Weekly News Analysis

Beck Visit, Czech Border Tiff Point Probable Nazi Course

By Joseph W. La Bine

Germany

Two events on one bleak January day, one at tiny Munkacs, Hungary, the other at lofty Berchtesgaden, Germany, gave puzzled European observers the key to future plans of the Rome-Berlin axis. The events:

Berchtesgaden. To Adolf Hitler's Bavarian eyrie came another visitor, Poland's Foreign Minister Joseph Beck. Colonel Beck was frightened because: (1) Germany has shown outright hostility by fomenting revolt in Polish sections of the vast Ukraine; has been busy Nazifying Lithuania's Baltic seaport of Memel; has Nazified the free city of Danzig and made other threats at closing Poland's precious "corridor" to the Baltic; (2) because one of Poland's allies, France, refuses to help her in wartime; (3) because another ally, Russia, is far away and would be of questionable assistance.

POLAND'S COLONEL BECK
He sought and found security.

Colonel Beck left Berchtesgaden after discovering he had much in common with the master of Europe. Though unannounced, the conference results are quite discernible. Having been granted security at Germany's mercy, Poland will play an important role in the Reich's campaign to create a Ukrainian republic, also serving as a rear guard while Berlin turns its attentions to helping Friend Mussolini win Mediterranean territorial concessions from France. Poland will lead in forming a band of armed, neutral states from the Baltic to the Balkans, protecting Germany from Russia. Poland will permit a German railroad and highway from East Prussia to Germany proper, across the Polish corridor. Most important, Poland will probably lead in Pan-Ukrainian agitation, serving as a "front" nation for the Reich.

Munkacs. Bad blood has stood between Czechoslovakia and Hungary since last November 2, when a German-Italian commission remarked the southern boundary of Carpatho-Ukraine (Ruthenia) and gave added territory to Hungary. Unpopular with Germans and Czechs alike was one Italian demand, that strategic Munkacs be ceded to Hungary. Munkacs is a key city in Germany's plan for vast Carpatho-Ukrainian fortifications, slyly planned as a threat to keep Russia intimidated while the Reich turns its attentions to winning concessions from France and Great Britain, both for itself and Mussolini.

When Czech-Hungarian hostilities broke out at Munkacs, the inspiration was obvious. This time using Czechoslovakia for a "front," Hitler was stirring up trouble which will lead to a re-demarcation of the Czech-Hungarian frontier, bringing strategic Munkacs back into his power. This done, the Reich has only to placate little Hungary. Then the chain of pro-German states will extend from Baltic to Balkans.

These things happened just as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain left for Rome, where observers expected him to make a deal with Mussolini. The probable deal: France would give Italy Suez canal rights and joint use of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railroad. In return Italy would guarantee security for British shipping in the Mediterranean, also helping settle Britain's Palestine headache. But with Hitler once more turning his eyes westward, this could be interpreted as only the beginning. After helping Mussolini win his demands, the Reich will probably demand gigantic economic and financial concessions from the democracies, even going so far as to demand return of World war reparations. Mulling over these prospects, European democracies have good reason to fear 1939's eleven remaining months.

Races

Germany originally planned to finance deportation of Jews by making foreign powers buy her goods. The plan: Jewish emigrees would trade their money for—or be financed in the purchase of—German export products. This plan won little sympathy from either Britain or the U. S., but it at least offered a basis for negotiation by which the intergovernmental refugee committee could deal both with Germany and Italy. Since Italy's Jewish persecution is far less severe than Germany's, President Roosevelt contacted Premier Mussolini shortly after January 1, asking him to urge more leniency on Chancellor Hitler. Also suggested was the settling of Italian Jews (who must leave by February 1) in Ethiopia.

A week later, as Prime Minister Chamberlain left on his "appeasement" journey to Rome, it looked like President Roosevelt had inadvertently given the Rome-Berlin axis another weapon to hold over Democracy's head. Smart Mussolini, probably on advice from the even smarter Hitler, was willing to discuss the Roosevelt program with Mr. Chamberlain. Observers thought he would agree, but only if Mr. Chamberlain hastens French capitulation to Italian territorial claims. Meanwhile George Rublee, American director of the refugee committee, left for Berlin to negotiate with Hitler, apparently willing to consider a modification of the Reich's program to blackmail democracies into accepting unwanted Jews.

