later would fall into the clutches of the Gestapo. In this way Senator Vojta Benes, brother of the President, was tipped off about his impending arrest, whisked away to the Polish border in an automobile, then at midnight stealthily led with his wife across by reliable people. Others were taken to safety by miners through abandoned coal shafts; still others were helped by railwaymen in freight cars.

Another category of men who were helped abroad were former army officers, mainly fliers and technical experts. They were eager to get into the war which was bound to come. Finally, a good number of engineers, inventors, and technical men left the country, some of them carrying their plans and formulas on paper, others relying only on their good memory. Once in England, they helped turn out the famous Bren machine gun,

pumps against incendiaries, gloves and shoes for the services, flashlights and batteries for civilian defense, and scores of other essential articles.

Many reached safety by fooling or bribing Gestapo agents. A good number of fake traveling salesmen crossed the frontier representing firms who could not export. The Czech officials in the Protectorate were always most helpful. It was always possible to say to them: "Please rush these papers, I'm leaving the country." The most spectacular feat of the underground organization along this line was the case of Ladislav Feierabend and Jaromír Necas, two ministers of the Protectorate Government. They respectfully paid a visit to Protector von Neurath; three hours later they vanished into thin air. Later, they appeared in England where they were made members of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile.

The Martyred Hen

A PHASE of the struggle in which the entire nation participates is on the economic front. It is an unequal contest where the nazi aim is to grab without limit, and where the Czechs can rely only on their ingenuity and mutual aid. The Germans soon realized that they could get nowhere with the cunning Czech peasants. Only a truly Prussian economy could produce at least part of what they wanted: all cattle and pigs had to be registered; quotas were established for farm products which must be fulfilled under penalty, and peasants were permitted to dispose of their products only to German authorities. Despite heavy penalties, including capital punishment, hoarding, unlicensed slaughtering, and smuggling still flourish. Even if the Germans are thus able to plunder efficiently Czech farms, the enormous number of nazi officials this requires is a vic-

tory for the Czechs. Food supplies for the Nazis were sabotaged also by some Czech officials of the Protectorate. Thus Dr. Otakar Frankenberger was shot, his chief guilt consisting, according to the Nazis, "in deliberately keeping secret and failing to carry out the regulations of the Reich officials in his capacity as responsible officer for stabilizing the market." But whom are the Nazis to shoot when they find a dead chicken with a card tied to its neck reading: "I preferred to die rather than to work for the Germans?"

Another battle of even greater importance to the Germans which they have had to wage in the Czech lands since the first day of invasion takes place in the factories. The powerful Czech armament plants immediately became the object of nazi regulation and supervision. Now, one nazi guard has to watch five machines in the Skoda plants. This does not prevent Czech workers from adding zinc and sulphur to molten steel, which makes the turned out guns useless after having fired a few shells, or from putting sand or graphite under the caps of explosive bombs.

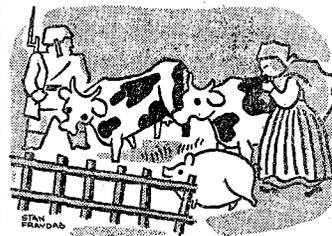
Not only open sabotage takes place, but an ever-present stubborn passive resistance impedes the wheels of industry. Workmen take a few seconds longer in each movement at the machine, make more mistakes, waste more material, are harder on their tools. Along assembly lines, bolts and rivets are not tightened enough, bearings are not properly greased, somehow

fine sand gets into them. The result is most often observed only on the battlefield; there, breakdowns are most useful. Particularly after Hitler's attack on Russia were the Czechs spurred to further action in their desire to help their Slavic kinsmen. In the summer of 1941, war production in the Protectorate dropped off 40 per cent. This made Hitler send Heydrich there to whip it up by terror, since all other means had failed.

