

FRIEND

NAZIS AND POLAND

— 7.29.8.39

PILSUDSKI'S BASTION OF
PEACE

It has been the way of Nazi Germany, before striking at her successive victims, to try to show that they are impossible to live with. Austria, the Sudetenland, Bohemia, we were told in turn, were ruled by "butchers" who had, nevertheless, "lost control"; and their mere existence was an "intolerable affront" to European hopes of peace and justice. Nowhere can these extremes of propaganda have been effective, unless at home; and the world has ceased to be interested in them, except as indications of the extent to which the deed may follow the word. Even in the present case of Poland it is right to consider the peculiar violence of the contrast between the machine-made charges now levelled at her by Germany and the scrupulous care which she has in fact taken to pursue a neighbourly policy.

The reborn Poland has, in large matters at least, found herself cast for the part of a good neighbour in Europe. She has been engaged in more than one dispute, and, like other European States, has given targets for the critic, but, by and large, her influence has been a steadying one in a troubled part of the world. This was her destiny, and the policy of the great Pilsudski—and to have followed it so long is no mean achievement for a country that had to begin life anew on the ruins of three warring empires.

Pilsudski stuck throughout to his watchword, "Romantic ideals; realism in their pursuit," and this realism for Poland meant the securing and reinsuring of the *status quo*. It was, moreover, a constructive policy. France, the ally, was far away, but Germany and Russia were next door. It was not long before Pilsudski had concluded non-aggression pacts with both of them.

PILSUDSKI'S PRINCIPLE

The formal principle of Pilsudski's foreign policy was the "Bastion of Peace." The notion was almost too mathematical to be true. Germany, it was argued, was neutralized on the west by France, Russia on the east by Japan; in the middle of this precarious see-saw was the Polish fulcrum, united with Rumania to form the most vital and successful of peace blocs. Unfortunately, diplomacy has little in common with the laws of mechanics, as the events of the last weeks have shown; but Pilsudski had no alternative but to balance Russia and Germany, and be neighbourly to each. In January, 1934, upon Herr Hitler's initiative, he concluded the pact with Germany which had an immediate effect on the European balance of power, and diverted Nazi pressure, for the time being, away from Danzig and the Corridor.

This document, which still in law has five years to run, reads, in the light of the unmasked cynicism of modern diplomacy, like a tale from a long-forgotten Arcadian age. Who remembers now that it invoked the Kellogg Pact?

The two Governments (it began) think it time to initiate a new era in German-Polish relations by direct agreement with each other. They start from the fact that the maintenance and ensuring of a durable peace between their countries is an essential

the fact that the maintenance and ensuring of a durable peace between their countries is an essential condition for general European peace. They have therefore decided to base their mutual relations on the principles laid down in the Locarno Pact of 1925 and more precisely to define the application of these principles to their own relationship.

If (the treaty goes on) disputes incapable of composition through direct negotiations arise, the two Governments would seek agreement in mutual understanding by other peaceful means. . . . But in no circumstances would they proceed to the use of force for the purpose of settling such disputes.

Had Stresemann or Brüning concluded such a pact he would have been branded as a traitor. But already Hitler, after one year in power, could do no wrong, and he was cheered in the Reichstag a few days later when he affirmed that "Germans and Poles must reconcile themselves to each other's existence." Was it surprising that the whole world welcomed this new friendship, suggesting only, as this journal did, that the Reich might "apply the same principle to the German-speaking country to the south of her"?

POLISH LOYALTY

The Polish-German pact remained fully effective during one stage after another of Nazi aggression. Poland was not hard to live with when her neighbour's quarrels were with others. In May of 1934 she confirmed the balancing agreement with Russia, Barthou was given a cool reception in Warsaw, and the idea of an Eastern Pact excluding Germany was strenuously resisted. Local relations with a Nazi-ified Danzig actually improved.

