

HOME AND THE CONSERVATIVES

William Gallacher

POOOR old Rab, there he was, twice ready to pass the post, in the Downing Street Handicap when a no-good gang moved the post and left him standing there utterly bewildered. All the other jockeys jammed up around him and while they were looking for the vanished finishing post, a rank outsider who was in the know, went slipping past and was proclaimed winner. Surely, said one unreliable correspondent to the woesome Rab, 'surely there never was anything the like of this in the history of racing?'. 'You are wrong in that', Rab might have answered, 'the same thing happened twice with Herb Morrison. First little Attlee slipped past him, and then "Old School Tie, Gaitskell" left him standing where the post had been. In the latter case there were 157 in the gang that ousted him, and I heard somewhere that he was alleged to have made a statement something like: "I dragged the party to the Right; expelled all who were loyal; and then the Old School Tie brigade foiled my well-laid plans".' So the new Tory motto has become 'We must preserve party unity'. As for Maudling, he was busy making sure that the gang that had 'worked the oracle' did not get themselves committed to anything that could in any way interfere with the holy practice of piling up profits.

But now let us get to the really serious side of this all too dirty piece of shuffling that has ended with a gross insult to the people of this country. Look at what they have presented us with! When he was in parliament no one paid him any particular attention. In fact, if he had not been a wealthy, very wealthy, landowner I am quite certain that he never would have been selected. But there is one thing about him that commends him to his kind—he has a

deep-seated hatred of the Soviet Union arising from the menace its example offers to all their rape-won privileges and pomp.

It was that hatred, shared by his, then, leader Chamberlain that brought upon us the Second World War. That's a pretty strong statement but, it's true! Recently he made an attempt to white wash Chamberlain in which he stated that the mistake he had made was not having recognised that Hitler was mad. What a miserable attempt at a get-out from this most despicable and craven act of Chamberlain's. What is the meaning of Munich? At the time, it was so cunningly stage-managed that many of those involved had no realisation of what had been going on. Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia constitute Czechoslovakia. Bohemia borders on Germany and the Czechs had exceptionally powerful fortification on the bordering mountains. In western Bohemia (Sudetenland) there was a considerable population of Germans. Konrad Heinlein had organised the toughs amongst these into Nazi groups, attacking and brutally beating up all known anti-Nazis. When the Czech Government tried to control these thugs, Hitler in Berlin raved at his wildest about how 'the scoundrels Benes' was persecuting 'our German brothers' in Bohemia. This was the technique that had been applied to Austria; now there arose the 'Sudeten question'.

Early in May 1938 Chamberlain was in that centre of Fascist conspiracy, Cliveden. A group of Canadian and American journalists were invited to meet him. The following day reports appeared in the Canadian and American press that in an interview, Chamberlain had expressed the opinion that the Sudetenland (Western Bohemia) should be ceded to Hitler. Several weeks later the German army marched towards the Czech frontier. The Czech Government mobilised the army and troops, and tanks thundered towards the fortifications. France declared that if Czechoslovakia was attacked she would honour her treaty and side with the Czechs; the Soviet Union made it known that their agreement with France would be honoured. If Britain had joined with France and the Soviet Union such an encirclement would have put finish to Nazi pretensions and there would, in all probability have been no Second World War. But Chamberlain and Home wanted otherwise. Even without Britain the combination was too strong for Hitler and there was nothing for him but to withdraw his troops, a bitter humiliation! Chamberlain's first trip was Berchtesgaden where, no doubt, the next step was discussed, and the next step was to get France to repudiate its alliance with Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

