

The bombing of Schaffhausen

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7. The citizen must in all discussions with others bear in mind that individuals are different. Nature has willed it so. No system will succeed to mould each citizen permanently into a uniform standard of perfection. The result would sooner or later be disintegration. Democracy demands from citizens not enforced, but voluntary co-operation, decency, mutual understanding and willingness to compromise. Let us beware of rigid dogmatizers and fanatics of any creed whatever.

8. The members of a democratic community must strictly watch that other members who may harbour thirst for power, are discovered and neutralized in good time. The people must instinctively distinguish between a citizen who is ready to co-operate in an elected government, and an autocrat intent upon giving free rein to his impulse. Democracy gives to its elected governors not power, but responsibility.

9. The most important thing in the State is Man, and the most important thing in man is his soul. Consequently, those measures which relate to the promotion of spiritual values should have first place. Actually it is the body, or the material side which stands in the foreground.

How should the economy in a democracy be organised? Surely in this way that to each individual the utmost spiritual and material development within the written and unwritten laws is vouchsafed, but in no case so that the State should control to the smallest detail the life of the citizen according to "scientific methods".

There is today in many circles a current against the man who earns his living by his own efforts. And yet, it is just this man, "large" or "small", who is the real fighter, who has to bear the consequences of his own actions or omissions, and who gives to the life of the community constantly a new impulse. Of course, he must not think of himself alone, but, in his own interest, all his actions and deliberations must be consistent with the welfare of the community.

This class, which includes the business man, the farmer, the doctor, the lawyer, the artist, in fact all except the functionaries of the State, constitutes the opposing force against the tendency to inflate the State apparatus. This class also includes employees who are independent of the apparatus of the State. If the national economy were to be organised on the lines of a State, or State-co-operative, then no system, however well meant, could prevent the simultaneous transfer of State functions as well as economic functions upon one and the same person, and the originally free community in which the Executive Government and Legislative control were neatly separated, would, perhaps slowly, but all the more surely, become a bureaucracy in which there would be State employees but no longer any free citizens.

Inherent in the democracy, there is apparently a certain heaviness which gets on the nerves of the impatient ones, especially in eruptive times. As against that, there is no other system which, for decades ahead, offers so much protection against mistakes of individuals and, consequently, against catastrophes which can throw whole nations into misery.

THE BOMBING OF SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Our readers will have read in the local newspapers about the unfortunate bombing, by mistake, of the Swiss town of Schaffhausen by American bombers on the 1st of April. Some more details have now come to hand. Part one of this article will inform readers of the circumstances of the bombing and the actual damage done, whereas part two is a reprint of an article which appeared in the "New York Herald Tribune" by Walter Lippman, one of America's leading columnists and commentators, who knows Switzerland very well.

Part I.

Forty persons were killed and more than fifty seriously wounded when thirty American four-motored bombers in three waves swooped out of a cloud formation

at 15,000 feet just before 11 o'clock and rained explosive and phosphorus incendiary bombs on the northeastern Swiss town of Schaffhausen. Their probable objective was the German town of Singen, about eleven miles north of Schaffhausen and an important railroad junction on the German-Italian railroad lines.

The first bombs, according to the official account, fell near the railway station of Schlatt, where the freight yards were seriously damaged. Rolling a "carpet attack" along the tracks the bombers came on to the town of Schaffhausen itself, hitting successively a porcelain factory, a rope factory, the International Watch factory, the famous Jetzler Silversmith and the Schaffhausen electricity works and then the post office. Other extensive damage occurred around the market place and behind it, where headquarters of two religious organizations and a museum were burned to the ground.

(The commander of one of the groups of Liberator bombers said that "we are terribly sorry that it happened.")

("We were simply blown off our course by a wind of higher velocity than anticipated" he said. "The boys did not know they were dropping bombs on Switzerland and a lot of them do not know it yet.")

The people of Schaffhausen grieved for their dead and tended their wounded but with stoic calm.

They knew they had been victims of a tragic miscalculation by American airmen and attributed it to the fact that their ancient city lies on the north bank of the Rhine, only three miles from Germany.

There are no hard feelings toward the United States. Americans were being treated with the utmost politeness and friendliness by police, military authorities and the population.

Material damage plus compensation for the dead and wounded is unofficially estimated by the Swiss at \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000.

Part 2. For the tragic accident in which the Swiss town of Schaffhausen was bombed by our air forces, the regret in this country will be heartfelt and universal. We cannot, alas, make any reparation which will bring the dead back to life, or even make fully good the material damage. But what can be done to show our feelings and what can be paid to restore the city and to compensate the Swiss, our people will certainly want to see done in the fullest possible measure.