That year the Marshal died. It is significant that there were Franco-German contacts at his funeral; he had left his "political testament," and the Bastion of Peace was still a factor in a changing Europe. The Danzig currency dispute was settled to mutual satisfaction, and Poland and Germany between them overcame the difficulties due to accumulated arrears of dues for transit across the Corridor. In 1936 Herr Greiser, of the Danzig Senate, was cocking his snook at the journalists of Geneva; but Poland, charged with the responsibility of "the Danzig question," took up a tolerant attitude towards the Nazi movement in the Free City, and mostly confined her efforts to protecting her own economic interests. The expiry of the Geneva Convention on Upper Silesia in July, 1937, did indeed lead to some friction between Poland and Germany on minority questions, but a new declaration on the subject was signed in November, and Hitler told the Polish leaders that it "would have the effect of improving and settling the relations between the two peoples."

Then the citadels began to fall—but still Hitler blew no trumpet near the Polish walls. After the rape of Austria he publicly thanked Poland for her "approval." At the last Nuremberg rally, before Munich, he reaffirmed his friendship. It still seemed unshaken when, upon the occupation of Sudetenland, Poland succeeded in closing the corridor of Ruthenia to further German penetration.

RIBBENTROP'S TRIBUTE

On January 25 last Herr von Ribbentrop was in Warsaw. At a banquet given by Colonel Beck he declared that the pact of 1934 was the work of "our two great leaders, Josef Pilsudski and Adolf Hitler."

It has stood the test and strains of the last five years (he said) and will remain the surest foundation of relations between Germany and Poland, for a firm understanding with Poland is an essential element of the Führer's policy. Therefore both Poland and Germany can look into the future with complete confidence.

Later a *communiqué* was issued claiming that the Pact had "become in the new situation a valuable contribution towards present appeasement in Europe." This was barely seven months ago.

It is now generally believed that about this time von Ribbentrop proposed joint German-Polish action against Russia for

MS

the partition of the Ukraine. Colonel Beck, true to Pilsudski's political testament, answered "No." On February 19 the first Soviet-Polish trade agreement was signed; on February 25 public places in Danzig were placarded with the words, "No admittance for Poles, dogs, and Jews"; on February 27 came the first "rebuttal" to Poland in the official German diplomatic gazette.

The subsequent course of events will be easily remembered. German students whipped up an anti-Polish campaign in the Free City, which the Poles, for their part, did nothing to exacerbate. The Berlin Press campaign began. The independence of Poland was now openly threatened.

Yet Poland had supplied no sort of pretext for a change in the relations between the two countries which, five long years ago, mutually renounced the weapon of force, as enjoined by the Kellogg Pact. Then, on March 15, Hitler seized Bohemia and Moravia.

Before any British guarantee to Poland had been given or even prepared Hitler made his "minimum demand," which was for the return of Danzig to the Reich, a German route and railway across the Corridor, and frontier "rectifications" in Silesia. He now tells M. Daladier that its mildness "shocked the German people." "No one but myself," he says, "could have dared to step before the public with such an offer."

The "offer," presumably so called because it was accompanied by large, but now wholly untrustworthy, promises of respect for Polish independence, was in itself an abrupt and unilateral denunciation of the Ten-Year Pact. Poland, and indeed all Europe, took alarm over this new and wholly unprovoked threat to the security and territorial integrity of a friendly Power. Britain responded—and no other response was possible—with a defensive guarantee to Poland. Herr Hitler then proceeded to make this guarantee the excuse for denouncing in form the Ten-Year Pact which he had already torn up in fact. In the whole of this transaction he had taken even less trouble than on similar occasions previously to conceal the cynical diplomacy of the Third Reich. Poland has maintained throughout and still maintains her readiness to meet Germany and German claims in direct negotiation. Germany hitherto has rejected every offer of conference and continues to require unconditional surrender to her demands.

Such is the plain story of six years' relations between the two Governments.

