Weekly News Analysis

Sharp Foreign Policy Shifts Follow Rome Parley Collapse

By Joseph W. La Bine

EDITOR'S NOTE—*When opinions are expressed in these columns, they are those of the news analyst, and not necessarily of the newspaper.*

International

Why, they did not know, but from every nook and cranny of the world came statesmen bound for Geneva where under leaden skies opened the 104th session of the League of Nations. Spokesmen admitted the League was forgotten in a new era of "power politics" in which four nations (Britain, France, Italy and Germany) appeared destined to guide the world to war or peace. Geneva's convocation would have been dolorous anyway, but on its eve two great statesmen met in Rome and found they could not agree. Overnight, with lightning speed, the forces of democracy vs. dictatorship shifted to more positive, more threatening positions.

When British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain went to Rome for consultation with Premier Benito Mussolini, he knew his political future hung in the balance. For 18 months he had subscribed to the unpopular course of appeasing dictators. Munich's "peace" treaty had been followed by Italian territorial demands against Britain's ally, France. Invocation of the Anglo-Italian friendship pact had been followed by an even more aggressive Italian participation in the Spanish war. Obviously appeasement was a failure.

When, after two days of conversations, Mr. Chamberlain left for home without an announcement, the world knew what had happened. Appeasement as a peace weapon was abandoned. Britain had straightened up, deciding to lead with her chin instead of the palm of her hand. This news had hardly been flashed before news of resultant developments began flashing back from key world capitals:

BUDAPEST

Almost unnoticed the day Mr. Chamberlain arrived in Rome was the announcement that Hungary had recognized Japan's puppet state of Manchukuo. The past few years have seen Hungary vainly attempting to straddle the fence, keeping peace with Germany and Italy, meanwhile maintaining cordial relations with Britain. But Count Stephen Csaky, foreign minister, has been squinting at new developments with an eye to changing his position. A week before the Rome-London conversations, Poland — Hungary's unofficial ally in eastern Europe—had abandoned her independent position and tightened her bonds with Germany. Count Csaky realized this left Hungary uncomfortably isolated. When news from Rome heralded a sharpened definition of policy between democracies and dictators, Count Csaky decided to cast his lot with dictatorships. Thus Hungary joined the Italian-German-Japanese pact against communism and made plans to leave the League of Nations. A safe prediction is that Poland will follow suit.

To strengthen the Rome-Berlin axis even more, Italian Count Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's foreign minister, is making a tour of the Balkans with special emphasis on Jugo-

HUNGARY'S CSAKY
He chose to follow dictators.

slavia, Hungary and Poland. At the same time German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop left for Warsaw to talk with Polish Foreign Minister Joseph Beck.

BARCELONA

French sympathies in the Spanish civil war lie with Loyalists; Italy's sympathies—and support—lie with Rebels. This animosity has widened the Rome-Paris breach over Italian territorial demands in Tunisia, Corsica, Djibouti and other French points. Just before Mr. Chamberlain left for Rome, Rebels began a well-timed offensive in northeastern Catalonia, aimed to show the prime minister that Loyalist Spain was weakening and should be sold down the river by democracies. But when Chamberlain refused to concede the point, Mussolini's controlled press announced it would be "absolutely useless to speak of arbitration and mediation" in settling Europe's problems until the Insurgents won the Spanish war.

As if to hasten this outcome, the "Chamberlain offensive" swept into Catalonia and drew near Barcelona. Obviously Mussolini wants to wind up the war, release his troops from Spain and consolidate his position in the Mediterranean in preparation for renewed demands against France. Meanwhile, in Paris Premier Edouard Daladier's Radical Socialist party demanded govern-

VISCOUNT HALIFAX
England will come to the rescue.

ment intervention to prevent a Rebel victory in Spain, arguing that such an outcome would threaten France's Mediterranean communications.

PARIS

There no longer remains doubt that the French-Italian argument will supply Europe with its next crisis. Prior to the Chamberlain-Mussolini conversations it looked like France might have to face this dictator threat alone, thanks to Britain's hesitancy over insulting Germany and Italy. But immediately after the conference British Foreign Secretary Viscount Halifax left for Geneva where he met French Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet. It was authoritatively learned that Halifax assured Bonnet that England will go to France's aid if she is attacked by any other country, including Italy.