News from a Madhouse

ON the propanganda and ideological front the Nazis have met their worst defeat. They have dissolved 25,000 organizations, including the Sokol, the largest of them all; they have muzzled the Czech press and closed all Czech colleges and universities; in spite of this, nazi ideology has not penetrated the people's mind. To combat nazi lies and misrepresentations and to steel the people in its daily fight the underground press was born. Based on information that the revolutionary workers can obtain directly or on statements made over the radio by representatives of the Government-in-exile in London, it circulates throughout the country at the risk of the lives of thousands of people each day. The two most prominent of these papers are called *Into the Struggle* and *Czechoslovak Republic*. Not only is information being received; it is also sent out. In 1941, President Benes' Government obtained 1,200 separate news items from the underground organizations. One secret broadcasting station was operated by a Czech doctor in charge of a lunatic asylum. The Nazis discovered it after long months of search only after a Gestapo agent was intentionally sent there for treatment.

Above all, the factor that strengthens the people most is the conviction that the Repub-



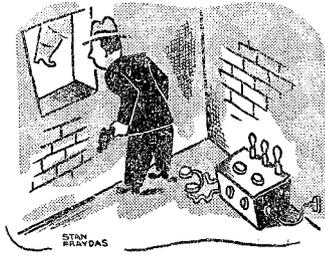
lic is something worth fighting for, that under the leadership of Masaryk and Benes it never stood for wrong, nor had it been guilty of appeasement or aggression. The knowledge that their Government symbolizes their future liberty and that their men are fighting over Germany's skies, in the Middle East and in Russia, that the other United Nations are striving for the same cause, keeps the people from falling into despair.

The Heydrich Case

THE struggle at home is climaxed by direct revolutionary action. By the end of 1941, the Nazis were unable to conceal the fact that it existed. Heydrich's first act in Prague was to order the arrest for treason of General Alois Elias, the Prime Minister of the Protectorate whom von Neurath himself had confirmed in office. The Nazis had created their first puppet government in Czechoslovakia, but it has also been the first government whose members were deserting or were being condemned for high treason.

At the same time death sentences were being passed on Czechs "for giving support to saboteurs who entered the Protectorate by parachute." Even a Czech gendarme was condemned to death "for giving his service weapons to enemy parachute agents." Despite the torture the Gestapo undoubtedly inflicted on these patriots in order to find the parachutists who had landed from R.A.F. bombers, they never caught any of them. At least, they never bragged about it.

Whether they came by parachute or not, the exploit of the two Czech patriots who accounted for Hangman Heydrich constitutes the most dramatic incident of the whole revolutionary action. In view of the fact that President Benes



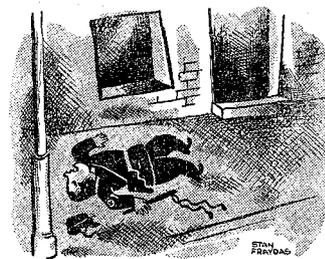
himself had been asking the Czechs over the radio not to provoke the Germans into committing wholesale massacres, it is not probable that the parachutists were being dropped with orders from the Government-in-exile to kill high nazi officials, but rather to communicate with the revolutionary groups at home and to commit sabotage of militarily important objectives.

In Heydrich's case it was one of the revolutionary organizations which took the initiative. Whatever was to be the cost the Czechs were going to pay, drastic action was necessary since Heydrich was planning to do away with the last remnants of the country's autonomy and to introduce compulsory labor service for Czech youth. It is probable that he also intended to introduce compulsory military service for the Czechs, scattering them into German regiments fighting on the Russian front. His plans were betrayed to the underground movement by highly placed Czechs in the Protectorate. On May 27, 1942, on his way to Berlin the Hangman was attacked and mortally wounded by two mysterious men. They had been waiting for him at a point where the Puchmayerova street in a Prague industrial suburb makes a sharp turn, showering Heydrich's car with bullets from an automatic pistol and hitting it with an anti-tank bomb.