FOREIGN ISSUES

EFFECT OF TREASURY RESTRICTIONS

The Treasury order imposing restrictions on the change of ownership of securities payable in certain foreign currencies naturally caused some disorganization in the Stock Exchange yesterday, and dealings in the issues directly concerned were suspended for the time being, though one or two isolated bargains were done in dollar securities subject to the necessary permit being obtained. There was published last night the text of the Defence (Finance) Regulations under which the Treasury made its order. This reveals that the Treasury may extend the order to cover securities of any class likely to be marketable outside the United Kingdom, and makes it clear that the

itself if it considers it expedient to do so at a price not less than the market price at the date of an order. It had, of course, been generally anticipated that this was the purpose of the order. It is now, however, found necessary to relieve the pressure on sterling.

Sterling yesterday, in fact, showed renewed weakness against nearly all the active foreign currencies, but closed well above the worst in terms of dollars at \$4.28, having been \$4.10 in the morning. This still represented a depreciation of 12c. on the day. The corollary of the morning's acute weakness in the pound was a sharp rise of 6s. in the price of gold to the fresh high record of 161s. per ounce. In the Stock Exchange the further depreciation of sterling caused buyers to come forward for the leading commercial and industrial shares, oil, and copper shares, while goldmining shares received a fillip from the consequent advance in the price of gold. In the gilt-edged market the minimum prices established last week remained in force, but there were buyers of the long-dated and irredeemable British Government stocks at above the minimum quotations. Further details are given in the City columns.

CHILD KILLED BY FALL OF ROCK

CAUSE OF CHEDDAR GORGE ACCIDENT

The view that there was always an element of danger in cliffs such as at Cheddar Gorge was expressed by Dr. F. Wallis, deputy director of Bristol Museum, when he gave evidence yesterday at the inquest at Axbridge, Somerset, on the body of ARTHUR JOHN WHITE, aged five, of South Stoke Road, Coombe Down, Bath, who was killed when over half a ton of rock fell on Wednesday.

Mrs. Kate Scott, a widow, of Pound Hill, Corsham, who was visiting Cheddar on a day trip, and was also struck by some of the rock, died in Bristol Royal Infirmary on Sunday.

Dr. Wallis said that the fall was primarily due to joints in the rock aided by excessive rain, but the immediate cause of the fall was the heavy growth of ivy and other vegetation. He suggested that further falls might be avoided by removing vegetation or erecting a concrete dam.

Mr. T. G. Gill, agent for Lord Weymouth, owner of the cave, said that earlier this year 300 tons of loose stones were removed from the face of the cliff and as much vegetation had been cut as was practical. A barrier had been erected round the cliff and everything possible done to prevent rock falls. He considered a dam impracticable as it would not stop a very large fall and there was danger of its collapsing.

Evidence was given that the rock fell 400ft. A verdict of "Misadventure" was recorded.

GELIGNITE FOUND ON RAILWAY LINE

Sticks of gelignite were found in suspicious circumstances yesterday at Shotts, in Lanarkshire, and in Glasgow. At Shotts a miner returning from work found on the main L.M.S. Railway line between Glasgow and Edinburgh 5lb. of gelignite with detonator and fuse attached. The fuse, which had been extinguished, had burned to within a few inches of the detonator. It looked as if an attempt had been made to wreck the line, but the police are somewhat sceptical about this; they believe that the explosives were stolen from one of the local collieries and they are endeavouring to trace the pit they came from.

In Glasgow 12 sticks of gelignite and 22 caps were found by workmen engaged in the demolition of offices at the corner of Tradeston Street and Kingston Street. The building has been unoccupied for some time and it appeared as if the gelignite and caps had been thrown through a window by someone anxious to get rid of them. They had been made useless by the damp.

"W
NEV
Herr I
lished
Herald
Hitle
confide
tainty
can be
not He

DR.

The
the N
rupt b
petitio
Mende
receive
nounc
protes
heime.

Treasury may transfer
such securities to
itself - - -