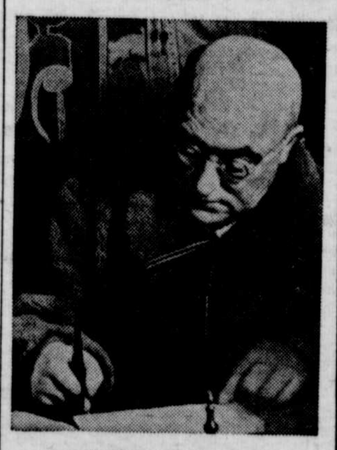
Interesting as a sidelight was the announcement of an Italian repatriation commission, whose duty is to make 10,000,000 racial Italians return from foreign countries, partly replacing the Jews now being ousted. But the drive's real purpose is to give Italy an uncomfortable surplus population, thereby backing her territorial claims in Africa.

Spain

Just before Prime Minister Chamberlain left London for Rome *(See GERMANY)*, Premier Mussolini sent orders to Spain's Rebel Generalissimo Francisco Franco. The orders: Start an immediate major offensive, aimed to show Mr. Chamberlain that Loyalist Spain is collapsing and should therefore be sold out.

Aided by Italian troops, also by Italian and German planes and guns, General Franco started driving into northeastern Catalonia two days before Christmas. A fortnight later his offensive was sprawled over a 100-mile front, creeping slowly and painstakingly toward the coastal city of Tarragona. Though he boasted 300,000 troops, though his attack resembled the World war's Verdun, the showing was still too unimpressive to make Mr. Chamberlain jump through a hoop.

What made matters worse was news from south central Estremadura, where Loyalist Gen. Jose Miaja's Loyalist army had made a spearhead advance of 50 miles in five days, capturing rich mining lands on which General Franco depended for buying war materials abroad. Thoroughly angry, Franco ordered removal of his famous "radio general," Gonzalo Queipo de Llano, famous for his lusty broadcasts from Seville. Then he took steps to protect the Loyalist objective, the Seville-Salamanca railroad which connects northern and southern Spain. The only Franco recourse seemed to be withdrawal of thoroughly tired troops from the Catalonia front, which undoubtedly meant a loss of the bloody gains Rebel Spain has made in that sector since Christmas.



GEN. JOSE MIAJA
General Franco lost his mines.

Medicine

Bright and dark sides feature Surgeon General Thomas Parran's annual report on the nation's health:

Dark Side. Some 40,000,000 U. S. citizens cannot provide for medical care during serious illness. About 360,000 more hospital beds are needed. Only a few states have satisfactory programs against pneumonia and cancer; tuberculosis and malaria are also serious. Venereal disease control appropriations must be increased immediately.

Bright Side. Death rate fell from 11.3 per thousand in 1936 to 10.9 in 1937, then to 10.8 in 1938's first six months. Infant mortality fell from 57.1 per thousand live births in 1936 to 54.4 in 1937. Most contagious diseases are decreasing.

Chief causes of death in 1937 (as usual) were heart diseases, cancer and other malignant tumors, pneumonia, cerebral hemorrhage and softening, nephritis, accidents (except automobile) and tuberculosis.

Relief

"Now that Mr. Hopkins has been made secretary of commerce you won't need all of this $875,000,000, will you?"

The questioner: New York's Rep. John Taber. His audience: Works Progress Administrator F. C. Harrington. The implication: That President Roosevelt's request for an $875,000,000 deficiency appropriation to carry WPA until the next fiscal year starts July 1, is too high, since Former WPA Administrator Harry Hopkins can now dispense patronage instead of relief funds.

If Administrator Harrington thought this reasoning was silly, he knew better than to say so. So did any other Roosevelt appointee who might be called upon to testify before a house or senate committee. For there was revolution brewing under the capitol dome, and most of it was concerned with spending and taxing. First the White House had requested "moderate" tax rises to offset farm parity payments and finance the first half of a proposed defense expansion program. The added cost: $422,000,000. Next had come the $875,000,000 to operate WPA until July 1, which was $125,000,000 greater than WPA deficiency estimates included in the previous day's budget message.

WPA'S HARRINGTON
Rep. Taber asked a question.

Mr. Harrington knew that his WPA would have a harder time justifying its expenditures than would the agricultural department or the army. Placed into the house committee's record was a table showing that WPA expenses increased steadily through September, October and December, when the federal reserve board index showed business was booming. His defense: That relief rolls dropped from 3,112,000 on December 24 to 3,075,000 on December 31. His claim: That a slash of the deficiency appropriation to $500,000,000 would bring starvation to many unfortunates. Nevertheless it looked like Mr. Harrington would be lucky indeed to get $500,000,000.

Such incidents demonstrate that the Seventy-sixth congress is independent. If it grants Mr. Roosevelt's full budgetary requests for the next fiscal year—which is doubtful—the U. S. public debt will rise precariously near $45,000,000,000, which is the legal peak on treasury department borrowing. Anticipated daily is a White House request that the limit be raised.

