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Hell-Bent for War

by

GENERAL HUGH S. JOHNSON

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY

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To
M. B.

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PREFACE

THE LEASE-LEND BILL has passed. It passed in the best tradition of free American debate. It had smashing majorities, as did also the bill for appropriations to implement it. That decision must be accepted by all who opposed it, as this writer did not; by all who thought it ought to be modified, as this writer did. All must loyally support it.

But let us not forget one thing. It was not advanced as a measure either to get us into war or to put us into a position to accept responsibility to reconstruct the world after the war. On the contrary, it was advanced as a measure to keep the war away from our shores by aiding those who, for their own reasons, are resisting its spread westward—and for that alone. That, I think, is how most people understood and supported it.

Now it is being assumed, and with a good deal of reason, that it really involves us in the war or makes such involvement inevitable. It has further been announced that its purpose was, in part, to give us a voice in the “reconstruction of the world” which

presupposes a reconquest of Europe. Mr. Roosevelt has said so and Mr. Churchill has confirmed him.

No such thing as that has been decided by popular mandate after full and free debate. There is still an opportunity and, I think, a duty to debate that and the reasons advanced to support that. I fully realize that "it is later than you think." I know how viciously this book and its author will be attacked. I know from recent experiences and also from the wisdom of our great sages. It was discussed in a recent column of mine:

"In the gentle debate on getting into war, Dr. L. M. Birkhead said of the America First Committee 'whether its members know it or not and whether they like it or not [it] is a Nazi Front . . . a Nazi transmission belt,' with an intimation that it is also anti-Semitic. Columnist John Flynn resented that as a 'smear.' Now the editorial page of the New York *Herald Tribune* says, 'Herr Hitler's approving citation by name . . . of General Robert E. Wood . . . lends a certain added point to the brisk interchange . . . here is Adolf Hitler himself, head Nazi of them all, using their [America First's] acting chairman's name for exactly that purpose.' The word

'purpose' here refers to 'feeding the American people the vicious arguments of Adolf Hitler.' The editorial continues in part 'they [members of America First] should, in short, do something positive to prevent their being used in that way.'

"What Hitler said was: 'The fact that the American General Wood before the investigating committee of the American Senate testified that, as early as 1936, Churchill told him Germany was getting too strong again and must be destroyed in a new war, established firmly in history the real responsibility for present developments.'

"The fact is, of course, that Allied indifference and the vast offensive German rearmament beginning not in 1936 but in 1933 and not what Churchill told Wood, or any inference therefrom, is responsible for 'present developments.' But as for Wood, quoting Churchill, being in any sense a 'transmission belt for Nazi argument'—the mere assertion of such a thing shows how far hysteria has blacked out fairness in this country.

"Churchill didn't tell Wood any such opinion in confidence. In the most remarkably prophetic speeches ever made in Parliament, from November 1932 to the beginning of this war, many of

them published in his book *While England Slept*, he foretold exactly what has happened and urged England to all-out armament as the only means to stop Germany. He shouted it from the rooftops. I am glad to repeat that from the very first issue of this column, March 15, 1935, and continuously since, exactly the same warning has been repeated here with exactly the same prescription for our safety.

“Robert E. Wood, able soldier with a most distinguished record in the service of his country, would not, and this very printed record discloses on its face that he did not, advance any argument to favor Hitler. That record also shows the cruel twisting of this flimsy incident to discredit a good man.

“Mark Twain wrote of what he called the rule for a million years ahead. ‘A few fair men on the other side will argue and reason against the war with speech and pen and at first will have a hearing and be applauded but it will not last long; the others will out-shout them. . . . Before long you will see this curious thing: the speakers stoned from the platform and free speech strangled by hordes of furious men who in their secret hearts are still at one with those stoned

speakers but do not dare say so. And now the whole nation, pulpit and all, will take up the war cry and shout itself hoarse and mob any man who ventures to open his mouth; and presently such mouths will cease to open.'

"George Washington had something to say on the same subject, in his farewell address: 'Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another causes those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.'

"It can happen here. It happened in 1917. It seems very clear that now it has happened again."

Just the same, a man of some little experience in these matters will have a right to discuss them at least until we really go to war or the censorship closes down. This book may beat both guns—but I doubt it. It is a brief critical review of the arguments and emotions by which we have been driven thus far "hell-bent for war." It is one last critical look before we leap. That at least is justified.

Main

HELL-BENT FOR WAR

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Chapter I

WHAT GOES ON HERE?

EVERY survey of public opinion still indicates a majority of about eighty-five per cent against our engaging in bloody war on foreign shores. Yet there is hardly any opposition to our sending aid at least to Great Britain. Too much aid to a belligerent is not neutrality and yet, even in the strictest construction of international law, there is much aid that can be given without unavoidable entrance as an ally. A non-belligerent can lend money, it can sell ships and guns and planes and munitions to either side for cash or credit. There is no important American opposition to our doing any of these things. Certainly there has been none from me.

It is also true that the old laws of war are pretty generally in the ash-can. Wars frequently are no longer declared. They are started and go on without any declaration. Japan has been assaulting China for several years. Since there has been no declaration of war, even our government did not officially

recognize that one of the greatest land campaigns in history was actually a war in Asia. Hitler and Mussolini on the one side (as Nazis and Fascists) fought Stalin (as a Communist) on the other in Spain and none of these countries admitted that there was a war. English ships were sunk by Italian and perhaps by German submarines in that war and yet England didn't enter it.

Declarations of war change the legal relationship not merely between the parties to it but also between them and all so-called "neutrals." We don't recognize the Sino-Japanese War, perhaps because we do not wish to suffer the trade and other restrictions which would follow.

Our own hands are not too clean. Within my own military service we have invaded Mexico twice without any declaration of war. Soldiers and sailors on both sides were killed—pitifully in Mexico, where soldiers were shot out of their saddles and "by order" did not retaliate. It was practical but not legal war. We have invaded Nicaragua and Santo Domingo and held them under subjugation for long periods of time.

This poses some strange questions which arise to plague us now. Under our Constitution only Congress can declare war but, over and over again in the past, Presidents have engaged in undeclared war

without even a nod to Congress or the popular will to war.

How far goes this power of one man—the President—to engage us in a war without the consent of either the Congress or the people of the United States? I don't know. It is one of the blind spots in our Constitutional system.

Take this question of convoys which will strike us between the eyes, perhaps before this book appears. It has already been urged by the old William Allen White Committee, which forced the Lease-Lend Bill in its final form by high-power publicity. If there were a danger of illegal interference with our legitimate commerce on the high seas, such as that Barbary piracy which actually afflicted our ships in our early days in the Mediterranean, there is no doubt whatever that the President could order the navy to protect it. That is what our navy is for and some of its most glorious acts have been performed in that duty—as in our undeclared war with France when the *Constellation* captured the *Insurgente*, to refresh your memory.

But war, whether declared or undeclared, involves the question of blockades, and blockade has taken on new meanings—ascended into the air and dived beneath the sea. No nation not at war ever claimed the right, with warships, to crash a belligerent's line

of blockading warcraft to convoy its goods and still escape the status of a belligerent itself. To do so would be to assume the role of an aggressor in naval war. This is our greatest danger of war just now. The Committee to defend Britain has already urged it. The advocates of all-out intervention are clearly for it, and they seem to have a great influence with the Administration. If the President assumes, as Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, the right to do this, the effect, if not the purpose, will be immediate war and war whether or not the Congress declares it or the people desire it.

Once thus committed, by the will of a single man, there can be no drawing back on the part of any one of us. Once the flag is engaged, criticism must cease. Every face must turn against the foe; war will have come. Because I believe we are headed straight and furiously in this direction, I say we are "hell-bent for war." There are considerations that we should ponder well.

This I think is true: No President could force this country into war against the will of a majority of its people. If he did so, he would be responsible for such disunity that our effectiveness would be greatly weakened. But there are two ways to try to get such an emotional people as ours into a war. One

is to try to force them. Another, and a much slicker and more clever way, is to try to propagandize, fool and lead them. It is not the former but the latter that I fear. It is the danger of that which this book seeks to examine, and, with that danger, some of the sleazy arguments that have created it and some of the consequences this incitation of public hysteria—not yet for war, but for “methods short of war”—are almost certain to entail.

Today we have two pieces of conflicting legislation—the Neutrality Acts and the almost unlimited authorities of the Lease-Lend Act. Under the Neutrality Acts and the President’s own proclamations in accordance therewith, American merchant ships could not venture into proclaimed war-zones at sea. Would the President violate the law and his own proclamations by permitting this and further violate it by naval escorts? Surely there is no authority, even in our border-line precedents, for him to use our navy to escort British ships loaded with American-made munitions through the German air and submarine blockade of the British Islands. Would he do that? Not in the present temper of public opinion. But he is now in the best position imaginable to change that temper by permitting or invoking a series of acts that could raise the resentment and hysteria of our

emotional people to the pitch of battle. Indeed I think he is in a position, as I shall try later to show, where even he would be powerless to prevent exactly that result.

If either method, escorting American ships into danger zones or convoying British ships, were attempted and the Germans interfered with such voyages—as surely they would—and our navy resisted—as surely it would if it were charged by the President with that duty—there would be a deadly encounter between American and Nazi naval and air forces and we should not only be hell-bent for war but in it to our very eyebrows.

Some of our war-minded people say one thing to that and others another. Some say: “Not necessarily. We should keep our shirts on. Even if an American naval vessel were sunk, it need no more mean war than the destruction by Japan of the U. S. gunboat *Panay* in China or the sinking of British craft in the Spanish unpleasantness.” This is surely shooting craps with destiny at very short odds. Our people are not going to see many American naval units sunk, no matter what the circumstances, and not want to fight about it. I would. “Remember the *Maine*.”

Others say: “So what? We elect to help Britain. Germany elects to stop us—the immovable force meets

the irresistible object and the war is on. Let it come."

Which is exactly what this extremist group wants. It has only recently revealed its hand. During the campaign it restrained itself with difficulty, knowing that an advocacy of outright war would have been utterly repulsive to the American people. It restrained itself while both Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Willkie (who now has proved to be only a sort of Democratic Trojan horse in the Republican Party) campaigned on a slogan of "Aid to the Allies by methods short of war but more than mere words." Both these politicians pledged a determination to keep our country out of bloody war. They both always said, "Methods short of war." Now both, with little explanation or comment, have dropped the "methods short of war" reservation. They are both for "all means necessary to defeat Hitler." Of course, "all means" includes war.

Thus far have we come toward the brink of bloody war. | We have come against the will of most of our people. | They have been fooled by slogans. They have been asked for support of "methods short of war" and have gladly given it. But that consent has been used to cajole from them authority and powers to act which may not be "short of war"—but could

be war itself. A minority made up of clever people have shown a willingness to place us in an iron clutch of circumstance from which we could hardly hope to escape without engagement in the worst mortal conflict that ever ensanguined this earth. If this is their willingness, would they ever stop short of war? Would a fish ever not swim, a duck fail to float, or an impassioned fool not return to his folly?

At this point it is necessary to make my own position clear. The weakness of some Congressional and other leaders in the opposition is the utter diversity of opinion and doctrine, ranging all the way from sincere advocates of pacifism and non-resistance, to panderers of partisan politics and men of more subtle and sinister design—Communists and worse. Several of the Senatorial leaders of this opposition have voted against appropriations for every advance in American defensive military and naval armament for many years.

My own position is and for many years has been simply this: Terrific destructive forces—Naziism, Fascism and Communism—are abroad in the world. We could be strong enough to keep them out of this hemisphere but not strong enough to police the Eastern Hemisphere. We are not strong enough to keep them out of this hemisphere unless we convert our boundless potential resources into an impregnable

defensive armament on land and sea and in the air. There is no precise definition of what is the "Western Hemisphere" but the words are used here to include the two Americas and their natural offshore strategic outposts.

In this preparatory effort we should encourage and aid every nation, such as Britain, which stands between us and these sinister forces, but we cannot afford to depend at the last on any other nation or on any force but the mailed strength of our own right arm and the valor, fidelity, resourcefulness and patriotism of our own people. Nor can we, in return for what we call their contribution to our defense, so far entangle their fate with ours that, if they fail, every consideration of American honor and of faith in promises requires us to fight over their dead bodies. We can aid other nations wherever their interests are parallel with ours. We should never be put in a position of principal reliance on them for our own defense.

Europe is a shambles of nations which relied for their protection upon strength other than their own. France encouraged the little nations of the Cordon Sanitaire—Poland, Austria, Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia—to rely on French arms and she relied on their arms. Britain relied on the French Army and France relied

on the British Navy. Where are those nations now—excepting only England? And where are Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg and Norway? “Gone with the wind.”