Halifax and Bonnet obviously held their meeting in Geneva—just as the League sessions opened—to bolster League prestige and give some semblance of international support to the Anglo-French position.

TOKYO

When London heard that Chamberlain had abandoned his appeasement policy, the foreign office immediately emboldened itself like a youngster with a new slingshot. Looking around for places to drain off a long pent-up wrath, it turned attention first to Japan. Tokyo's conquest of China has been tolerated by Britain simply because a stern position would incur the anger of Japan's anti-communist friends, Italy and Germany.

For some time there have been hints of U. S.-British "parallel action" against Japan for violation of the 1922 nine-power pact which guaranteed China's "open door." But this parallel action has heretofore been one-sided, as witness the huge U. S. credit grant to China compared with Britain's tiny credit allowance. But Washington's strong protest note to Tokyo last December 31 was velvet smooth compared with the protest British Ambassador Sir Robert L. Craigie was called upon to hand Japan after the Rome conversations. Excerpts:

"His majesty's government is at a loss to understand how (former Japanese premier) Prince Konoe's assurance that Japan seeks no territory and respects the sovereignty of China can be reconciled with the declared intention of the Japanese government to compel the Chinese people . . . to accept conditions involving surrender of their political, economic and cultural life to Japanese control. . . . For their part, his majesty's government desires to make it clear that they are not prepared to accept or to recognize changes of the nature indicated which are brought about by force."

SIGNIFICANCE

Behind the Mussolini-Chamberlain impasse which precipitated these events was the unseen hand of U. S. disgust over London's vaccilating foreign policy. But just as important was London's assurance that the U. S. planned to build up its armed forces under President Roosevelt's two-year, $552,000,000 emergency defense program. Regardless of the cause, regardless of the resultant consolidation moves by totalitarian states, both France and Britain are inclined to believe they have seen the last of democratic concessions to dictators. The greatest fear is that this new and sensible policy has been adopted too late, that Germany and Italy have attained an undisputable upper hand in the few short months since Munich.

Religion

In prosperous years church membership and attendance remains even or shows a very slight increase. During depressions membership and attendance will rise through a return to religion. Foremost among U. S. religious statisticians is Rev. Dr. Herman C. Weber, whose report for 1937 has just been released.

Salient facts and figures: Total membership early in 1938 was 64,156,895, church members having increased 960,000 in 1937 (twice as fast as the population). Churches increased by 1,743. A trend to church unity was evident, since 97.3 of the total U. S. church population belongs to the 50 larger bodies. About 160 smaller bodies account for the remaining 2.7 per cent.

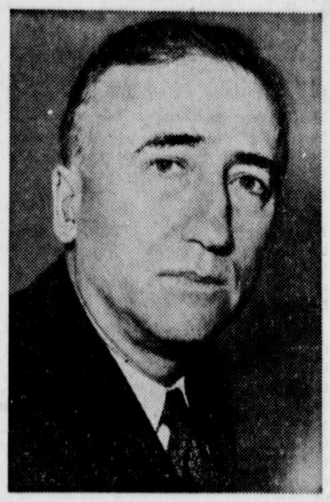
Communication

An important weapon in the spread of Nazi economic-political influence is propaganda. So important has this weapon become that at December's Pan-American conference in Lima, Peru, delegates adopted a resolution condemning it. But for five years the government-subsidized Transocean News Service has operated via wireless from Berlin to Latin America, providing slyly propagandized world news coverage to newspapers at small cost. Its purpose: To win Latin American markets for the Reich, meanwhile spreading political doctrines. In answer to Pan-American conference resolutions, Transocean News Service is now being modernzed and speeded to South America. Just opened is a new transmitter at Buenos Aires, while another is being built at Lima.

Congress

President Roosevelt won little applause January 4 when his State of the Union speech referred to the unpopular governmental reorganization bill. Congress thought it best to leave well enough alone, but since the session got under way two reorganization schemes, one of them far more important than the administration's proposals, have been broached:

Relief. Reluctantly the average U. S. citizen admits unemployment and old age assistance have become permanent problems. Created by the New Deal, pioneering agencies to cope with these needs have worked too independently, often wastefully. Social security, WPA, PWA, CCC and NYA all have a common denominator, but not until this year has anyone bothered to suggest it. Headed by South Carolina's Sen. James F. Byrnes, a spe-



SENATOR BYRNES
He found a common denominator.

cial senate committee on unemployment and relief has now proposed creation of a new department of public works to handle all such duties except social security. The three basic recommendations:

(1) Co-ordination of state unemployment compensation systems under federal law, with U. S. financial assistance, providing 13-week payments ranging from $5 to $15, depending on salary over the 26 weeks before an unemployed person lost his job; (2) increased federal participation in state-federal old age assistance, to provide minimum of $15 a month compensation; (3) an anticipated, annual U. S. public works appropriation.