Asia

Under the premiership of Prince Fumimaro Konoye, Japan came close to overthrowing China's Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek when Wang Ching-wei, one-time leader of the Kuomintang (Nationalist) party, agreed to make peace and head a puppet Chinese government. This three-man poker game first began collapsing January 1 when Kai-shek ousted Wang from the Kuomintang and sent him scurrying to cover in French Indo-China. The second player to withdraw was Prince Konoye, whose forced resignation from the premiership places Chiang in an even firmer position.

Prince Konoye has been succeeded by Kiichiro Hiranuma, a pro-Fascist and extreme nationalist, who would hardly sympathize with Wang's plans for an independent China. Premier Hiranuma's only offer to Wang could be leadership of an outright puppet regime like Manchukuo, and this he could not accept. Another fly in the ointment is Japan's military machine, now strengthened by the Fascist governmental tendency.

People

At San Pedro's Terminal island correctional prison, where he was transferred from Alcatraz, **Al Capone** was said by a guard to be "screwy as a bedbug."

● In Vienna, Jewish, persecuted Dr. Salomon Frankfurter, 80, rejoiced that the U. S. had elevated his nephew, Harvard's **Felix Frankfurter**, to the Supreme court.

QUIZ

If you read News Analysis, you can answer these questions:

● Did the U. S. death rate rise or fall in 1937, compared with 1936?
● Of what famous prisoner did a guard say, "He's screwy as a bedbug"?
● Japan's new premier strengthens the hope for Chinese-Japanese peace. True or false?
● What nation will serve as Germany's "front" in the Ukrainian conquest?
● The legal limit of U. S. public debt is $50,000,000,000. True or false?
● Why is Spanish Rebel Gen. Quiepo de Llano known as the radio general?
● Identify: Munkacs, Beck, Miaja, Rublee, Hiranuma.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

President Outlines His Policies In Annual Message to Congress

Gives No Assurance of Prospect of Balanced Budget; Necessity for Armed Preparedness Stressed; Continued Spending Makes Some Democrats See Red.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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WASHINGTON.—It is always expected that the annual message to congress from the President of the United States will outline his policies. The message is presumed to reflect, in a broad general formula, what the Chief Executive regards as the major problems and what should be done about them. Moreover, the annual message on the state of the Union is a document that usually embraces some political considerations and, frequently, therefore, constitutes the basis for a test of its author's leadership either from what is proposed or because of things which were omitted.

President Roosevelt's recent message meets each of the phases just described. He outlined the general policies: 1. the necessity for armed preparedness in protection of our religion, our liberty and our form of government—democracy; 2. he disclosed that he has no intention of retreating from his New Deal social policies and that to buttress them and accomplish national protection against dictatorship, he proposes to keep on with his policies of spending. He likewise omitted to give one bit of assurance that there is any prospect of a balanced budget or any means by which the business of the country, small as well as large, can look forward to less governmental messing.

Thus, there seems little reason to doubt that what Mr. Roosevelt proposed, as well as what he omitted saying, places his current annual message in a position to provide a test of his leadership. There are those among the legislators who do not want larger armed forces; there are those who think an armed America will invite trouble; there are those wanting business recovery here much more than wholesale reform of our national business practices and social relations, and there are those who think there will be no reduction of unemployment until the government itself quits its wild orgy of spending and borrowing—they want a balanced budget.

Message Most Temperate Roosevelt Has Delivered

Any President's message is greeted with hurrahs by his party supporters and hisses from the minority. This one was no exception. These shouts of praise and denunciation, respectively, do not always go to the merits. Frequently, they are more than half political. And if I were asked to evaluate those that I have heard in the last 10 days, I should say that each side was about 50 per cent right.

In the first place, Mr. Roosevelt's message this time was the most temperate he has ever delivered, or so it impressd me. There was an evidence of greater sincerity in it than has characterized most of his messages to congress. He spoke out boldly against dictatorships and supported our form of government with an emphasis that belongs with the office of President of the United States.

In the matter of armament, he told why he believes it is needed. He may have gone too far; he may be inviting another battle on a subject akin to the long-time League of Nations controversy by proposing protection "of democracies." Yet, fundamentally, I think it must be agreed that we, in the Western world, must be able to snarl as well as to smile.

In the matter of social reforms, there can and will be violent differences of opinion. It appears that Mr. Roosevelt had not listened very closely to the election returns of November 8 because, instead of a "mandate" which he believed he received in 1936, the last election was a distinct brake on the machinery of social reform.

In the matter of continued spending, Mr. Roosevelt's message must be regarded as having its greatest weakness. There was less justification in his words for the conclusions he reached than in any other phase of the document. Even a substantial number of his own partisans could not swallow his assertions that the spending of some 20 billions of borrowed money was an "investment."