We must never forget also that dependence, in war, on another nation, amounting to or approximating an alliance, creates mutual obligations—entwines our fate with hers. We are bound to support her wherever she is threatened, whether it is to our interest or directly contrary thereto—whether it strengthens our defense or weakens it. In this case, we would have to support a war which we did not start, the course of which we could not control, and the effect of which might be our own bankruptcy and ruin.

Aid to gallant Britain as part of our defense? Certainly in enlightened self-interest and up to two certain, rigid and hard-bitten limits: first, that it does not suck us into the maelstrom of war for her in either Europe or Asia and, second, that it does not impair the swift accomplishment of all-out and dependable American military, naval and air defense in this hemisphere. Aid to Britain? Yes, but thus far and not one inch farther.

The real question of whether we are “hell-bent for war” is therefore strictly one of degree. If America is to enter into mutual obligations, express or im-

plied, which amount to alliance, and we are to take the responsibility to defend Britain wherever she is threatened and to do "whatever [she thinks] is necessary to defeat Hitler," then we are not only "hell-bent for war" but *in* war to the uttermost. If, on the other hand, it is our purpose to lend only such aid as helps to interpose obstacles in the direct line between Hitler and our own interests and to do so without ourselves injecting our armed forces of land, sea and air into the conflict, then there is much which we have done, are doing and can continue to do, that is justified in prudent statesmanship and yet preserves our independence, our greatest defensive strength and our greatest hope for peace and prosperity in the future.

This is the difference between my own stand and that of the "all-aid-to-Britain-which-is-necessary-to-defeat-Hitler" boys. They seem to care little whether it impairs our own hemisphere defense and to care even less whether it involves us in foreign wars that we would not otherwise dream of seeking. I admire their enthusiasm and their brave spirit but I pray to God that we may not be sucked into their hair-brained hysteria—hell-bent for war.

I shrink from using too many perpendicular pronouns but, in this case, it is absolutely necessary to

state my own record, because pro-war propaganda has gone so far that it is almost impossible in the East, at least, to talk in this fashion without being accused of being anti-British, pro-Hitler and much worse. (To be what you think is pro-American rather than pro-British seems to be the darkest sin of all.)

Just as an example of the sort of thing I mean, there appeared recently in a Washington newspaper an attack on all those who oppose our bloody involvement. It recalled King Solomon's judgment about cutting the baby in two and giving each claimant mother half. It said that "all such non-interventionist writers as Hugh Johnson are of the bloody faith of the false mother—willing to assent to a decision which meant the murder of a living child"—the "decision" being a determination not to be honeyfuggled into war.

It then attacked their "moral integrity and human decency" and said that "those who are willing to connive at this proposed murder of the world are no fit leaders of the American nation." It named other names and of me it said: "Gen. Hugh Johnson who believes that world freedom is not worth fighting for . . ." It is perhaps an error even to dignify this incident by this reference. I do so only to take

it as a type and example of what intimidation is being attempted in our present hell-bent plunge toward war.

My record speaks for itself but, for the sake of further interest in the book by strangers, perhaps I ought to state it. I had some part in the mobilization of both American man-power and industry in 1917-1918. I served a fair fraction of a life-time in the army, mostly with troops and subject to any call of any commander, and passed through all grades from cadet to Brigadier General—Deputy Provost Marshal in the creation of the 1917 Selective Draft, Chief of Army Purchase and Supply, and War Department member of the War Industries Board in the first World War mobilization of industry. In 1918, I commanded an infantry brigade embarked for France when the armistice was signed. I wrote into the 1933 Recovery Act complete authority for the President to use those billions of dollars to make work by doing exactly what Hitler was doing—motorize and mechanize the army and increase and modernize the navy and air force. Most of it was used for raking leaves.

In 1934, as Administrator of NRA, I called attention in a widely publicized speech to what Hitler was doing in persecution of the Jews and preparation

to dominate Europe and did it with at least enough effect to result in an official diplomatic protest from the German government.

In 1935 my very first column (March 15) called the turn precisely on what Hitler was doing to reverse the safety and balance of power in Europe provided by the Treaty of Versailles, and the inevitable result of British and French complacency in not stopping him when they could have done so with absolutely no danger and practically no effort. More than one hundred issues of that column over the almost six years of its existence and at every turning point have warned of the terrible march of European events, their inevitable conclusion, our own utter inadequacy in defense, the necessary steps to repair that lack and, in default of that, the coming of the present peril—warnings with at least as much accuracy as those of the Prophet Isaiah.

For example and for the sake of the record, that column of March 15, 1935, is worth reproducing here:

“Hitler’s flaming action is the most fateful news in years. It was inevitable. Up in that Teutonic corner of Europe has lived a fighting race that has been permanently licked by nobody

since the first word of recorded history—‘down’ often, but ‘out,’ never. Augustus, the greatest of the Caesars, sent Varus up there to do it and all he got out of it was the worst trimming ever handed a Roman general and a hairbreadth escape from destruction of the Empire. That ended the Roman attempt at subjugation.

“Charlemagne tried it and decimated those early Heines. They were on his back almost before he could turn around. Frederick the Great lost for them ‘all save honor,’ only to come back as the most threatening military force in Europe. Napoleon trounced them brilliantly and himself invented a limitation of armaments to keep them down. But out of Prussia came the idea of the ‘nation in arms,’ or universal conscription—a direct product of Napoleon’s own limitations on German arms. It drove Bonaparte to Elba and St. Helena. Sixty years later it almost destroyed France. A century later it endangered the whole world.

“I am not approving it. I am only stating a plain record of two thousand years of human experience. We ourselves helped to prove in blood and treasure that there are no supermen—German or otherwise—but that did not change one of

the most obvious facts in human history—that the Germans are a fighting people and that nothing will remove their threat of force save a threat of greater force.

“Just two things have kept the peace of Europe in the past few years—one was the British fleet and the other a potential one hundred French Divisions fully equipped. Modern war on land requires a big and efficient modern industry. The Germans have a much better one than the French. Today I think the French Army with its allies could march from one end of Europe to the other—but not after the Germans rearm with modern equipment. Fully equipped, they would be a military nation far superior to the French and, on the slightest provocation, or no provocation at all, could bring down on the world a new 1914 or worse.

“This mad move of Hitler’s starts catastrophe on its way. From his barbarous persecution of the Jews and his ruthless murder of his political opponents, the world knows that he stops at nothing because of ethics, mercy or humanity and he certainly would not be stopped at a political boundary by so slight a thing as the peace of the world.

“If the past twenty-one years have not given us sense enough to keep out of that mess, there is no hope for western civilization. But there are some things we should do—and do them with the vim, vigor and vivacity of a man whose house is threatened by a vast conflagration. We should immediately pass the pending legislation to take the profit out of war and to provide for the mobilization of our wealth, property, and industry as well as of our man power in any great threat to our peace. We should get our State Department to work on whatever is necessary to make instantly clear exactly what are the rights and duties of absolute neutrality. If we have any engagements or commitments, commercial or official, that can possibly get our feet caught in that rapidly-closing bear trap, we ought to rid ourselves of them at once.”

England and France, very probably with the distinct encouragement of our government through the representations of Mr. Bullitt and the concurrent utterances of President Roosevelt, thought that they could count on us for support. In such circumstances they declared war in September 1939 because Hitler proceeded to enforce his demand for the return of the

overwhelmingly German City of Danzig and some methods of alleviating the gross absurdity of the Polish Corridor. They declared war after violating the written obligations of France and the tacit obligations of England to protect all the countries of the so-called "Cordon Sanitaire"—a military alliance of smaller countries surrounding Germany. My column then remarked upon this hideous error in timing and predicted the precise result of this turning of Hitler's face from East to West, throwing him into an immediate partnership with Russia, and the utter inability of both England and France to protect either themselves or the nations they had thrown to the wolves, including Poland—which they thus induced to suicide—and again called attention to our own complete military helplessness.

At every stage—from the reluctance of England to join France to repulse Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland, to France's reluctance to help England when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia—my column called the turn and predicted the result. In a radio address two days before Hitler marched into Poland, I warned of the certainty of that invasion. Every time B. M. Baruch came home from Europe after conferences with Mr. Churchill who was then making the astonishing record of warnings which he afterward published

in *While England Slept*—when Baruch returned, year after year, and reported with alarm all these tendencies, weighing with them, from the greatest knowledge and experience of any American, our own total and inexcusable industrial, military, naval and aerial inadequacy to deal with the growing danger every time my column emphasized and underlined what I knew from intense experience and current information to be the absolute accuracy and cogency of Baruch's reports.

It is somewhat more than painful, after such a record, to find men who as leaders were preaching through all this fatal period but remaining stubbornly blind to the greatest danger on earth—to find them now beating the war-drums for immediate unprepared involvement in a volcanic crater about which they have been so ignorant and, from some rarefied atmosphere of assumed intellectual perfection, condemning as traitors or idiots—or worse—others who saw and warned of it for six years and now say, in the interests of America alone, “Wait, Watch, Listen and Prepare.” We are suddenly hell-bent, all unready, for war, and this is the type of leadership that is bending us.

If they were so much at fault in military judgment through all these years, why should they now be

deemed infallible in that regard or suffered to condemn others not so obtuse as "appeasers," ignoramuses and worse? Since they were the slumbering sentinels of our crumbling safety, if not the architects of our present danger, I feel justified in at least questioning some of their judgments, arguments and reasons, and especially this belligerent and unstudied bolt "hell-bent for war."

What goes on here? That's all this book wants to ask.

Chapter II

IS BRITAIN FIGHTING OUR WAR?

A RECENT *New York Times* dispatch from London summarized the British attitude toward us in some such way as this: "You—not we—insist that we are fighting your war. You say that, precisely as we hired and sent the Hessians to break George Washington and your Revolution, you are hiring us to defend you against a real and dangerous threat by the common enemy. You are hiring us by furnishing us with weapons—ships, planes, tanks, guns and munitions—and by promising us money and credit. Well, if that is so, we aren't getting our pay. It is up to you not only to pay for but also to deliver the goods—not on New York docks but here in England—to force them through Hitler's air and submarine blockade."

We have decided to pay for them but this "delivery" business is something else again.

Of course, as has been explained, it can't be done without involving us in total war. But if I had be-

lieved and said that Britain is "fighting our war," I wouldn't know how to answer that argument. In fact I would be ashamed to try. If Britain is fighting our war—defending our shores—then there is no excuse for our not engaging in total war on, under and over the land and sea—and doing it tomorrow. If that is true, our failure to fight is the most pusillanimous chapter in American history.

That British argument is correct from another angle. I can't recall any English official urging that they are "fighting our war." A Chinese, Mr. Soong, said the other day that China is fighting our war, but no Briton, to my knowledge, has said it. It has been said plenty of times but always by American neck-stickers-out on our Eastern seaboard. These people are more pro-British than the British. Their pronouncements haunt the radio ether waves. They punctuate the Eastern metropolitan press like the thrumming of a Sioux war-drum. They lose no opportunity to appear on the hustings not intoning as brave old Cato did, "My voice is still for war," but, well-knowing the eighty-five per cent American opposition to war and also the unspoken deception of the phrase, they begin by saying, "My voice is still for 'methods short of war.'"

When a man insists on effective aid by "methods

short of war" to a country which he claims is "fighting our war," he is convicted out of his own mouth of one of two great evils. Either he is urging on his fellow Americans a cowardly course of permitting mercenaries to defend our liberties where he is unwilling to risk his own life, or he is employing a subterfuge. He doesn't dare disclose his own purpose, which is war. So he seeks, step by concealed step, to draw a great peaceful country which is opposed to war-involvement into a situation from which it cannot retreat without open war.

I couldn't feel comfortable under this philosophy. To me it seems either cowardice and national dishonor, a poltroon intent to sacrifice the blood and flesh of Englishmen to save the blood and flesh of Americans—or it is Satanic guile, a kind of national entrapment, a failure frankly to disclose a purpose to force a war, when the people intend no war, but nevertheless to force war upon them by entangling their feet in a situation where no escape from war is possible.

In this modern sloganeering day, when life is too complex for the average layman to think things through and the truth which he is allowed to hear is too fragmentary to permit him to form his own sound judgments, the constant repetition of a lie has become

the most frequently used and successful weapon of the totalitarian propagandist. Both Hitler and Mussolini have openly discussed, approved and flagrantly used this method—which hasn't been hard for some of our most headlong interventionists to understand. "Britain is fighting our war" is the slogan that they repeat most frequently. For the reasons just stated it is as fateful as the drums of doom. For if they can repeat it often enough to make our people unthinkingly accept it—as they sometimes accept an advertising slogan—there goes your old ball game. We are in it in the full sense of Private Mulvaney's "bloody war and a sickly season—North, East, South and West."