It is possible to do more than that. This would be a fitting occasion for the President to order a review and reconsideration of those policies of economic warfare affecting Switzerland which many think have been carried beyond the bounds of law, reason and military necessity. The President himself cannot know, the public has no means of judging, whether the regulations do not in many cases do more harm to the Swiss than they do good to the United Nations. There are grounds for suspecting that many of them may be excessive, that over-zealous subordinates, intent on the total exercise of their powers, may often be failing to distinguish between the Swiss, who are true neutrals, and nations satellite to Germany.

Neutrality does not arouse much sympathy in nations who are desperately at war. But the neutrality of Switzerland is a very special thing, indeed unique. Only Switzerland in all of Europe has made no military concessions. Surrounded by the Fascist world, its neutrality has been much more than a policy of staying out of war. The Swiss have maintained intact their democratic liberties because they hold them dear and because their hearts are stout. That is a great contribution to mankind. Through the darkest days of the war, when Hitler seemed about to sweep all Europe before him, the moral resistance of the Swiss has reassured us that once a nation has known liberty, it will never willingly surrender it.

Their example should never be forgotten and if there is anything this government can do to express not only its regret for the Schaffhausen bombing but its appreciation of the part Switzerland has played, it should do it. It should take the risks of giving the Swiss the benefit of the doubt as between the judgment of some official here and their honest representations. We shall be amply repaid if we come out of this war with the confidence and friendship of the Swiss nation.

Let us not forget the indispensable part which Switzerland has to play in the healing of the nations. By long historical tradition Switzerland is the seat, so to speak the capital, of mankind's works of charity and of mercy. We shall need Switzerland when the war is over. It will stand there, firm and free, in a sea of misery and hatred. We shall need the Swiss because they alone perhaps will be able to go everywhere, feared by none and trusted by all.

Realizing all that, we shall be wise if, jolted by this terrible mishap, we go beyond the obvious regrets and indemnities, to larger actions which express our moral solidarity with this people.

CORDELL HULL AND THE NEUTRALS.

Mr. Cordell Hull's recent broadcast speech, the greater part of which was addressed to the neutral countries, did not give the Swiss people the impression that the criticisms and the suggestions offered by the American Secretary of State was intended for them. Our neutrality is a very rigorous principle, which cannot be interpreted, according to the flux and reflux of current events - it is valid for all times.

Just what distinguishes our neutrality from that of so many other lands? Our neutrality is no middle term between absolute neutrality and non-belligerency. Our neutrality is not occasional. It is permanent. It does not lend itself in any way nor in any sense to arrangements and shades of application and practice. Swiss neutrality is absolute, total. This is what makes its strength. Applied with perfect loyalty, it does not authorize anyone to suspect a lack of good will and determination to persevere to the end.

The Basler National Zeitung says: "We do not feel hit by these remarks. Switzerland is neutral without any kind of reservations. And we have made of our neutrality a permanent principle and as such it is recognized by the world. Moreover, it has been confirmed by the great powers in times of war. We would compromise ourselves, were we to begin listening to messages to neutrals collectively. We haven't listened to these messages, when the time came for German proclamations, when national socialist propaganda bothered itself about our conception of neutrality. We then followed calmly the path of international law, and we shall never leave this path. Law, as Germany once interpreted it, was not in Germany's favor. Neither is law, as some other power might be tempted to interpret it, when taking into account certain pressing interests, necessarily what it is claimed to be. Law is based on factors of common utility. It is created in times of certain reflection. Therefore, it must never be sacrificed to passing wartime passions. The state principle of lasting neutrality can only be established through strict fidelity to accepted obligations. Only in this way can it be kept pure. Any turning aside from this fundamental concept would bring an eternal blemish on the faith of Swiss neutrality."

With these clear principles in mind, we shall ever defend our neutrality in the face of all difficulties. In the future as in the past we shall defend it against all attacks, and unreasonable demands. The belligerents, on the other hand, will not have any occasion to regret their respect for our neutrality. Once the war shall be over, it can be seen whether it has paid to do violence to neutrality of any state. Mr. Cordell Hull tells the neutrals that their future depends upon the victory of the Allies and that, therefore, their neutrality is no longer justified. We would be more prudent and say that the future of the small states depends upon the respect of the victors towards certain principles. Whoever wants our confidence does well to make it sure by respecting the prevailing law."