Should the proposal be adopted, relief and security would still hold plenty of headaches for congress. Left to be ironed out was President Roosevelt's proposal of "social security for all," under which old age and unemployment insurance protection would be given every U. S. worker as soon as possible. Other points in the administration's social security program: (1) increased protection to aged and dependent children; (2) establishment of merit system for state social security personnel; (3) advancing social security's pension starting date from 1942 to 1940.

Defense. Far less noteworthy than the Byrnes report but significant of the reorganization trend is the thusfar anonymous proposal to pool army and navy under a single cabinet officer. Its aim: To co-ordinate defense. Though similar measures have reached congress before, most of them failed because of traditional, leather-necked rivalry between the two branches of defense. This session's bill has a better chance because the proposed special rearmament program needs a single guiding hand, not several.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

Federal Government So Huge Few Can Grasp Its Magnitude

Multiplicity of Bureaus and Agencies Demanding Reports of All Kinds Places Tremendous Burden on Business; Many Agencies Covering Same Lines of Business.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART
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WASHINGTON.—Many times in these columns I have written expressions of fear about the size of this thing we call the federal government. It is so huge that few persons grasp the magnitude of the machinery. And it can not be explained satisfactorily. Certainly, one can not say that it is just "so big," and measure it by extended arms. On the other hand, incidents or actions of a unit of the federal government may furnish an indication of the size on the basis of a comparison. Such an incident came in the news recently and, unfortunately, very little attention was paid to it in daily newspapers of the nation.

Here is the basis of comparison, and it tells its own story as to the size of our national governmental machine:

As of July 1, 1938, the director of the census estimated there were 130,215,000 persons living within the continental United States.

During the year 1938, citizens and corporations within the United States were compelled by law or regulation or special orders to file with federal government agencies a total of 135,000,000 reports, information forms, questionnaires, statistical facts and other required statements.

That total is the official calculation by Chairman Stuart A. Rice, of the central statistical board, who had made a survey of all federal agencies upon orders of President Roosevelt. The President wanted to know whether there was a real basis for the thousands of complaints and editorial criticisms about the tremendous burden that has been placed upon every kind of business, including individuals, by their government. The Rice conclusions, however, have demonstrated in an understanding way just what an octopus our national government has become, and it may be—indeed, it is likely—that Mr. Rice has performed a chore here which will mark the beginning of the end of federal government expansion. His findings ought to have that effect, in any event.

Then Began an Expansion Of the Federal Government

Shortly after the World war ended and the federal government got back to normal in the matter of size and the functions it was performing, there was a time when the populace raised loud shouts because their government was spending a billion dollars a year. There were some hard times along in 1919 and 1920 and a year or so more, and there was the call of the suffering for help from their national government. There were, too, numerous ideas being fomented and allowed to ferment. Each one contemplated something new in the way of government functions. Well, each one contemplated some additional federal expense.

In this way, there began an expansion of the federal government that has carried on with an ever-accelerating pace until the New Deal took over, six years ago. Then, we really went to town in expanding the number of arms and legs and eyes and ears of the federal government. Yes, and with that expansion there came additional expense—expense, not in millions, but in billions. Recently, you know, President Roosevelt asked congress to appropriate more than $9,000,000,000 for the government year beginning July 1, 1939. That total is not all. There will be other and additional sums called for as each one of these agencies, or many of them, fails to live within its appropriation and goes back to congress to ask for more money. The relief administration came in a few weeks ago and asked for $875,000,000 more to run it until July 1 when congress believed in May, 1938, that it was voting enough funds to meet the needs of relief until the coming July.

But to get back to Mr. Rice's survey. I am not informed as to details, or whether the figures have been segregated to show how many of these 135,000,000 reports are filed with each of the several agencies. Certain of the great offenders in the matter of demanding reports can be enumerated, however, to show the trend. It is necessary obviously in some cases for an agency of the government to have all details of businesses over which it has supervision; yet, I can not help wondering whether it is necessary to have such supervision in the first instance.