People Wondering When Dividends Can Be Expected

It is pretty difficult for one to accept these piling deficits and increasing totals of the national debt as being anything except an extremely dangerous condition. When Mr. Roosevelt's argument about the "investment" is followed by a budget message that fixes next year's deficit in excess of $3,300,000,000 and a probable national debt of $44,500,000,000 in 1940—well, a good many people are wondering when dividends can be expected. Three years ago, Mr. Roosevelt defended the growth of the national debt, saying there was no need to fear it. He held that it could go to $5,000,000,000 before it became a real burden upon the nation. It is only six billions short of that total now, and many members are getting fidgety about it, especially, as I mentioned earlier, since no mention was made of a balanced budget.

This question of debt, therefore, can be expected to provide some divergence of opinion among the legislators, and there will be other bases upon which disagreement with the Chief Executive will rest. I am wondering, for example, whether Senator Borah of Idaho and Senator Johnson of California will smell something of a League of Nations aroma about the program of defending any and all democracies. Friendly interpreters of the President's message believe his program contemplates only a strengthened support of the Monroe doctrine, but the other side's views envision national policy going beyond that point. It may not happen, but what if the Borah-Johnson school of thought decides to breathe fire about "new alliances" under the expanded defense of democracies?

Continued Spending Makes Some Democrats See Red

There are prospects of opposition to his arms program confronting the President, therefore, among the Borah-Johnson school of thought, as well as among those representatives and senators from inland areas where there never has been much fear from attacks by other nations. There will be ridicule of his arms program, too, on the basis of his indication that it will provide work. That ridicule will be justified. Work can not start on ships for a year and a half or two years after they are authorized, and supplies for the army, even an expanded army, will not call so many men back to factories.

Proposals for continued spending, as outlined by the President, made a number of strong Democrats see red again. Men of the type of Senator Byrd of Virginia and Bailey of North Carolina, and others in the senate and house. They can not be reconciled to such a program and they will have the Republican minority backing them up wherever and whenever they attack continued spending of government funds.

The proposal to continue spending, of course, is linked like a tangle of yarn with the whole question of relief administration, and there is no telling what may come of that row. Senator King, Utah Democrat and anti-New Dealer, already has a bill in the hopper to eliminate the entire federal relief setup. He would turn it back to the states, providing only for grants of federal money when the states can't meet their obligations.

On top and alongside of the Democrats who, for one reason or another, will differ with Mr. Roosevelt's program will be found almost a solid Republican phalanx. There are 169 of them in the house, now, and 26 in the senate. This is far from enough to control, but when that number is coupled with any defections from the Democratic ranks, the answer spells out into the words "trouble for Mr. Roosevelt."

Use of Subject of Religion Causes Some Comment

From the standpoint of political considerations, there were numerous published comments, after the message was delivered, in which members of the house and senate openly chided Mr. Roosevelt for attempting to capitalize politically upon sentiment among the church people. I relate that because it illustrates how no political leader can be quite sure when he makes a statement whether it will be received favorably or not. It is so easy, and every politician knows it, to make a perfectly sincere statement, only to learn two days later that it was being held up to ridicule as bunk or being torn to pieces as being unsound, fundamentally.

Those who have been razzing Mr. Roosevelt's use of the subject of religion recognize, of course, that destruction of free religion has been one of the keystones of dictatorship. They recognize further that the actions of Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini in this regard have been responsible, as much as any other one thing, in creating bitter resentment in the United States. Obviously, then, they look upon the Roosevelt appeal in this regard as being good politics, but they are unwilling to let him get away with it.

In summary, then, it seems proper to catalogue Mr. Roosevelt's 1939 message to congress as one of his best state papers, but it must be added that it stands to create greater difficulties for him than any other annual message he has delivered. Whether one agrees with all, or only a part, or none of its proposals, it is a great improvement over the intemperate character of some of his earlier efforts.

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FLEETWOOD GROVES
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It's Early Worm That Get the Bird's Smile

John and his twin brother George had been paying a great deal of attention to the very pretty girl at the dance. And at last John managed to get her to himself for a few minutes:

"Mary," he said earnestly, "every morning you are my first thought."

Mary looked up at him. "George says so, too," she murmured.

For a moment John looked blank, then his face lit up.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "but I get up an hour before he does."

And she favored him with a smile.

Coolidge's Tribute

Writing of the death of his mother, Calvin Coolidge said: "In an hour, she was gone. It was her thirty-ninth birthday. I was 12 years old. We laid her away in the blustering snows of March. The greatest grief that can come to a boy came to me. Life was never to be the same again . . . Five years and 41 years later almost to a day, my sister and my father followed her. It always seemed to me that the boy I lost was her image."

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