Most of the movies are controlled by men avid for war and they reek with war propaganda. The principal radio systems are similarly controlled and it is as hard as for a camel to enter a needle's eye to get continuously on the air with anything but pro-British radio propaganda. All such "independent" and "impartial" radio reporters, commentators and editors as H. V. Kaltenborn, Raymond Gram Swing, Dorothy Thompson and Gabriel Heatter are constantly pumping into the great still pool of public opinion most reckless incitements to a pro-British war. Some of the most influential newspapers are in similar hands. To my knowledge they have strongly influenced

Mr. Wendell Willkie's utterances. He has recently said that in spite of powerful pressures during the campaign he remained true to his interventionist views. What he told me during the campaign was that interventionist pressure had been so powerful that, in spite of his non-interventionist convictions, he had to be careful of his words.

All this is a clever use of a small community of influence by sincere Americans of the fifty per cent variety rather than a conspiracy, but that doesn't make it any less effective—or, as I believe, less dangerous. This leading by the nose of American public opinion to the opposite of its own convictions and interests is one of the most expert pieces of propaganda in all the records of publicity—and, from the American standpoint, one of the most evil.

All this dangerous publicity strength has given some commentators of contrary opinion pause, and will continue to do so in increasing degree until we get the concentration camps working. It gives me no pause and will give me none until I am silenced by superior authority.

The crux of this whole situation—the question of whether we are to finance and engage bloodily in a new World War to the probable total bankruptcy and possible military and naval humiliation of the

United States—is the truth or falsity of the slogan “Britain is fighting our war.”

The statement is frequently made that the Monroe Doctrine has depended on the presence of the British Navy in the Atlantic. It is true that the Monroe Doctrine suited British purposes when it was enunciated. It is equally true that, from the time it was published until now, it has been challenged four times.

One was the seizure of the Falkland Islands by Great Britain. A second time was the advancement of British claims through obscure rights of timber-cutting to obtain what is now British Honduras. A third was British acquiescence or even assistance in the French occupation of Mexico when our backs were to the wall in the Civil War. The fourth was an outrageous British insistence on taking away from Venezuela part of the mouth of the Orinoco River, which President Cleveland prevented only by outright threat of armed resistance.

It is quite clear why each of these attempts was made although the Monroe Doctrine had received such support from Britain. The Falkland Islands control the western hemisphere route around Cape Horn. British Honduras controls what we have for decades thought would be our alternative inter-ocean route through a new Nicaraguan Canal. Control

of the Orinoco River is control of the water route to most of the interior of the northern half of South America. A hand in the occupation of Mexico coupled with Britain's own strategic island possessions in the Caribbean Sea would govern the eastern entrance to the proposed Panama routes between the oceans. The Mexican business also was part of a dark dream, as old as Aaron Burr, to split the United States on the Mason and Dixon Line and create a competing slave Confederacy south to Panama.

What was behind our own undeclared wars which invaded Mexico twice—once at Vera Cruz and once through Columbus, New Mexico, into Chihuahua—including the astonishing orders given Pershing not to capture Villa as he could have done any day? The answer probably never will be made clear. Neither will the stark abandonment of Woodrow Wilson's campaign promises for American preferences in Panama Canal tolls as no "mess of molasses to catch flies" nor the unexplained hold-up of these two American thrusts in Mexico. But there is no doubt that part of these mysteries were British intrusions into the military and naval area of the two Americas.

"Britannia rules the waves." She naturally rules them in her interest first and ours second. To say that is no slap at her. There is not, and there never

has been, any altruism among nations. No government has ever conducted its affairs in the interest of any people other than its own—except on certain occasions when Uncle Sap has done so—as he is being euchred into doing now. But Uncle would still do well to respect the words of his own father, George Washington, when he said good-by:

“It is folly for one nation to look for disinterested favors to another . . . it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character . . . by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater folly than to expect from, or calculate upon, real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.”

British interest in America, including the Monroe Doctrine, is obviously the same interest that has urged her to control every critical point on the ocean lanes of the whole round globe—Gibraltar, Malta, the Suez, Aden, Singapore, Hong Kong, Capetown, the Falkland Islands, positions controlling both the Pana-

manian and Nicaraguan routes across the American Isthmus, Halifax, the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and the British Isles themselves. It is the most complete network of key naval bases on the surface of the globe. We do not envy England their possession. We are glad that she has them. We should understand her desire to keep them all. But to remark of her far-flung strategy to keep them all now, "England is fighting our war," is just too much for prudent American consumption.

We are vitally interested in seeing that her key-points in this hemisphere do not fall into hands more hostile to us than hers, but the idea that there is any such community of interest as would raise an obligation of honor in us to die for dear old Dong Dang in Asia, be slain for Singapore or Suez, or fight to preserve her retention of most of Africa and a large part of Asia with their subject and miserable peoples, is plain baloney, as this book will later prove.

There is a disposition now to regard Washington's advice about the inherent selfishness of nations as obsolete. Yet we have suffered grievously by neglecting it. We intervened in the last World War and gave Britain and her allies all they asked of blood and of treasure by the billions. It is not too much to say that we turned overwhelming defeat for them into

accomplished victory. For this we were accused of doing too little too late and were then reviled for seeking repayment of our loans. In this revilement Uncle Sap became Uncle Shylock and even Mr. Winston Churchill, according to the Chicago Federation of Labor's *Federation News*, said in 1936 to William Griffin, New York inquirer: "Legally we owe this (war debt) to the United States but logically we don't, and this because America should have minded her own business and stayed out of the World War. If she had done so the Allies would have made peace with Germany in the spring of 1917, thus saving over a million British, French, American and other lives and preventing the subsequent rise of Fascism and Naziism."

I don't hold this against Mr. Churchill. He is the greatest man of our generation and I am not sure that he is not one of the two or three greatest products of the Anglo-Saxon race in either Britain or America—the "either or" being used advisedly since his mother, we are proud to say, was an American. But Mr. Churchill is a realistic advocate for his own country—first, last and all the time. He should be. She has had none greater. But there should be some advocates for our own country too. Mr. Churchill would be the first to credit an American who is such

an advocate, as he would be the first, in his own heart, to despise either the intelligence or the patriotism of one who isn't—and there must be many who aren't, on his list.

On all these considerations, and many more, I have been unable to persuade myself that “Britain is fighting our war.” Britain is fighting her own war. She made hideous errors in timing it and preparing for it but the facts remain that her principal fight is to retain her dominant Empire position with her own kinsmen and also over black, brown and yellow, conquered and subject peoples in three continents.

This is not to argue that they would not be probably better off in her hands than in those of nations which would like to replace her. But that is not our business and to expand the proposition into a declaration that, in this case, “Britain is fighting our war” is nothing less than absurd.

Where our interests run parallel with those of Britain—as they do in the preservation of the British fleet in the Atlantic and the exclusion of other powers from it—it is the part of hardheaded common sense to assist her within limits already discussed, but only on a realistic rejection of any “Britain is fighting our war” slogan. In the first place it is not true, and in the second place you can't utter such mendacious

nonsense and preserve your self-respect if you do not favor an alliance with her and declaration of all-out war against Germany tomorrow.

An equally insupportable dogma runs something like this: "England supported the Monroe Doctrine from its inception and the only thing that has preserved it since has been the presence of the British fleet in the Atlantic."

England acceded to the Monroe Doctrine because the Holy Alliance which took over the ruins of Napoleon's Empire was threatening to restore to the European monarchy of Spain all her revolted colonies in the Americas—from Mexico (which then included California and a good fifth of what is now the United States) south to Cape Horn. Through the centuries when Spain had those colonies she was England's principal and most dangerous enemy. Of course England didn't want to see them reconquered. But was that for love of the United States?

Another absurdity about this dictum that we owe the Monroe Doctrine to British beneficence is that, as earlier related, the Monroe Doctrine has been challenged only four times and, in at least three, England was the direct challenger—in the Falkland Islands, in Honduras and in Venezuela. The fourth time was in the joint occupation of Mexican ports during our

Civil War which resulted in the attempt by the French to establish a Mexican Empire under Maximilian. In this England was an original party.

Passing this up entirely, the assertion that only the British fleet has protected the Monroe Doctrine during all these years could be sufficiently answered by the query, "Against whom?" Not only in the Revolution but in the War of 1812, the American Navy gave a sufficient account of itself and, from the latter date to this good day, what sea power, except perhaps England, could have successfully challenged us on these coasts? Not any. Only one tried, the Spanish Navy off Santiago, and not a single ship escaped. There simply is no truth in this assertion, and why Americans should make it against the interests of America is a little difficult to understand. We have protected the Monroe Doctrine by reliance upon our own strength alone, and the principal if not the only challenger was Great Britain.

Much weight has been given recently to the "friendliness" of the British squadron in Manila Bay when Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet there. There was not enough German naval strength there to have affected the outcome of the Battle of Manila Bay. The small British fleet was "friendly" but no "incident" occurred. Of course the British didn't want

to see Germany seize this strong point on the Asiatic littoral. But as George Washington warned and as is always the case, there is no altruism among nations. The incident is insignificant and has, on the dread subject we are discussing, no contribution of value whatever.

Some of the most absurd statements have been made by Anglophiles, as, for example, that in 1790 the British lease-loaned us guns from Halifax for the defense of Charleston against the French! In 1790 the French Revolution was at its height, Britain had not yet released all American territory won in the Revolution, and was practically at war with France.

When our interests have paralleled those of the British we have supported them—and they us. When the contrary has been the case, the contrary has been the course of action. We fought two wars with them and perhaps the only reason we didn't fight a third, when they harassed us in every way possible during our Civil War and the ruling British class was avid to see our nation torn asunder, was because Abraham Lincoln said that "one war at a time was enough" for his administration.

In that war they supplied the enemies of the Union, helped by outfitting and furnishing crews for Confederate vessels to drive our commerce off the seas,

and encouraged every possible embarrassment to our embattled government.

It isn't pleasant to write in this way about a nation, a government and a cause with which we all have sympathy. Indeed it is so unpleasant that it would be impossible if it were not for the fact that very influential people, who are getting away with it, and seem to be able to see every point of view except the American, rest their whole case on two false slogans: "Britain is fighting our war" and "Only the British fleet has protected us and the Monroe Doctrine for more than a hundred and twenty years."

It simply isn't true and if I thought it were true I would be rampant for war tomorrow. (Britain is fighting her own war.) It is a war in part for continued imperial dominion over weaker and exploited, subdued and subject peoples. To the extent that her interest parallels ours, I say, "Support her." To the extent that support of her butters our insufficient strength too thin over too wide an area and builds not our defense in our two bordering oceans but dissipates it far abroad, let us say, "America first, last and all the time."

Chapter III

MACHINES? BLOOD? OR BOTH? AND WHY?

AT ABOUT this stage of the debate the question is usually asked, "How could we get into the shooting part of the war? When? Where? The British don't want our troops—only our tools. Mr. Churchill has said so. This is a war of machines—not men."

A man would be a fool to attempt specific prophecy in this wholly unpredictable war. Of one thing we can be sure: Two gigantic powers, Germany and Britain, are engaged in a struggle to the death for world dominion. Two more, Japan and Russia, are standing on the side-lines awaiting the exhaustion of either or both. All belligerents have shown that they stop at nothing—blockade, starvation of innocent and helpless people in conquered countries, ruthless air attacks, maiming and murdering indiscriminately on both sides, wide indifference to the so-called laws of civilized warfare, treaties or international codes on both sides.

It doesn't stand to reason that a fifth great power,

like ours, can enter that kind of a ruthless shindy giving warlike aid to one side that we hope, and it hopes, will crush and destroy the other, and expect to continue it without encountering some effort to stop us and save itself by the threatened nation. Before 1914 it was thought to be axiomatic that you couldn't transport and supply an army of a million men across an ocean. As late as 1917 it was considered impossible that we should fight importantly in France. Where will we fight now? I don't know. Perhaps on the high seas to prevent the destruction of millions of dollars' worth of munitions for which we have paid. A ton of munitions on the docks of Liverpool is of vital value to the British. A ton of munitions in the hands of our troops is a great aid to our defense. But a ton of munitions at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean helps nobody but Hitler. If there are great losses of this precious American-bought stuff, how long will it be before our own public is going to ask, "Are we spending these billions just to sink them in the sea?" The Aid-Britain Committee is already saying that. It doesn't reside in human nature to refrain from saying that. Perhaps it is too late to talk about it but no nation can be gun-moll to a trigger-man in such ruthless war of extermination and expect to keep long out of the line of fire.

