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Bring Them Out!

THE NATION appeals to the President of the United States and to the American people in behalf of the anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist refugees in France. What we do for these brave men and women will be a test of our own democracy's power to act and will to win. These were the first to fight fascism and the first to fall victim to it. These were the earliest barricades of flesh and blood and heroic gesture against the tide we are now spending billions to hold back. These are the men who gave up fortune and family and career, the men who risked their lives in Italy, in Germany, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, and in Spain, in that struggle for the preservation of liberty and of humanity to which our own country is finally being aroused. The future will pay tribute to their heroism; the present cannot ignore their plight without revealing its own spiritual bankruptcy.

Those who look back on the great struggle now raging will see its beginnings not on May 10, 1940, or September 3, 1939, but in the Promethean figures of the Matteottis and the Ossietzks, in the brave workers of the Karl Marx Hof in Vienna and the dominadores of the Asturias, in the offensive of the International Brigade on the Ebro and the stubborn resistance of the people of Madrid. Many of their comrades, their survivors—professors who had the courage to say Nein instead of Heil, writers whose names will yet grace a greater Germany, intellectuals who answered Fascist taunts by proving their worth as soldiers—were trapped in concentration camps near Paris. Today we have no way of knowing whether the many camps in southern France have been opened or whether their keys will be turned over to the German and Italian invaders, as the armistice terms seem to demand. In either case hundreds of thousands face capture and death. Most desperate of all is the plight of the marked men, the leaders, the Negrins, the Heinrich Manns, the Sforzas.

The President is aware of their danger but needs strong popular support for quick action. Mexico has offered to take 200,000 of these refugees. We cannot honorably afford to do less. At the very least we can offer them transit visas and a temporary haven. Portuguese-chartered ships could be used to bring them to the New World. Without some such concrete proposal it may be impossible to prevail upon the French government to facilitate the escape of those in greatest danger. The reactionary and pro-fascist elements composing the Pétain Cabinet represent factions which have always been hostile to these refugees. But the Cabinet may well be glad to be relieved of responsibility for their maintenance and anxious not to evoke universal disgust by giving them up to the Gestapo. If we are not to be accessories to such a crime, there must be immediate action.

Escape and Appeasement

BY FRED A KIRCHWEY

WHEN I read an article like Mr. Villard's Vale-
dictory in this week's Nation I feel as if I had been transported into a dream world. It is a world created and inhabited by a considerable assemblage of good people— isolationists and pacificists, many of whom are also reformers or radicals. It is a world in which recognizable things happen: Hitler's legions conquer France by means of unspeakable methods of slaughter and terror, Jews and liberals and leftists are hounded into exile or death; rooted ways of living and feeling are torn up and discarded by a despotism that acknowledges no boundary lines. These things are set down in the record and duly deplored. But they happen at a great distance; they are our concern only if we choose to make them so.

The people who inhabit that dream world naturally choose not to be concerned. They note the all-too-obvious imperfections in the democracies which are in process of being crushed and point out, comfortably, a host of reasons why their extermination was inevitable. They also note the imperfections in our own country and urge, reasonably enough, the need for eradicating them. But they do not consider the question whether even the most nearly perfected state is secured by its virtue against the possibility of annihilation. And they stubbornly refuse to look at the hard facts which Hitler's triumph in Europe has thrown into their faces.

It frightens me to read such articles. They represent, to my mind, a danger more present than fascism. They represent a retreat from the grimmest reality that has confronted our nation in many generations, a reality so plain that one would hesitate to state it were it not for the fact that so many good people refuse to admit it. The reality is that a system of highly organized tyranny has now established its control over the continent of Europe and is attempting to impose itself on the world. France has been subjugated to the point of becoming Germany's "non-belligerent ally." The lesser states are tumbling over themselves to accommodate their political and economic life to that of the Reich. Russia is attempting to barricade its western frontier by occupying the Baltic states and, if possible, building up its strength in the Balkans; but its maneuvers look miserably ineffect-ive. It is a captive of Hitler, and it has its own fatuous policy of appeasement to thank for its present servitude. Japan is rapidly reconstructing its government on fascist lines apparently in anticipation of receiving favors from the victor.

Britain remains—supported by the empire and what goods the United States is willing and able to send. Whether Britain can survive is uncertain. The empire