

II

America Must Answer the Nazi Pogroms

ALL THE WORLD is filled with horror at the events of the last few days in Hitler's realm. The Dark Ages from which is drawn this social plague furnish no parallel to the mad fury of anti-Semitic pogroms deliberately unloosed and organized over Germany. A spontaneous cry of outraged protest has come from the people of the United States. It is intolerable that such wholesale offense against human decency can be perpetrated anywhere. Human dignity cannot exist anywhere in the world, in face of these crimes, except through unequivocal and emphatic condemnation expressed not only in words but also in deeds. Every American who clings to our best traditions must have felt a thrill of gratification that Washington responded by a deed, more eloquent than any words, in the withdrawal from Berlin of the American Ambassador.

The horrible events now going on in Nazi Germany are but a part of the fruits of the Munich Pact. That agreement for the enthronement of organized banditry over Europe opened the flood-gates of reaction over the world.

Every person who fails to raise his voice against the Nazi pogroms, by that fact becomes a partner in crime with Hitler. And every person who accepts or condones the Munich Pact undertakes the same responsibility.

The broadest united front of all the forces of decency and progress must be formed to impress upon the Nazi butchers, in the only language they can understand, that the world is united against them, determined to halt once and for all the spread of their poison over the face of the earth. Humanity can no longer live in the stifling atmosphere produced by a Hitler.

In the hot indignation that sweeps over America against the crimes in Germany, let us not overlook the growing and alarming signs of the growth of Hitlerism within the United States itself. Anti-Semitism is the infallible sign of desperate reactionary forces at work, threatening civilization, wherever it appears and under whatever forms.

It is being spread wholesale in the United States today. It seeps through our social structure in whispers and innuendoes. It is openly expressed in meetings, in the press, on the radio. It played a vicious role in the election campaign just concluded. It is subsidized with millions of dollars by some of our economic royalists. It has a sanctified spokesman in the radio priest, Father Coughlin. It is preparing for America some shameful pages similar to those now disgracing Germany, if it is not scotched in its infancy by an awakened and outraged people.

For the attention of our Catholic brothers and fellow-citizens, who still tolerate the anti-Semitic and fascist ravings of Father Coughlin, we point out the lesson of Germany, that anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism are Siamese twins that always go together. Pogroms against the Jews in Germany are accompanied by the sacking of Catholic sanctuaries and the murder of Catholic leaders. The same close connection between the two obscurantist cults is clearly visible in the United States, where it is also closely linked up with a revival of the hateful anti-Negro cult, remnant of the slavery we abolished long ago under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln. And Hitler has shown us that what begins as a "crusade against Communism" always and inevitably ends up as a smashing of the labor movement, the destruction of democracy, the crushing of religious freedom for Catholics and Protestants alike, and culminates in such historic crimes as those now going on against the Jews in Germany.

All these reactionary and divisive propagandas, anti-social and criminal, are being wielded in our own country by those

dark forces which would drag America onto the road of fascism. All of America that would save our country from the fate of Hitlerism must unite to drive these criminal cults out of public life, and to clear them out of even the darkest corners.

Do not allow confused and false leaders to lead you to place the blame for the current atrocities upon the German people. The great and cultured nation that produced Goethe, Heine, Marx, Humboldt and a thousand other brilliant figures who gave their full contribution to lifting humanity to newer heights—that nation is not responsible for the miserable typhus-lice of the Hitlers, the Goebbels and the Goerings, who have infected Germany and threaten the whole world with such dire sickness. The German people were betrayed into the hands of fascism by the false and traitorous representatives of monopoly capital all over the world. During last September the German people were preparing to rise up and crush these lice upon their body, but they were thrust down again by the brutal hands of Chamberlain and Daladier, who rushed to Munich to press into the hands of Hitler the weapons for re-establishing his power over Germany and spreading it to new regions of the world.

No, the German people are our best and most important allies; they are awaiting the work of co-operation from us, to do their bit. To scotch the snake of Hitlerism, there is no necessity for armies of American boys to march into Berlin. If any fighting is required there to end the Brown Shirt plague, the German people can be relied upon to do the job thoroughly—once they are sure that America is ready to guarantee them against a new betrayal.

It is necessary to organize the world for a great social and political health campaign, to cleanse the earth of the typhus of fascism. The United States must lead the world in this task. We who have the most to lose, must assume the most responsi-

ble role. We will find willing and enthusiastic helpers all over the world.

It is true that we cannot trust the Daladier government of France for the slightest co-operation. But given a clear and strong lead from the United States, the people of France will quickly raise up a government which we can trust.

It is true that we cannot trust the Chamberlain government of Britain for anything, steeped as it is in treason and betrayal. But given a lead from the United States, the British people will quickly raise to power a government of the peace coalition of all labor, liberal and progressive forces, which we could trust, and which could restore the now-missing prefix of Great to Britain.

And we can absolutely depend upon the collaboration of the greatest power in the world outside the United States—that is, the Soviet Union.

It is one of the brightest achievements of the Soviet Union that, inheriting a land where anti-Semitism had been fostered for generations by the Czarist government, it not only outlawed by its Constitution and its Criminal Code the sadistic cult of anti-Semitism and race-prejudice (so far the only nation in the world that has done so), but it has done more, it has effectively wiped out this plague as an influence upon public life and among the masses.

The Soviet Union has proved beyond all doubt that it remains true to its obligations, to its treaties, to its responsibilities as a good neighbor in the community of nations. It has never committed an act of aggression, nor broken a treaty. It unwaveringly supported Ethiopia. It remains the one active friend of China. It alone refused to abandon the Spanish republic. It stood from beginning to end in solid support of Czechoslovakia. What other nation in the world can claim a similar record?

Let us be clear, that if we want to halt the fascist atrocities in Germany, if we want to prevent its spread over the world to finally engulf America, we must be prepared to co-operate with all peace-loving peoples and with all governments that can be trusted to keep their word, including the Soviet Union.

And let us further be clear, that we must end once and for all such criminal stupidity as our present attitude to China and Japan, in which we criticize Japan's aggression but continue to furnish more than half of all the economic means whereby it is perpetrated. If democracy is so stupid as to continue to furnish weapons to its active executioners, then democracy will surely die. And such stupidity deserves to die.

If we want to preserve Latin America from Hitler, whose plans place that continent next on the list of aggressions, then we must awake to the fact that Spain is the first line of defense of Latin America. We must lift the shameful embargo against the Spanish republic, an embargo which violates our treaty obligations, and which betrays the American national interest as well, making us in effect allies of Hitler.

Instead of helping the aggressors and blockading their victims, we must do the opposite. We must help Spain and China, by opening our markets and by sending them our surplus foods; we must place a strict embargo on all trade with Germany and Japan, until they halt their atrocities and aggressions.

The shameful pogroms against the Jews in Germany has finally awakened the sleeping conscience of America. But now that we are awake, let us see fully the whole situation of the world around us. The world is in deadly peril. We have contributed to that peril by our stupidity and complacency and inactivity. We have a unique opportunity. America holds half the wealth and potential power of all the world. Four-fifths of the rest of the world waits for our leadership. We have world destiny in our hands. We can decide whether the world shall

slip down in chaos and destruction, or whether it will be organized for human progress and decency.

Let all decent Americans unite to solve this question in the high tradition transmitted to us by our great forebears Jefferson and Lincoln.

Radio speech over station WMCA, New York, November 16, 1938.