The situation in northwest Africa is obscure. If through some sort of collaboration with the Vichy government, which seems more probable every day, the Germans should get Dakar and be closer to Brazil than we are by sea and air, how long would it be before the pressure here became overwhelming to "carry the war to Africa"?

Not a few of our leading military and naval experts—professionals and amateurs alike—are already urging not only that but also our seizure of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands, and some of my fellow columnar kibitzers since the Lease-Lend Bill are arguing openly for that. There have been many assurances that we are going to send no men across to "bleed on foreign shores." We couldn't take either one of these steps and avoid that. If we once get mixed up in war further than we are already mixed, we won't decide alone where we will fight it. The enemy has much to say about that. Just as no prize-fighter can "hit soft," no warring nation can pull its punches. Once it is in, it goes wherever victory promises or defeat threatens—not only to itself but to its allies.

Another thing, we seem to be operating under some kind of written or tacit understanding that we are to rely on the British fleet and air force to keep the

Germans out of the Atlantic and the British are to rely on the American fleet to keep the Japs out of the East Indies, Singapore and Australia.

Passing for a moment the point that our stake in those waters is not sufficient to risk our fleet and our Pacific defenses so far from home, let's not forget for a minute that no nation can take the benefit of this kind of unspoken mutual assistance pact and escape its burdens. If it is true, but I think it is not, that our security on our east coast is a gift of the British Navy in exchange for our gift of the American Navy to watch their colonies, possessions and trade routes in the West Pacific, then we are even further away from an unlimited right to say where we shall fight and when and whom.

It depends on what Britain does, what Germany does and above all what Japan does. We shall be prisoners not only to our own national pride but also to our national obligation to honorable agreements. And, considering the wide area over which we are thus forced to dissipate our potential strength for war and the slight national or economic interest we have in these far-flung exploited areas—for what? We shall have to fight not only wherever we are threatened but wherever Britain is threatened—from the Straits of Malacca to the Straits of Dover and back

again—to preserve not only her free States, such as Australia, but her exploited black and brown colonies, from the Andaman Islands to equatorial Africa. It is just too much territory and an even more indefensible inconsistency.

“I know it is natural for Ministers . . . to wish to play a great part on the European stage, to bestride Europe in the cause of peace and to be as it were its saviours. You cannot be saviours on a limited liability. I agree with the statement of the late Mr. Bonar Law who said that we cannot be the policemen of the whole world. We have to discharge our obligations but we cannot take upon ourselves undue obligations. . . .” That is what Mr. Winston Churchill said in November 1933. He perhaps would not recommend it to us just now but it is the kind of sound advice which has kept the British Empire on the map.

We tell Japan that she can't expand any farther southward toward Borneo, Sumatra, Java and so forth. Suppose she doesn't at once comply. We move our navy to base on the British naval station at Singapore. Then she still doesn't comply. So what do we do? We either back down completely or we attack—attack some seven to eight thousand miles from home. No doubt our navy will give a

good account of itself—even under this terrific handicap. It is the best navy in the world but it would be a miracle if it didn't get pretty well bounced about, itself. So then what? Then perhaps Japan would get back in her own backyard. Our navy would limp back home—surely we do not intend any more Asiatic conquests. It would have been a glorious adventure and the situation in the West Pacific would be about where it was before—certainly no more to our advantage.

That is the best that could happen. What is the worst? I have never been able to get any so-called “expert” publicly to hazard a guess, but of course it could be a great American naval disaster and humiliation and a weakening of our westward defenses for many years—and for what?

The only answer I ever heard is we have to do this “to keep the British Navy between us and the Germans in the Atlantic.” It is too early to appraise that answer with any degree of confidence. I happen to believe that the danger of the British Navy's not remaining there is not great. In the first place the principal argument is that Hitler may do to England what he did to France—and then hold the British people hostages to starvation or extermination for the surrender of the British Navy. (Let us note that he

hasn't even yet got the French Navy. The British destroyed most of it.)

A good many naval and military experts don't believe that Hitler can do that. A few more think that, even if he successfully invaded England and attempted it, the British Navy would retire to rebase in Halifax and our Atlantic ports and continue the sea war for the Empire. That is what it intended to do in the dangerous days of early 1918. It has great obligations to the colonies, provinces and dominions of the "Commonwealth of Nations"—which we are now told is not an "empire" in spite of the title, "King, Emperor" of George VI. Of course basing the British Navy on our ports would put us all the way into this war, but that is completely consistent with the title of this book—"Hell-Bent for War."

Those who doubt the outcome of an attempted German invasion of England don't say that it is wholly impossible—clear out of consideration—but no authority in my ken argues that it could be done without the Germans suffering the most wholesale slaughter ever to befall any people in the history of all the wars of mankind. Every day that passes multiplies the potential magnitude of that mass killing.

One thing that has distinguished Hitler from other conquerors is that he has taken a wider area and a

greater population with less of what our Civil War generals used to call "effusion of blood" than any other. He seems to have hesitated at no gamble depending on boldness and imagination, but when you review his campaigns you will see that even if his principal thrusts had failed, his losses would not have been too great. They depended on surprise, lightning swiftness of a small force and a mobility which could have extricated him from any local or temporary setback. He just wouldn't risk the losses of mass murder.

The chances are all against his being able to pull anything remotely resembling that new German strategy which he used in France and Poland in any thrust anywhere across the waters that separate him from England. He can gain dominating footholds only by tremendous sacrifices and, without command of the air, not even then. He is farther from any truly decisive command of the air over England than ever—and it is getting farther away every day. His seizure of the British Isles as hostages for the British fleet, while not theoretically impossible, is most unlikely. If that is so, our risking all our naval eggs in the single faraway basket of the West Pacific with its almost certainty of war, to "prevent" what is most unlikely in the Atlantic, is just plain lunacy.

But, for the sake of argument, let's agree temporarily that there is real danger of a failure of the British fleet. How does that justify the war-minded men who want to stick our naval necks out seven thousand miles across the Pacific, where our interest is insignificant and when the duty of our navy is to protect our country on both coasts—a duty which, with its interior lines and growing littoral bases, is becoming yearly easier to perform, especially if we do not fritter it away across the whole surface of the known globe? How does that justify us in risking a two-ocean war with a one-ocean navy and digging our noses into situations that risk its availability for our defense in either ocean close to our shores?

The obligation in the West Pacific is slight and wholly of our own making. Our Pacific Coast must be defended at all hazards. It is a gem. But let's not forget that, for wealth and resources necessary to us in both peace and war, our Atlantic Coast is a casket of jewels—the richest prize that ever tempted a piratical nation. We must defend both coasts.

What kind of American navy policy is it that risks the protection of the East coast in reliance on the navy of an alien nation when that nation, if not its navy, is already extended and embattled in the most dangerous war of its existence and, in exchange for

that threatened reliance, possibly entraps our equal naval force in an engagement seven thousand miles away from our West coast and so risks protection of our West coast in an adventure in which our interest is slight? To some of us it seems the most reckless kind of gamble, shooting craps with destiny with our richest possessions, on both coasts, at stake.

Some great point is made of our own "vital" interests in the West Pacific. Where?

We are told, "In China." Neither our total investment nor our annual trade there is worth a hundred million dollars, less than WPA used to spend in a month—a little more than the cost of one modern battleship. Is it for that we are risking our whole fleet and countless billions?

But it is said, "We must support the democracy of China." It is hard to see why. Even if China is a democracy, still, as Mr. Churchill said of England, we can't police the world. But China is no democracy. It is in large part Communist and for the rest it is not a democracy in any such sense as we know and respect. When was the last Chinese election? Where is the Chinese Congress? It is all foolish juggling with contradictory terms.

But it is said that we have a duty under our "open door" policy. The "open door" policy was invented

by us when China was being carved up like a turkey. She was being forced, as the old Manchu Empire fell, to give up territory, cities, bases, trade and other concessions and extra-territorial rights to every imperialistic nation in Europe and to Japan. We didn't want any of this ourselves but we didn't want to be excluded from these markets. It was in our foolish era of imperialism. We bargained with the looters, but not to stop the looting. We bargained for a share in the swag. It never got us anywhere. We weren't successful in the China trade—open door or closed door. To advance now the "open door" policy as a reason for going to war in or for China—well, the less said about that the better. It is an impudent hypocrisy.

Finally we hear that under the Nine Power Pact we are responsible for the integrity of China. On a careful reading of that treaty, you will find that we are responsible for no such thing. That was a consultative pact. If China's territory was threatened by an aggressor, we were to consult with other nations signatory to the pact. There was no further obligation. Unless all joined in action none was bound. When Japan moved in to carve Manchukuo out of China, we got all stirred up and asked for the consultation provided by the treaty. We got from most

the icy eye and from none any eye icier than that of Great Britain, who just didn't want to "consult." That ended the Nine Power Pact in China. Britain was playing with Japan—not us. She was then willing to throw China to the wolves. But that was the same Britain whose interests in China and the Far East we must now protect, against Japan—even to entering the war. In part it is urged by reason of our obligations under the Nine Power Treaty. The unadulterated brazen cheek of some of this Anglophile argument to get us into Britain's war in Asia hasn't been equaled since the man convicted of patricide and matricide pleaded for mercy because he was now an orphan.

Then comes the argument that we have a vital interest to see that some great Asian and East Indian colonies, for years exploited by England, France and Holland, do not change hands because they are sources of our strategic materials—tin and rubber.

The cheap coolie labor of those colonies is largely responsible for the fact that we do not have our own sources of tin and rubber at least in this hemisphere, if not within the United States. Rubber is native to South America. There are respectable sources of tin in South America, Mexico and Alaska.

For generations we have permitted these materials

to be controlled and monopolized by international British and Dutch cartels to the exclusion of the development of the great tin deposits of Bolivia, for example, and to the strangulation of rubber production on this continent either in its native home in Brazil or by way of the guayule plant in Mexico—which was a hell of a way to promote our good neighbor policy and economic unity in the Americas—and a worse way to protect American enterprise and labor and provide us with economic security in war—so bad a way in fact, that we now learn that we must risk our navy seven thousand miles away in the Pacific to insure our supply of tin and rubber from British, French and Dutch exploited colonies in the Far East.

Those cartels and monopolies were strong enough to prevent even the beginning of a tin-smelting industry in this country. All had to go to England to be smelted—even from Bolivia and, from there, shipped back across the Atlantic to us. Now, when the pressure of war comes, we are at last permitted to have a small tin-pot smelter financed by Jesse Jones' R.F.C., with American money, and he builds it not for America, but for a Dutchman, and sees that it is located at Houston, Texas, which is a kind of proprietary colony for the amiable Jesse himself. In the meantime, and to a considerable extent for the future,

we have deprived labor and farmers in both the Americas of a considerable source of employment and income in favor of rich European capitalists—monopolists of the world's supply of both tin and rubber—and, in the course of that foolish conduct, raised for ourselves a duty to risk a disastrous war to protect not us but them.

Of course this whole argument for dangerous American naval intrusion into the West Pacific is absurd for two other reasons, each of which would be sufficient unto itself if it stood alone.

The first is that we consume more of the products of these exploited colonies than all the rest of the world combined—about fifty-five per cent in the case of both commodities. No matter who controlled that production—whether Dutch, French, English or Japanese—are we to suppose that this market would be cut off for spite? Economics just doesn't work that way. Of what use would these possessions be? What would happen to the price and production of tin and rubber? Perhaps the sappiest exhibition in the whole experience of Uncle Sap in international relations is the fact that, as the fifty-five per cent world consumer, he has allowed foreign monopolies and cartels to set for him the price of these basic commodities when, by using his combined buying power he could,

within reason, have set the price himself. And now he is urged to get into war and to send his navy halfway around the world to protect not his own advantage but the present tenants and exploiters, not only of these colonies but of the whole vast American market for tin and rubber.

The second reason why all this argument is schmoos and nonsense is that our scientific development of no less than three separate varieties of "rubber" has offered synthetic products far superior to these natural ones. It is true that in the minimum quantities yet manufactured in competition with rubber, these products cost the consumer more. But it is almost certain that, if we substituted them entirely, our methods of mass production would reduce the differential in cost to a point where, considering the improvement in quality and durability, the East Indian rubber products, for which we are told we should go to war, would be certainly priced clear out of the American market forever—and this with a vast addition to the field for American labor at American wages, to replace Malaysian coolies who now work at a few cents a day to displace American labor in these fields.

Surely, if against any conceivable difference in price, we offset the cost of going to war in the West Pacific, what we are being offered by our war en-

thusiasts is the worst bargain in stinking fish into which the American people were ever cajoled.