How Many of These Agencies Can We Get Along Without?

Hence, the Rice survey calls attention to something much deeper than just the burden that government places on its citizens. It suggests the question: how many of these governmental agencies and their functions can we do without? How many can be abandoned with benefit, both in the matter of sound government and in the elimination of useless expense to the taxpayers and the individuals or corporations required to meet government demands? My guess is that at least a third of our present government structure is of no value; that at least that portion could be eliminated and everyone would be happier, and that if a large chunk of these functions were forgotten, living wouldn't be so complicated and certainly not so costly. It must be remembered that every time cost of government is increased, there is more than the outlay for government expense involved. Every time a government agency gets slimy fingers into business, just then does there arise an added cost of living.

It is not hearsay with me when I say that high pressure groups force additional government expenses upon the nation. I have watched their operation year after year. I have sat in the galleries of congress and observed the operation of lobbyists who have checked and rechecked their lists of members; I have seen their propaganda, their threats of dire consequences at the polls and I have seen cowardly senators and representatives capitulate to the pressure. A million or so, or several hundred millions, are voted; a new federal agency is created and starts spending money. The personnel that gets on the payroll at the start begins immediately to look for ways to keep its jobs and the agency establishes a "liaison" with congress in order that congress can be "informed."

There are 20 or 30 boards and bureaus and commissions in the government today that were created for "temporary" purposes, but which continue to convince members of congress that unless the agency is continued thousands of persons will suffer—maybe die.

Too Much Burden Placed On Every Kind of Business

Surely, Mr. Rice has corroborated the contention that government is placing too much of a burden on every kind of business by demanding and obtaining all of these reports—daily, weekly, monthly, annually. Of my knowledge, I can point to a hundred small businesses that have had to hire extra accountants and other experts to do nothing but make out reports to the federal government—and answer correspondence from some squirt here in Washington who tells them they have not filled in the proper items on line 87, etc. It has happened to me, personally, more than once, and all there is to my office is myself and my secretary.

I imagine that farmers got a taste of this business of reporting to Washington in connection with the agricultural adjustment program. In wandering around the department of agriculture I have seen hundreds of persons checking and rechecking farm contracts, reports of agents and inspectors, county committees, etc. Those farmers who did not encounter demands for statements about this, that or the other still have something to which they can look forward, because they will get such demands sooner or later.

Like the government machine itself, I can not help puzzling as to what 135,000,000 reports mean. Of course, it can be said that it is one report for every man, woman and child in the nation, but it is not a true perspective. There are, of course, many millions of persons who make no reports to the government in Washington. That means others must make many reports.

Why So Many Different Agencies Doing Same Work?

From the standpoint of effective administration — assuming that many of the government activities are proper—why is it necessary for the government to have 11 different agencies interested in housing? Why should the departments of commerce, labor, and agriculture, as another example, be asking the same business man to make reports to each one on the same subject? Why should there be a federal deposit insurance company, a board of governors of the federal reserve system and a comptroller of the currency all concerned with one industry—banking? Why should each of these agencies have examiners or investigators, doing very much the same thing, making investigations and examinations and reports to their respective agencies? And I forgot this one: the securities and exchange commission also horns into bank management every now and then!

Aside from these types, there is the ever-present taxing authority. Now, there must be taxes and they must be collected and it must be admitted that not all taxpayers are honest. But hundreds of tax investigators are going around and around and undoubtedly they get their feet tangled up with other investigators and examiners. One wonders where the end is.

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Sun Down, Accidents Up

When the sun goes down, traffic accidents go up. More than 60 per cent of all fatal traffic accidents occur at night, the National Safety Council reports. Since about a third of the driving is done at night, it estimates, the number of traffic deaths per mile is about three times as great at night as during the daytime.

In the past seven years, night accidents have increased 60 per cent in rural districts, the report says, and only 17 per cent in cities. Adequate lighting and divided highways tend to reduce headlight glare and accidents, the council said. Some states are experimenting with new reflector buttons placed along the side of the road to show the alignment of the highway on curves, hills and other hazardous places.

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Work Is Never Vain

No work truly done, no word earnestly spoken, no sacrifice freely made, was ever in vain.—F. W. Robertson.

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What to Remember

Friendship consists in forgetting what one gives, and remembering what one receives.—Dumas.

HEADACHE?

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