All the running to and fro that followed was directed towards that end. Godesburg! Hitler 'patience exhausted' handed Chamberlain a document for the latter to pass on to the Czechs: the German army to occupy Western Bohemia without a shot being fired and all fortification to be left intact to be taken over by the invading army. This unspeakably nefarious document was handed over by Chamberlain 'without *comment*' which meant that the Czech Government had better accept—or else! Then back to Britain, the next stage in the preparations. A real war scare: reserves called up, naval squadrons at battle stations, gas masks issued, preparations for food-rationing; something like panic created. The House of Commons was brought together on September 21. A packed House taut with nerves, heard Chamberlain start a long wail of how he had laboured for peace; he had not stopped trying; and he had sent, in a last effort, a letter to Hitler. In an atmosphere deliberately created, he read the letter to which scant attention was given. No sooner had he read it than there was a stir in the benches behind him; a telegram had been handed in and was being passed along. He held it for a moment in his hands. There was a silence that could be felt. Then he looked at it, turned and gazed with a hypocritical grin to his followers: 'Hitler', he told them, 'has agreed to another meeting. I must leave immediately for Munich'. Pandemonium. A surge of relief brought cheer after cheer with one certifiable Tory shouting 'Thank God for the Prime Minister'.

Off went Chamberlain and Home with 'Godspeed' from Attlee and Sinclair and general cheering. But Churchill sat in his corner seat with his jaws clamped and his brows drawn down, clearly opposed to all that was going on but realising that he would not be listened to if he made a protest. What I met with in such an effort was enough to convince him of that. Here is the letter that was sent to Hitler; a letter that shows that France had been won over:

Dear Herr Hitler, After reading your letter I feel certain that you can get all the essentials without war and without delay. I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once to discuss *arrangements for transfer* with you and representatives of the Czech Government, together with representatives of France and Italy, if you desire. However much you distrust the Prague Government's intentions, *you cannot doubt the power of the British and French Governments to see that the promises are carried out fairly and fully and forthwith.* (My emphasis in both cases.) As you know, I have stated publicly that we are prepared to undertake that they shall be so carried out.

Having deliberately prepared the way, he and Home went off to complete the betrayal of Czechoslovakia and, thereby, opened wide

the road to war. War came, but not as they had contemplated.

Now, Home has the brazen audacity to say that we will be able to talk with the Communists 'if they give up the use of force'. What impudence! Apart from the fact the Americans have bases and Polaris all over the place; apart from Suez, and our soldiers in Aden and other parts of Arabia, he himself claims to own a very considerable part of Scotland, and how does he come to possess it? Thomas Johnston, now a very respectable citizen, in his unregenerate days wrote a book entitled, *Our Noble Families*, dealing with the Scottish nobility. Murder, rape and all sorts of skull-duggery, including the basest forms of treachery.

During the past weeks there have been great celebrations, with quite a show on television in connection with the 800th Anniversary of the Paisley Abbey. On the television, the present incumbent Dr. Rogan gave a long and interesting history, leading up to the modern version of the old structure. But I am not aware that any mention has been made in all the proceedings, of its most famous incumbent, Rev. Patrick Brewster. About 130 years ago he delivered a series of Chartist sermons, from which we may take a word or two applicable to Home's ancestors. After an exposure of how the small body of exploiters robbed the people, he went on:

Yet are they the only patriots—the only lovers of freedom and humanity! This is their unceasing boast. Let us try them also by this test. Wherever the cause of freedom has been nobly contested—wherever the hopes of humanity have pointed to a glorious deliverance, upon which side have we invariably found them arrayed? . . . Their power, their wealth, and their most devoted exertions are still, as they always have been, in every quarter of the world, on the side of the oppressor, and against the oppressed.

It applied then, and it applies today, and this peculiar product of a peculiar exhibition of bourgeois democracy, who is Prime Minister, is an outstanding example of those he condemned, as this further quotation makes clear:

Cast your eyes over the land, count the number of the idlers who are each consuming the bread of a thousand families—consuming what neither their own labour, nor the labour of their fathers ever produced, but what they acquired at first by the hand of power alone.

Yes, by *force* and *fraud*! Will this relic of robber feudalism voluntarily hand back the land his forebears stole? If not, then let him be sure that I will do all in my power, as a Communist, to get the organised working class, at the earliest moment, to take back the land which properly belongs to the people.