A good many considerations similar to these latter apply to tin. In this field the possibilities of substitution of glass, plastics, or alloys, paints and paper are almost unlimited. Black steel sheets don't need tin to preserve them in containers as we proved over and over again in 1918. There is no limit to our production of glass. In fact, in both utility and economy, tin was already on the toboggan in its economic contest with its competitors. War accelerates and advances all the trends and processes of peace. If we can, under war pressures, liberate ourselves from these Old-World sources at great savings to ourselves and improvement in our own living conditions, let's let the process of change roll on and not try to stop it by getting into war.

Both rubber and tin deteriorate hardly at all in storage. As this Administration was warned over and over again in the past eight years, there was an excellent opportunity for it to lay in stocks and thereby dispose of its own mountainous agricultural surplus to the mutual advantage of all concerned and to a practical certainty that, regardless of all other arguments made here, the accumulation of reserve supplies of these strategic materials, taken with the

possibilities of the enormous scrap piles of old rubber and tin for reclamation, together with proved methods of conservation, would enable us to escape any war embarrassment whatever in this regard. At the eleventh hour we did some of that but—as usual—“too little and too late.”

Nevertheless it is very misleading to say that there is any real problem here. I go further and say that to urge that there is a sufficient problem to justify risking our fleet in the Far Pacific is just some more of the same sort of grotesquely absurd mendacity as characterizes most of the rest of these fantastical war arguments.

There remains the question of the Philippine Islands—another indigestible chew that we took in the exalted period of our era of tinsel imperialism and Kiplingesque assumption of the white man's burden in the era of the Spanish-American War. It was an imposed dominion. The little brown brothers resisted our seizure heroically at the beginning and have wanted us to get out of there every moment since. Those islands have cost us far more than they ever contributed to our economy. As for strength they are a sore thumb thrusting American arms and prestige into the most dangerous military and naval salient on earth.

What most people do not realize is that, on the shortest and most direct great-circle route on the earth's surface between Seattle and Manila, and at two-thirds the distance, is Tokyo. Between us and the Philippines lies the whole Japanese archipelago. Surrounding it on other and longer routes from our shores are the mandated islands (now fortified) which we were foolish enough to surrender to Japan at the Washington Sweetness and Light Disarmament Conference in 1922. The Philippines are, for us, indefensible and, as in the case of China and the East Indies, the claim that they are either necessary or desirable to our economy or defense is a proposition so fallacious that we are left none but the unpleasant choice of questioning either the integrity or the sanity of its proponents.

Furthermore, we are by repeated legislative promises, treaty and other obligations, made at consistent Filipino request and pressure over many years, pledged to grant them their full independence in 1946. The argument that we must get into a war in the Pacific and risk the defensive value of our entire sea power to preserve our "interests" there may make sense to people in a berserk ecstasy of warlike exaltation but it doesn't make sense to me. Whom the gods would destroy, do they first make mad?

Finally is advanced the assurance of Mr. Churchill and others that nobody wants our men, that this is a war of machines only, and so our war-minded leaders say that American mothers need never fear the loss of a single American son abroad. Those who were saying that a few months ago now add "except perhaps in the navy and the marines."

Marines have mothers, and so have sailors and airmen. If a land regiment goes to war, some of it has a chance to escape—perhaps with twisted limbs and ruined lives, but at least with life. If an equal number of men in the crew of a battleship or cruiser go down, there are usually few survivors. Even Mr. Churchill no longer denies that he could do with American lives in uniforms of sea and air services. There is hardly a military observer who does not confidently expect an early engagement of our navy but not our army. What does a mother care in what uniform the flesh of her flesh is slaughtered?

Mr. Churchill may think that this is just a war of machines but if so why have the Germans between four and five million soldiers—most of them organized as old-fashioned infantry? Why are we preparing another army of four million and England and the Empire an equal number—twelve or thirteen millions

in all? Just to watch a "war of machines?" With what is Mr. Churchill going to "crush Hitler" out of existence on the continent of Europe and restore all the conquered countries?

Make no mistake about it, there isn't an "expert" with respectable military education and experience in any country who will deny that there isn't a chance of that kind of an outcome of this war—the complete conquest of Hitler—without an immense American expeditionary force, probably larger than the last one, fighting once more on battlefields blood-soaked for centuries down the ancient paths of conquest of Continental Europe. If that happens, the slaughter will surpass anything ever known to the human race. Mr. Churchill himself has said, "Britain could, I believe, save herself for the time being, but it will take the combined efforts of the whole English-speaking world to save mankind and Europe from the menace of Hitlerism and open the paths of progress to the people."

Machines? Yes. The Germans stabbed into both Poland and France with dive bombers and parachute troops ahead, panzer divisions, motorcycle troops and motorized artillery, slashing at incredible speed beneath them. But not a military man but knows the now established fact that rumbling behind them,

for the sake of speed in transport only, came legions of old-fashioned infantry in motorcars and, behind them in turn, masses of marching men with no other transport but "shank's mare" and, like the men in trucks, with no other weapons than the World War implements of the infantry—rifles, bayonets, grenades and machine guns.

It is a cruel deception to tell ill-informed people that this is merely a war of machines. It is and will remain, like all other wars, at the last a war of the muscles, courage and cold steel of great masses of mothers' sons marching forward to be slaughtered in windrows.

Had the French, the English and the Belgians—or the Poles earlier—been trained and equipped as were the Germans, those stabbing armored thrusts would have been parried, frustrated or cut off and the time of this first fencing would have served only to bring into contact the foot masses that slogged after them and the war would have been then, as wars always have been and in the future will be, a matter of the preponderance of man power, weight of metal, fortitude and endurance.

Make no mistake about it. If we get into this war so unthriftilly, so unnecessarily, we shall have to follow it to the bitter ends—the ends described in this

book. Perhaps we have gone too far already ever to escape.

For we are hell-bent for war. We are hell-bent in an unofficial alliance with a nation whose interests are not at all points parallel with ours, in a policy which underwrites those interests whether they are ours or not, on a course we cannot control, whose aims we do not know but the expense of which we have assented to underwrite without a thought to the question of whether it will bankrupt us. It cannot possibly advantage our position, but it is very hard to see that it will not bankrupt our economy, destroy our democracy and possibly wreck what we now laughingly call "Western Civilization"—no matter who wins.

Chapter IV

TO RECONSTRUCT THE WORLD?

EIGHT years ago, we started out on a New Deal to reconstruct America. Great good was done. Many old social abuses were remedied. But is our country stronger and better? The first real reason for government is to prevent men from injuring one another. The New Deal has done much of that. The second is so to order our economic policies that men can earn their livings by the exchange of their goods and services in free and plentiful employment.

In that, this high idealism has not succeeded even to the previous levels attained through many generations. It has subsisted largely on the fat piled up by previous generations—a method, not of producing new things, but of parsimoniously dividing up old ones. As many studies have clearly shown, local and federal hidden and other taxes have piled on the poorest—even those on relief—a tax charge of at least twenty per cent of all that is earned and consumed. More visible taxes have paralyzed new enterprise and development without which no growing population

can continue to prosper. Every worker must give one day out of every five to work not for his dependents but for government, and millions must give much more.

But even these mounting taxes have hardly covered half the cost of the "benefits" distributed. There was an increase of debt of about thirty billions. Taxes take the fruit of current daily work. Debt either mortgages the future or promises new dissipation, through inflation, of the savings of the past—even to their complete destruction.

These considerations, though often urged, have latterly been almost completely ignored. Nothing was too much to pay to spread these "benefits." Neither rising debt nor rising taxes were much considered, notwithstanding that they certainly contributed to prevent our normal economic system from getting back into gear and hence, in the end, threatened far more harm to the future than was prevented in the present. For eight years, everything has been an "emergency" and cost should not be counted. But the crippled economic system of America was not made right. Except for this munitions boom, which is an unmixed evil, the fundamental condition is worse. After eight years of such gruesome failure, who are we to offer to "reconstruct the world"?

Now in this sudden new war effort, every restraint of fiscal prudence is to be completely thrown aside. Authorizations or commitments already made will run the public debt well over a hundred billions and there is no end in sight. There are no recent official estimates of national wealth, the last one (1922) being three hundred and twenty billions. Considering the depression slash in values, it seems hardly possible that it can now exceed four hundred billions. We are on the way to hock with no less than twenty-five per cent of it—and possibly much more.

How long and how far can this go on without bankrupting the United States? Nobody knows but certainly somewhere there is a limit. National bankruptcy does not, as in private life, take the form of a receivership. It takes the form of runaway inflation—a panic rise in prices even to the destruction of the value of all present rates of salary, wages, and of all present savings whether in banks, government bonds or any kind of life insurance.

In our present trends toward increased taxation on wages and incomes and increased government financing, when even now every worker gives government one-fifth of his time or twenty per cent of his income, and governments are taking or soon will take from thirty to fifty per cent of the gross incomes of all

business, with further and much greater increases just over the horizon, government will own and operate all principal enterprises in the United States and every man will be working not for himself or any private employer but for government alone. There can be no more share-our-wealth. There will be no wealth to share.

Now of course this is nothing whatever but Communism, totalitarianism, the corporative state, and these, whether as Naziism, Fascism or Communism, are the very political creeds that we say we are going forth to fight. In the process of fighting against them, we shall find ourselves saddled with them.

Why then are we going forth to fight them and, in that process, to contribute unlimited dollars, not merely for our own defense—as all of us are willing to do—but in the defense of other nations in Europe, Asia, Africa, Malaysia, and perhaps later in Australia and South America? In the President's lease-lend "fireside chat" he said one purpose was so that we might have a hand in the reconstruction of the world. He has also given us a glimpse of what we are going to give the world in its reconstruction—the "four freedoms": (1) of speech (2) of religion (3) from want (4) from fear. We have done pretty well on freedom of speech and religion here in our own coun-

try, but how are we, at "no distant millennium," as Mr. Roosevelt says, but "within our own time and generation," to free the world of want and fear? The whole world, mind you! We haven't freed our own country. Jesus said, "Ye have the poor always with you." If since the beginning of time a man ever lived who never has known fear, there is no record of it. It is some assignment to free the world of want and fear. Can't we talk sense?

Having failed in the primary, basic effort of "re-constructing" America after an expenditure of fifty billions, we are now to try to reconstruct the world at a cost nobody has even taken the trouble to compute and with a probable destructive effect on our own economy which it is at present becoming highly unpopular even to mention.

Thus far that cost has been presented to us merely as some sacrifices that we may have to make in "silly fool dollars." As this book has tried to show, and as few informed professional soldiers and sailors even so much as doubt, it is going to cost us also a war to be fought and lost or won by the sacrifice of blood and life and limb in such a holocaust of human happiness as the world has not yet seen. They may be "silly fool dollars" but everybody is going to have to pay them in one way or another. They are far too many

for us the living ever to pay. Before the end, they may be too many for our children's children's children to pay. I sometimes feel bitterly ashamed of my own generation. We received from our fathers the richest birthright ever known. We were prosperous, lightly taxed, almost free from debt under a political system of the utmost liberty and freedom carefully guarded by many generations of our forebears. There is great danger that we shall hand it on bankrupt—a certainty that we shall convey it mortgaged to the hilt, staggering under unconscionable taxes and with a political system scarcely different from the European centralized personalized governments and systems of slavery to the state. How can we avoid that change? By being hell-bent for war, we are rushing with open arms to embrace it.

When the Lease-Lend Bill was under debate, there was hardly a voice raised against what was at first advertised as its purpose—a purpose to aid brave embattled Britain by making it possible, when she had no resources with which to buy here without too great sacrifice, for her to buy here at our expense. The author of this book argued for that from the beginning.

As finally passed, it carries a much further authorization than that. It permits the President to send

American arms and supplies of all kinds to any nation he elects—any place on earth. We must accept that. The point, as I have said, was debated in the best traditions of democracy and overwhelmingly carried. But in using that vast world power the President must still consult public opinion and it becomes important to consider whether the public understands fully exactly what that power includes.

As already stated, the President himself has said that it includes a power to have a voice at least “in the reconstruction of the world.” Mr. Churchill was prompt to respond with the promise that “the day will come when the British Empire and the United States will share together the solemn and splendid duties which are the crown of victory.” Yes, we have embarked on a course which includes—if all is well—a New New Deal, not just for America but for Europe and the world. It includes much more than that. It includes a voice, if not a command, in the direction of this new World War. In the President’s speech there was a plain bid to Yugoslavia that if she would resist in the Balkans—i.e., enter this war on the British side—she too would get aid at the expense of America.