After twenty-three days of the most thorough and extensive man hunt the Gestapo ever staged, it claimed to have

tracked down the two attackers in the old Saint Charles Borromeus Church in Prague. They were not taken alive; with revolvers and hand grenades they resisted until the end. The bodies supposedly were those of Jan Kubis, age 29, former sergeant of the 34th Czechoslovakia Infantry Regiment, and of Josef Gabcik, age 30, former warrant officer of the 14th Infantry Regiment. Despite these claims made just before the deadline within which the population of Prague was to give up the attackers the mystery remains unsolved. Only after the war will it be known, whether this was not a mere face-saving device of the Gestapo, and whether the two real attackers were able to reach safety after all. Meanwhile, the wave of terror which the Germans unleashed in Bohemia and Moravia cost the Czechs 1,700 acknowledged victims, including the destruction of the villages of Lidice and Lezaky. But Heydrich's projects were shelved.

The Nazis rave about "communist" plots in Czechoslovakia, but by now in conquered Europe all Communists have become patriots, and all patriots are called Communists. Regardless of former political affiliation, social standing, or religious beliefs, never before have the Czechs been so united as at present. The spirit of courage and sacrifice which carried the people, physically shattered but morally unbent, through more than three and a half years of unprecedented oppression is the same that will ultimately restore their liberty.



B O O K S

THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL MAN, by Peter F. Drucker. 298 pages. Day; \$2.50

At the very beginning of this interesting book the author claims that "social economics without political principles are harmful," an assertion natural to an economist of the German school. The entire book reflects this attitude, whether in the comparison of France and Germany—"Germany has been Europe's geological fault for these last fifty years . . . but France played the same part for a hundred years before"—or in the argument (which is now current in certain German circles) that "nazi leaders represent a type which never before has been the 'ideal type' of German society, neither in background, nor in personal character, class antecedents, profession, conduct, or belief." A historian who, in his explanation of totalitarianism, excludes the special German element, which in reality was one of the conditions for its complete realization, and explains its genesis exclusively as a product of an industrial crisis, commits grave error.

Despite this orientation, as well as a tendency to schematization and caricature,—for example, the chapter on the nineteenth century in France—Dr. Drucker has written an instructive book. Its main question is this: How can an industrial society be built as a free society? It centers the author's interest in the problems of social integration and political power—problems posed by industry and completely unknown to the old mercantile society. Scholarly and conscientious analysis of industrial facts leads him to the important conclusion that managerial power today is both illegitimate and irresponsible since it is not controlled by the shareholders. Since the union leaders' power is similar to that of corporation management, the author concludes his excellent analysis of trade unionism with the statement that "to substitute union leadership for corporation management . . . would not make any real change in the structure of society."

Dr. Drucker urges the integration of each individual into the society of which he is a member. (This is another language for the ideas of the young French school of "person-

alism," not mentioned in the book, which demands an organic society composed of persons and not of irresponsible individuals of the old liberal type.) When he arrives at the application of his interesting and stimulating theory to Germany, he becomes inaccurate. Thus, in Chapter V, Hitlerism is superficially described as an attempt "to create a functioning industrial society."

In contrast, however, the chapter dealing with freedom is original and brilliant. "Freedom is the heaviest burden laid on man," he writes: "to decide his own individual conduct as well as the conduct of society and to be responsible for both decisions. Freedom is not so much a right as a duty." Here the author fully identifies it with the Christian concept of man's nature: "Any philosophy which claims perfection for human beings denies freedom; and so does a philosophy that renounces ethical responsibility." Finally, he touches his highest point when he says: "The first flower of the tree of liberties was St. Augustine." The late President Masaryk expressed this view in the slogan "Jesus not Caesar."

On the subject of bureaucracy, Dr. Drucker makes some of his most provocative statements. In Europe, he says, "the administrative omnipotence undermined self-government far more than the lack of judicial control of the legislative." This analysis is sound. Rejecting the majority system, he believes that a good government "is a function of the normal character of a society and the genius of the individual statesman." He sees the United States as the only country where a free industrial society can be developed in a free, non-revolutionary, non-totalitarian way. The spectacle which he presents of American history is actually a fireworks of observations and more or less correct conclusions. His reply to the question presented by the book, namely the realization of a free and functioning society, is only partial. He recommends: "Neither total planning nor the restoration of nineteenth-century laissez-faire, but the organization of industry on the basis of local and decentralized self-government. And the time to start is now."

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