I don’t question the cleverness or even the soundness of that in view of the quivering crisis not only in

the Balkans but on the English Channel. I merely use it as an illustration to prove a point. The point is that the President has been given unlimited control of the sinews of war in Europe, that he can use it in his own scarcely limited discretion, and that it carries with it an American responsibility to engage in the age-old and never-ending feuds among Britons, Franks, Teutons and Slavs. To escape that was a principal purpose of our Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution.

No anti-Axis government—whether England or another—can safely make a military or naval move without Mr. Roosevelt's approval or at least in risk of his opposition. The Lease-Lend Act does not merely make America the "arsenal of democracy"—and let's never forget that "democracy" can include the dictatorships of Russia and Turkey, the Empire of England over several hundred million brown and black peoples. That isn't the half of it. It makes Mr. Roosevelt not only the "arsenal" but the banker, larder and arbiter of the conduct of this war across the whole wide world.

We did that on the understanding and belief that it was the best way to defend America and "keep out of war." Now it is beginning to appear that we really

did it to give the most aspiring American in all our history a power to direct a war in all the continents and at the end of it to help "reconstruct the world" at the expense of the pocket and belly of every American worker and farmer—poor or prosperous—at the risk of American prosperity, solvency and democracy, and at the further tragic and awful risk of a bloody American participation in a World War to defend countries and issues which do not concern us. "Reconstruct the world"—and we thought we were doing it to "defend America by methods short of war but more than mere words"—or, as one great propaganda slogan put it, "to defend America by aiding the Allies."

O.K. We've gone and done it and we've got to stick to our decision and support it. But it is highly important—and this book is written only because it is so highly important—to recognize precisely what is involved here. For one thing is very certain. Mr. Roosevelt has proved himself the cleverest politician the world has ever seen—far too clever to go very far ahead of the drift of popular opinion which he has shown himself to be so able to guide. If that opinion doesn't want to go so far as he now has a charter to go, he won't go that far. Public opinion would do well to inform itself and to do so without too much

unquestioning acceptance of such highly organized, heavily financed and clever propagandist groups as the rapidly forming chapters of "Union Now" and the old William Allen White Committee. These are a new development in our history. One begins to wonder for what purpose we ordained and established the Congress of this United States. Some of their methods have been indicated in the preface and the early chapters of this book. They are incitements to emotional hysteria and the tactics of indiscriminate smear.

Public opinion should take some thought of a remark of that strange, wise, little, gnomish, loyal hero-worshiper, guide, philosopher and friend, who was the patient selfless architect of Mr. Roosevelt's political destiny over many years—many seemingly hopeless years—the late Louis Howe. He once said: "Franklin has to have a new toy to play with every day. It is my job to see that he doesn't get one with which he can hurt himself or others." There is no Louis Howe today. Too many present associates are like those courtiers of Kent in *King Lear* who to their ends "bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods; renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks with every gale and vary of their masters." There are none but "yes-men" about the President today

and, with every week that passes, there are few in the public prints who dare say very much more.

Critical analysis grows ever more difficult or even distasteful every day but somebody has to do it. For, never for a moment forget this: these vast authorities cannot be assumed without a concurrent responsibility. No authority can. The authority is in the President but the responsibility must rest on the shoulders of the people, their treasure, their lives, their limbs, their children. For if authority thus to direct a war backed by all the resources of the United States be exercised and followed, responsibility for the result follows and if the result turns out to be disaster anywhere on earth, it will be our duty to retrieve it. It was to this that Washington referred when he said, "The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave," and he alluded to such utterances as those in this book when he said, "Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interest."

Step by cautious step we have been led down the road, away from any concept of defense of America or the Americas, to engagement in what we are now

told is to attain domination of the world in association with others, and then, in further association with them, to "reconstruct" it. In all this two things are appearing more and more certain: first, that we shall have to finance a large part of the reconquest—we have already begun and have held out the offer to do infinitely more; second, that we shall also have to finance its reconstruction to eliminate from the whole world "want and fear." Not much has been said about that but since all these countries, except us, are bankrupt, and since reconstruction requires finance, we are elected before we start.

Every one of these steps is a repetition of what we did in the first World War. First we entered it, as the then President said, to "make the world safe for democracy . . . to give the utmost practicable cooperation in counsel and action with the governments now at war with Germany, supplying them with money and credits. [Mr. Wilson firmly believed at first that our part would be precisely what we are told it will be now—money, materials and machines, not men.] A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. [Prophetic words, but listen:] . . . the great gen-

erous Russian people [came da Revolution] have been added in all their naïve majesty and might to the forces that are fighting for freedom in the world. . . . Here is a fit partner for a League of Honor." We were to "throw every selfish dominion down in the dust."

So we started. We sent, not seven billions in "machines, materials and money," but in gross eleven billions. We also sent at frantic demand a vast army. We fought in all parts of the world from the Marne through Murmansk to Siberia. We outlaid forty billions. We were then also going first to reconquer and afterward reconstruct the world, and our then President made such a bid to be the architect of the reconstruction that, while the peoples hailed him as demigod, the politicians frustrated his idealism, broke his heart, and destroyed his health and eventually his life.

But our financing and "reconstruction of the world" didn't end there. We made post-war private and public loans to what Mr. Hoover called "backward and crippled countries" by the billions. They were mostly defaulted. As Will Rogers loved to say, "we never lost a war or won a conference." [We bought for ourselves out of the whole mess the greatest disillusionment, disappointment and depression in his-

tory. We didn't make the world safe for democracy. We disarmed. We helped finance the destruction of democracies. We didn't "reconstruct the world"—at least not in the sense we intended. Our associates in this high emprise sat by to see the autocratic world reconstructed by Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and the mad military and naval mayors of the palace of Japan. We are right back where we started from and getting all ready to do it all over again with hardly a variation in timing sequence or superficial sloganeering.

There isn't a great difference either between the change from "He kept us out of war" in the 1916 campaign to "force to the uttermost, force without stint or limit" soon after inauguration in 1917, as compared with the change from "short of war" in 1940 to "whatever it takes to defeat the dictatorships" in 1941.

But there is one great difference which very few war enthusiasts mention. We got into the first World War with negligible taxes and debt and a long unbroken record of Treasury surpluses and superb fiscal strength. We are getting into this one with a colossal debt, a crushing burden of taxation and an eleven-year record of staggering deficits. We entered the last war with an economic system functioning, with some slight lag, on the old American system of uni-

versal employment and almost unlimited individual opportunity. We enter this one with that system creaking and tottering—its loose joints soldered with library paste, splinted with haywire or stuck together with spit. We entered the last war and gave unlimited emergency powers to a President so devoted to the American free system that he surrendered most of his extraordinary powers on the day after the Armistice. We enter this one with a President so devoted to regulation and centralized control that, except for his scarcely used powers under the Reorganization Bill, he has never willingly given up a single so-called “emergency” personalized power—and is now seeking and being granted more of that kind of power than has ever been donated to any President in the history of our country or than has rarely if ever been granted to any executive in any truly constitutional government under the sun.

There are dangers here such as our country has never known—dangers of our unthrifty engagement in universal bloody war, dangers of collapse in our fiscal and economic system, dangers of a complete revolution in our political system. Certainly there are dangers of our dissipating our military, naval and economic strength over areas as wide as the world, of injecting them into problems of which we have

little knowledge and less interest, and of concentration of our government on almost everything except the material, spiritual and political welfare of our own people.

This kind of talk is characterized by the opponents as "isolationism." It may be "isolationism" to insist, as I have done for many years, on military, naval and air preparation to defend ourselves against any intruder on this hemisphere—with ultimate reliance on nothing and nobody but the patriotism, loyalty and devotion of our own people, the efficiency of our own systems, the strength of our own right arm. Maybe it's "isolationism" to assume responsibility for half a principal planet in the solar system, but it seems to me it would be safer to do that—and to prepare as we acceptably could to do it well, so well that we would be safe from challenge—than to go out wholly unequipped, unprepared, and badly financed to assume responsibility first for the reconquest and then for the reconstruction of the whole round earth, to abolish want and fear everywhere.

I don't believe in that. I am not greatly impressed by the eleventh-hour awakening of men who should have been interested in our defensive safety against a danger of which I have been warning for years; men who, when suddenly awakened too late, can see

no solution but an assumption of responsibility for defending all the seas when they had not urged us to defend American waters; men who think that immediate strengthening of our defensive armament consists in lending-leasing it abroad and whose solution of a terrible problem, presented when they become aware that they are in back-room gangster battle armed only with a water-pistol, is to give even that away.

Let's help England to the precise extent that we can do it if, and only if, England defends America and does not embroil us, all unready, in foreign wars—and no further. Let's push the pedal down for all-out armament and defensive production for an American Army and Navy so strong that, considering our wet ditches of thousands of miles of blue water, no nation on earth will dare to attack or even challenge us in our own hemisphere. Let's not set out to reconquer the world and above all let's not assume a responsibility to reconstruct it. We had enough to do to reconstruct America and we didn't do that.

For years we have been the world's fat boy with the bag of candy—courted by many for the goodies we have in the bag, but admired by few for what we have under the bonnet.

Where are these areas and avenues of war? They

are the same places that have been salted blue with the bones of the same races since the beginning of history—the English Channel, the valleys of the Rhine, Somme, Meuse and Danube, the Balkan bastions, Salonika, Marathon, the Bosphorous and the Dardanelles, Suez, Alexandria, Palestine, Malta, Crete, the Waist of the Mediterranean and Gibraltar. Roman, Greek, Iberian, Frank, German, Phoenician, Turkish armies and the barbarian ancestors of Europe have writhed and struggled over these routes, rivers and passes since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. When we were colonies of England, there was none of these internecine wars into which we were not drawn, although the people occupying the old hunting grounds of the Five Indian Nations had no more real interest in them than the Indians had before Columbus came. Came then our Revolution—and we stayed out of them for a century and a quarter.

Now we are told that all that has just been said is old stuff—that this is a war of “ideologies” (may the devil run away with that word!) and that we must get into it to make right the wrongs of the world.

Maybe it's old stuff but there it stands. It has stood there for centuries. I am not now thinking so much of whether we are to help lick Hitler. I am thinking of how or why we should undertake to “reconstruct”

that cock-eyed world. It has been tried many times and we helped once. Don't we ever learn anything—or rather, have we forgotten all we learned from 1776 to 1917?

Chapter V

CAN WE LIVE IN THE SAME WORLD WITH HITLER?

I DON'T want to. Every word on that subject that I have written or spoken since long before this argument arose has expressed my appraisal of Adolf—long before many of the present breast-beaters understood or saw fit to characterize him for what, so obviously, he is.

But we, as a nation, have lived and prospered in the same world with tyrants more or less absolute than he and more or less bent on conquest—Napoleon, the old Emperors of China, Czars of Russia and Sultans of Turkey, Kings of Spain controlling most of this hemisphere, not to mention the little tyrants of our own fields—Tory Kings and Prime Ministers of England and Kaiser William the damned.

We don't like them but there are several principles here that we should not overlook. One of them is that if we are not brave enough to believe that we can cope with a later upstart, we are no true sons of

our fathers. Another is that there never was a sudden outburst of conquering power in this world that did not of itself breed a counterbalancing power. "Empires," said Napoleon, "have mostly died of indigestion." It takes a lot of energy and power from some highly nationalistic source to be able to spread itself thin enough to keep many countries in subjugation. The Pax Romana was perhaps the mildest and most intelligent administration of conquest in history but its intelligence consisted in two facts—that it interfered little in the daily lives of conquered nations, and that it recognized its own limitations—pretty well.

Like Ghengis Khan, it stopped at Germany and, unlike Alexander, it didn't attempt India. The empires of Ghengis and Alexander survived them but shortly and Napoleon's conquests fell during his lifetime.

As this is written it seems quite clear that Hitler has found his limit on the English Channel and recognizes it. It is not at all clear what the fox-faced autocrat of the Kremlin is thinking of Mr. Hitler but if he has ever read *Mein Kampf*, he must be thinking long and solemn thoughts. His territorial policy has shown itself to be little different from that of the Imperial Czars. He no more than the Czars could afford to see the Dardanelles in control of a strong

western European power. He can't just fritter away the Ukraine. The Rumanian oil fields are insignificant in comparison with those of Persia and he doesn't want to see Hitler there. He could never lie long in the same bed with Adolf—any more than a couple of hostile gorillas could go to sleep with their thumbs in each other's mouths. The territorial ambitions of Hitler and even poor old Benito the Bum are inconsistent. You can't spell that union out except on the theory of the Empire of Charlemagne, which did not long outlive him.

Mr. Hitler is far from finished with Britain. With what help we can send her to fight in the Eastern Atlantic, it is highly improbable that he can lick old England. What he may do to disrupt British life-lines of Empire in the Mediterranean is not clear enough to see even through a glass darkly. But if he cannot conquer England, the Empire and the British Navy are, and will remain, unfinished business that will plague him to his dying day and even if, as now seems highly improbable, he plugs up both ends of the Mediterranean, which we have accepted as Britain's life line, let's not forget that British merchantmen haven't been using that route for a year—yet the Empire still survives.

At the other end of the Axis, Russian and Japanese

aspirations have always been in conflict. It is hard to see how any kind of promises or paper pacts between any of these treaty-busters and word-breakers would affect their violent antipathy of interests or give them any comfort—how anything could, less than threat and power balancing power and threat. Neither would ever dare to move very much farther off base than the other had ventured. It is these counterbalances and tensions that have suppressed or restrained world powers—and they still remain effective.

Perhaps all this is wrong, but if it is all the ponderable probabilities of history are reversed. Hitler finds himself weak already under the obligation of using his vast forces to keep conquered nations subjugated, to watch Stalin, to threaten or thrust toward the English Channel and through the Balkan back door of Europe or perhaps at Gibraltar, all at the same time, and also stand ready to bail out his frog-faced Italian friend in both the Balkans and North Africa. Could he also butter himself over the vast empire and magnificent distances of Russia, conquer Turkey and Greece, and still remain a threat to South America, Persia, India and to us?

Maybe he could. I don't say he couldn't. I do say it is highly unlikely, so very unlikely that for us

not to wait and see something more of the interplay of these great forces, before stripping our own defenses of so much of our production and plunging body, soul and britches into a battle royal which is largely none of our business—for us *not* to wait, watch and listen is the diametrical opposite of prudent statecraft and strategic military wisdom.

Without permitting, by prudent aid without too much responsibility, what are clearly our outpost defenses across the Atlantic to fall from England to Hitler—meanwhile giving all help that a sympathetic friend can give who is not yet ready to shoot the works of his own national safety—I think that our course is to maintain what military professionals call a “position in readiness”: to muster all the strength we can for what may be the final showdown and to muster it without any purpose to “reconquer Europe” for others to hold, or to “reconstruct the world” when we haven’t the foggiest notion what form that reconstruction could or should take and when much of that also isn’t any of our business. We must maintain that strength so that we have at least something left with which to “reconstruct” our own shattered economy—to reconstruct a far stronger position in the Western hemisphere than we have ever held and to activate once more, if not throughout the world

at least in our closest natural trade and political areas, the Americas, the domestic and international commerce that made this country great and prosperous.

Of course it is said by some that we can never do this in competition with the slave-labor and government-controlled industry of the totalitarian powers if peace is restored with them in control of their own countries.

Is this to say that we can't compete with another industrial nation or its political or economic system without conquering it and either destroying it or making it accept our way of both political and economic operations?

To me this seems about the weakest argument in the whole category. In competition, if not against slave labor then at least against wages and standards of living from ninety per cent to thirty-three and one-third per cent lower than our own, we not only gained our position in international trade but maintained it. When we begin to talk about slave labor, let's remember that we tried that too. It didn't work. It retarded rather than advanced the economic progress of the South which, in spite of it, lost its foreign markets for rice and indigo and tea. Cotton may have been "king" during the Civil War but our near-monopoly of the cotton trade of the world, and also

of tobacco, came after and not before we abandoned the institution of slavery. We began to lose both those markets when we started under AAA to regiment the farm production of both cotton and tobacco by attempting, through governmental regulation, to raise the prices of both these export crops, through scarcity—to raise prices not only at home but abroad. All that did was to subsidize production of these staples in countries of lower living standards.

Mr. John Flynn has well taken Vice-President Henry Wallace to task for saying that the farmers of the South have a vital interest in this war program for fear of losing their export markets. Mr. Flynn showed that they have lost far more of them to foreign competitors by Mr. Wallace's price and regulation programs than Mr. Hitler could ever dream of taking from them. Several million bales of that market is gone and gone forever and much the same thing may be said of tobacco.

There is only one rule for success in trade. It is goods of better quality, at lower prices than competitors can offer. In spite of all contrivances, we have maintained our supremacy of foreign trade on this formula and against all competitors. We have maintained it against all sorts of foreign sweating of labor, cartels and barter arrangements and without

using those devices ourselves. We have done so—where we have done it at all—by superior ingenuity and advantage in mechanical skill and production resulting in better goods at lower prices. We shall never long be able to do so, on any other formula. If we are not willing to enter the contest on that basis, we should not enter it at all. Except for short and feverishly uncertain periods of time, you can't shout, finagle or bluff any competitor out of any market except on that prescription.

Can Hitler beat us at that game? I don't believe it, but if he can, we had better fold up our selling cases and go home. To this it is frequently said, "No, perhaps he can't beat us on a price-quality basis, but he can do it by political forcing and by the barter basis of doing business rather than the money basis."

If political forcing in our natural markets in the two Americas means doing it at the point of a gun, that brings up the whole essence of my stand—no European guns forcing anything in this hemisphere. To the extent that there is any danger of their doing so, let's get busier and busier with our all-American rearmament program. Our entire policy has been too soft on that. At this very moment the credits that we are releasing to Britain are being used to buy Brazilian cotton, and Canada is preparing further

tariff concessions to Britain so that the Mother Country can buy more of the same kind of munitions from Canada that we are going to give away. In the meantime, it seems that we are preparing to lease-lend to Canada too. For eight years we have heard nothing so much emphasized as all-American trade and solidarity, good neighbor, and "I hate wahwah." In the lease-lend fireside chat, none of this was mentioned. Our only good neighbors in that talk were Britain, Greece and China. What are our Latin American friends to think of that? The declaration of Panama seems now to be forgotten. The neutrality belt has been abandoned at least as far as Britain is concerned. We are no longer so much interested in being a Western hemisphere leader and big brother. We are now going to "reconquer and reconstruct" the world to abolish want and fear.

No, I think it is not in our future to lose our South American trade at the point of any gun. I doubt if it is seriously threatened. If it is threatened, then we should resist it by force of arms and be prepared so to resist it. As for this "barter" business, barter was a device of the Middle Ages. No country desires it if it can be avoided. The trading of goods for goods is not half so satisfactory and effective as goods for money—especially since ignorant natives will no

longer trade tusks of ivory and wedges of gold for calico, squareface gin and strings of beads. The countries with which Germany has bartered her principal articles of export—*aspirin*, bicycles and cameras—have difficulty in disposing of them.

There is only one commodity for which men, from the beginning of time, have been willing and eager to exchange their goods and services on any easy and satisfactory arrangement—gold. In spite of all criticism, I think Mr. Roosevelt will reap the plaudits due a major prophet for having cornered the world's supply of that against anything which may happen.

I don't want to see that vast hoard used to reconquer and "reconstruct the world," but it is a most potent force at his command to defend the Americas and, at the end, whatever it may be, to "reconstruct" an American trade and financial position from "Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strands." If, with all our advantages of industrial plant, raw resources and unlimited gold, we can't compete in international trade, we ought to have our heads examined.

In terms of any known kind of trade except piracy, which I think we can control, I would be ashamed to admit that we couldn't live in competition in the same world with Hitler or any other totalitarian gov-

ernment on the basis of trade and economic superiority, or, if he wishes it, on any outcome now remotely foreseeable of any military, air or naval combat in our own back yard.

I think it is just as absurd and indefensible to urge that this great nation of a hundred and thirty million people with most of the financial, material, mechanical and man-power resources of the world—and with a strategical and geographical advantage enjoyed by none other—needs to depend on any other nation for its economic and trade position in the future, as to say that, if it is administered and conducted with even half-measure skill and prudence, it needs to depend on any other nation for its military, naval and air security.

I don't say that we can lick the world in any of these fields. We don't need to, and even if we could do so there would be no profit in the adventure and this is no occasion to talk about it.

But I think it is almost equally indefensible to say that, because the peace of Europe has been disturbed by a new military upstart with a new ghastly record of conquest by surprise and efficiency, it is up to us to conclude that the whole world and our commanding place in it are threatened and rush forth, with complete disregard of our basic economic and inter-

national interests, to strip our own defenses and offer our resources, first to reconquer and then to "reconstruct" the world.

This may be realistic and not idealistic. That is now a position of great unpopularity. But it is one thing for a man to be "idealistic" with his own life, efforts and fortune—and quite another thing to be "idealistic" without also being realistic with the fate and future of a great people who have confided both to his care and trust.

Washington surely, on his record, cannot be convicted of lack of idealism, but his words quoted in this book have never proved wrong in the whole course of our history. It is the business of the chief of a great nation to put its interest first. It cannot be too often repeated that there is no altruism among nations. We do not elect a President to "reconstruct the world" however worthy his intent. Poor Woodrow Wilson found that out. We, like every other people on earth, choose an Executive to cultivate and defend our own land. If there is any reconstruction or uplift that needs doing we would like to see it done here. At least we would like to see that done before we begin to meddle with the affairs of all the world—especially when we have been so lacking in any fundamental improvement in our own condition.

Bearing more directly on the subject of this chapter—"Can we live in the same world with Hitler?"—if the question means, "Can we trust his promises?" the answer is "No." There may be some doubt about the value of the promises of many nations—as for example those of France to all the nations of the Little Entente, those of both England and France to Poland, and the kind of support Mr. Stimson got from England when, as Secretary of State, he invoked the Nine-Power Treaty when Japan moved into Manchuria. If we are to assume any holier-than-thou attitude in this galley, we might take a long and shameful look at our own record of keeping promises in Indian treaties.

Yet there is no argument of value in pots calling kettles black. Certainly it has never recently been a fixed policy of Britain or America to make treaties only to gain a position from which they can be violated to advantage, and that can't be said of Mr. Hitler. His honor, faith and good intent seem to be on a lower level than that of the average streetwalker.

It served him well on several occasions, but it can never serve him again because everybody knows that. The only thing he understands is superior force. If we are to deal with him on any basis it must be on the basis of superior force. I was aware of that and

said so more than six years ago. My difference with the "Aid-Britain-By-All-Means-To-Beat-Hitler" boys is not this point of theirs. I discovered it before most of them did. My great point is that I don't agree with them that it is best or necessary to dilute our strength with the world's weakness in order to meet him in our own bailiwick with all the force that will be necessary to deal with him—to deal with him in our own bailiwick, mind you. I don't agree that it is either our duty or to our interest to deal with him elsewhere.

Whether in the field of battle or the field of economic competition, I feel that, against that gangster we shall be stronger by aiding our friends than by marrying them. But we should aid them only where it is to our mutual interest to do so and not in our present headlong rush, without regard to our own present or future military, naval or economic position in the world, to get into a world war, possibly on all five continents and all the seven seas where we have little more interest than a hog has in heaven, on some purely emotional appeal to protect the British Empire and the possession by exiled governments of Asiatic, African and Malaysian territories and peoples.

I could sympathize deeply with Woodrow Wilson's high spiritual aspiration in the League of Nations and

felt at my heart a deep hurt for his frustration. In some quarters he was compared with the Master in what turned out to be his martyrdom to that cause. That I couldn't feel. Woodrow Wilson could have aspired to save the world only by at least risking the sacrifice of his own country. For his willingness to risk that, European people knelt in the streets as in the presence of a new messiah. But to me the difference was that Jesus had nothing to offer to support His doctrine except His life. He disclaimed any kingship in this world, saw even His little band of disciples desert, forgave them as they did it, offered and gave His life—and no other life to vindicate His doctrine. I trust and believe that I could follow any leadership blindly to the end and at any sacrifice to preserve and defend this country, but I find it bitterly hard to follow blindly on a proposition to risk the sacrifice of this country for another.

To me this is simply a hard-boiled resolution of American interests. One course threatens them with financial bankruptcy and too great a naval and military dilution to make the game worth the candle. The other, as I believe, involves far less risk at far less cost of American blood and treasure, and is far more consistent with American policy since the beginning. It may be less spiritual and idealistic but I still agree with

George Washington that there isn't any altruism among nations. I still can't find in the records any nation getting as soft in our favor as we have become in favor of others. In all this sloganeering din there still whispers in my heart only one slogan, "America, first, last and all the time."

Chapter VI

WHAT ARE WE TO FIGHT FOR— UNION NOW?

A VERY earnest and sincere newspaperman, Clarence Streit, published a very earnest and sincere book recently (called *Union Now*) in which he proposed a sort of United States of the World. It is a noble concept. Almost a century ago, Tennyson, with something approaching clairvoyance, wrote, in "Locksley Hall"—a poem otherwise almost maudlin:

"For I dipt into the future, far as human eye
could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be;

"Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies
of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down
with costly bales;

"Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there
rain'd a ghastly dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the
central blue;

“Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-
wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging
thro' the thunder-storm;

“Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the
battleflags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
world.

“There the common sense of most shall hold a
fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in uni-
versal law.”

It has been a dream for ages and Tennyson's vision remarkably suggests, as some now believe, that both the utility and the utter destructiveness of aviation could hasten it. The empire of the Pax Romana held something of that idea. Surely Napoleon intended to create such a union—by force—as Hitler does. Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations was a similar vision to be attained by agreement. Aristide Briand tried to lead in that direction by his dream of

a United States of Europe—which, by way of interjection, would be a fine start before we, who have accomplished the picture, butt in to cover too much territory.

Naturally, Mr. Streit's book attracted very wide interest. Recent developments of the war caused him to publish a new and somewhat different volume called *Union Now with Britain*. Like "Defend America by Aiding the Allies," it is going great guns, with the creation of many local chapters, the accumulation of a vast propaganda fund and various other methods to use the propulsion of war hysteria to goad us into emotional decisions.

The author insists, as a principal point, that his proposal is emphatically not a new League of Nations. He might well do so considering the loose sanctions and elements of inevitable dissolution in the post-war League. The new proposal is that right now, while this war is in progress, we consolidate the United States of America with the British Commonwealth of Nations on a plan somewhat approximating the first United States of America under the Articles of Confederation—which was a dismal failure. But this is proposed merely as a tentative and temporary step to meet the present storm with something more than a mere alliance. He is as impatient with the alliance

idea and name as he is with the League idea and name. It is just a first step, as was our "Confederation"—a first step "to a more perfect union" with a constitution modeled on that of the United States—and to get us irrevocably into war.

There is no official indication that our government has given any encouragement to this plan but, make no mistake about it, many leaders in the internationalist groups, who have been so effective and influential in carrying us thus far on the paths hell-bent for war, are just as hell-bent for "Union Now" as they have been hell-bent for war. They almost have to be. If we are going into all-out war it has to be with some end in view. It is easy to see what we are going to fight against but not so easy to say what we are going to fight for. War-criers have got to have a goal. To abolish fear and want in the world is a little too much for the most idealistic stomach.

In our Revolution, it was "Liberty and Independence"; in 1812 "Seamen's Rights and Freedom of the Seas"; in our Mexican War, a war of annexation and conquest, it was harder to define fuzzy issues, so we just said, "Remember the Alamo." In the Civil War, it was "The Union forever." In the Spanish War again the goal was not so clear, so we said, "Remember the *Maine*." In 1917, it was "Make the

World Safe for Democracy.” In this war, it is, as usual, easy to say what we are fighting *against*, “dictatorship” (and probably getting it in the process), but what are we fighting *for*? The shape of things to come is becoming clearer—these people say we should fight for “Union Now with Britain” and “Reconstruct the World.”

I don't want to be captious and I certainly do not question the fervent sincerity of these new wishful architects of our American future—especially Clarence Streit who sat through a great part of the League experience. And yet I submit that anybody who reads his new book and especially its ringing quotations from orators for our early American union must realize that he is, in his enthusiasm, calling on a cloud of witnesses who, if they lived today to hear his use of their words, would scourge him from the temple. Imagine quoting our early American orations for union spoken against Southern secession as an argument for American union with the British Empire. That is practically what Mr. Streit does. His proposals are in direct contradiction of the original architects or later defenders of our American structure, but the only certain thing in our world is uncertainty and the only changeless thing is change. Yet, before we go stampeding after slogans, possibly to national

disaster, I think we should carefully consider the arguments they are intended to condense for easy popular digestion.

It was quite natural for Mr. Streit to repel any suggestion that he is proposing a new League of Nations for the very apparent reason that the League is a discredited failure.

It was also quite natural for him—and I use his name only as a convenient tag to identify a powerful movement—it was quite natural not to suggest any permanent Articles of Confederation because they were also a grotesque failure. With stronger reason, it was equally natural that he should hold up our Constitution as the eventual charter of world federation because that is the most conspicuous success in the whole history of attempted consolidation of states.

But it is well here to emphasize exactly what experiences in this great American laboratory of method resulted in our change from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution.

Concisely, they were that there must be "*E pluribus unum*"—over all our states, a super-state. It must have exclusive power to coin money and regulate its value, keep troops and ships of war, and to deny those powers to the states; to declare war, make peace with

other nations, conduct all foreign relations, and to deny those powers to the states; to forbid, without consent of the super-state, treaties among the subject states; supreme control of commerce among the several states and with foreign nations; a power to lay and collect taxes, which in practice has proved superior to the power of the states to maintain their fiscal independence; a power, as it has now at long last developed, for the "general welfare" to tax one state or one area to support another, or to tax one class to support another, to "share our wealth," not perhaps, as Huey Long used it, to "make every man a king" but nevertheless an exclusive power to levy taxes and tariffs and control exports and imports, which has proved to be a power to subsidize one area at the expense of another, and one class at the expense of another. It is a power of economic dissolution.

The combination of these powers has further been shown, at least ever since our Civil War, and especially by recent experience, to have a resultant power, gradually to submerge the several states into one centralized or even personalized government, so powerful, through its control of the economic affairs of the several states and its power of distributing to or withholding benefits from one group or class for the good of another group or class, that it can perpetuate

itself, apparently indefinitely—in spite of the supposed popular power of a democracy to retain eventual control by an unhampered electorate.

It is now proposed that we enter this kind of a Federation by amalgamation with the British Empire—or, as it now prefers to be called, Commonwealth of Nations. This is urged as an American advantage because, in the proposed initial setup, we shall have more votes in the general assembly; but, since the proposal for the regional leaves out more democracies than it includes and leaves open the way for more to enter, our voting majority would not amount to much in the end.

The proposal begins to seem a little queer when you glance at a map and see the vast areas of the British Empire which are not at all, or only a little, self-governing—far more hundreds of millions of people than govern themselves who populate the bulk of its habitable land area. It is even queerer when you consider the difference between the needs and the inherent policies of the two areas—the British and ours. However unevenly, the United States is a self-contained unit of manufacturing facilities and raw-resource areas. Britain is a production machine. She needs these outlying provinces, first to furnish her with raw materials and, second, to provide her with

a market for her finished products. Where would we fit in with such a combination? Would she want to surrender any of her necessary markets or sources of raw materials? Would we want to give up any of ours? It is highly improbable. At this moment Canada is proposing more preferential treatment for British imports through her tariff walls in discrimination against our goods, in order that she may provide British credits for the munitions which she is making and asking to be paid for while we are lease-lending or giving ours away.

One of the most difficult questions of our new government under the Constitution—one which caused great argument at the time—was whether the new Federal government should assume the debts of the several states. Effective union and national credit were impossible without that and so we did it against one of the hottest contests and greatest threatened scandals that plagued the new nation.

If there is to be any "Union Now," it can't be considered without thinking about that. We are still reasonably solvent. Many if not most of these British countries are not. We could not merge with them without some kind of responsibility for their financial status—perhaps complete responsibility.

There is a great difference also between the wages

and living standards of peoples in various parts of the British Empire. There is some in ours but it is intrinsic in our unitary economic system covering one hundred and thirty million people that there should not be very much. Free competition across state lines without tariffs makes that certain. Between the worst living standards in our prospective family addition—the coolie wages and practical peonage of, for example, Africans and East Indians—and our very lowest standards, there is a most decided difference. We could not admit their free “interstate commerce,” as we must between states of the union, on any such basis as that—without degrading and diluting our own standards to a perfectly shocking degree.

Whether we consider it from the fiscal standard or the standards of living of the constituent peoples, we couldn't engage in any such merger without diluting our strength with the world's weakness—without lowering the standards of all our people as individuals far more than we could raise the standards of all these backward and suppressed and underprivileged races.

Is it not better for us to maintain this high American plateau of human standards for which we and our fathers have worked, fought and suffered, as a place to which we can admit and have admitted others, with due regard for our own, than to get off it and wallow in a universal mire of human depression and degrada-

tion? Why did we declare our independence and fight our Revolution? Are both now to be liquidated in some starry-eyed altruism which seems to be an American affliction against which all the rest of the world is immunized? It is reminiscent of the threadbare tale,

Said the drunken Scot in the gutter to the slightly less drunken Scot on the curb, "Help me oot, Jock."

And came the answer, "I canna' help ye oot, mon, but I can get doon in the gutter wi' ye."

What help is there to anybody in getting down in the gutter with him? As it has turned out, nearly all our New Deal attempts in this regard have distributed not wealth but poverty. They have tended, it is true, to make everybody equal, but only equally miserable. Are we now to try that formula of folly not merely on a hundred and thirty million American but on many times that number of people, from Hottentots and Chinese coolies to American workmen? What are we going to do about their WPA wages and Social Security benefits? Mr. Streit thinks that the curse of the world is the idea of state sovereignty—which means the clinging of a particular community to its property and political rights in its own adventure. He wants to give ours away. I don't want to do it.

There isn't any sense in that kind of dispensation.

To the extent that our defense interests are parallel with those nations of our common blood, we have shown once before in 1917 and we are preparing to show again that the British can rely upon us for almost unlimited aid, but why should we pass from that to some kind of dilution of all that we are and have gained by our independent existence with all they have lost or never have acquired since our historic divorce? They can rely on us in their hour of peril but we have yet to have proved to us that we can rely on them in any similar embarrassment. It may be water over the dam, but let's not forget for the sake of an intelligent appraisal that, except for the pale gesture in Manila Bay, we were never in serious trouble when they were not one of our principal anxieties. Again, let's recall George Washington—though on present standards he seems to be just an old appeaser, isolationist and a Nazi "transmission belt"—when he warned us, as all realistic statesmen have always known, that there is no altruism among nations.

Let's support the British Empire whenever our two interests run parallel but let's not marry it in any shotgun wedding for all time whether we are assured that the parallelism of interests will long continue or not. Especially let's not do it under the emotion and hysteria of any war. "Europe has a set of primary

interests which to us have none or a very remote relation." But that is just the old foggy, George Washington, talking.

Yes, here have been and still remain two separate and distinct systems. One—the British—is that of imperialism and world power-politics. The greater part of that Empire is composed of subject, subservient and underprivileged people. The other—the American—is one that pretends at least to an absolute freedom of choice to peoples within its orbit. I think that, while we have not always had, we have now reason in that pretension. While we ventured vaguely into imperialism in the Philippines and Cuba, without any compulsion whatever, voluntarily and true to our traditions, we released Cuba from the modified apron strings of the Platt Amendment. We are now pledged to release and are in orderly process of voluntarily releasing the Philippines. We have paid for all our so-called conquests. It was only by grace of our restraint in this high idealism that, although the northern tier of states of Mexico were part of legitimate conquest and would probably now be much further advanced if we had kept them, we voluntarily released them at the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

These two systems—American democracy and British imperialism—without any criticism intended

of the latter, simply do not mix on any deliberate and unemotional analysis. Surely they should not be mixed under any hysterical pressure of threatening war. It is true that great weight is given in British writings and in Mr. Streit's *Union Now* to the fact that certain British possessions or dominions are as free as air from any British association not of their own choosing—the Commonwealth of Nations. It is equally true that others are not free at all. But the "loyalty" of those that are free is mostly a clear community of security and interest.

Support of Britain by America, where at least a partial community of interest lies, has been and will probably again be much more expensive than support of Britain by these free nations of the Commonwealth. It should be enough. If they are free and satisfied and loyal, so are we, and why should we pose as a war aim that either they or we should be bound under the emotional pressure of a new world cataclysm into some kind of new union the troubled ends of which no man can foresee any more than the framers of our Constitution foresaw the Civil War. There are many more germs of a similar dissolution in this proposal.

From the purely American point of view, there is nothing in it. We give and they take as they took in 1917 and 1918 and as they are preparing to take

now. They have no reason now, as they had none then, to complain of our parsimony. All we got in return then was a kick in the pants and an added headache. That's all we figure to get now. All right, let's go into temporary partnership with them in this crisis as we did before—but let's not marry them till death do us part. Don't forget that we'll be the papa and pay all the bills—now as then and, if this becomes a permanent wedding, from now on.

Also, there is such a thing as a single national government being too big. The interests of people in diverse conditions and climates may not be sufficiently identical to be governed by a central source. The success of both the British and the Roman Empires through the widest kind of latitude in local self-government bears eloquent testimony to the value of that principle. A violation of it brought to us the bloodiest Civil War in history and almost wrecked our country. A second violation of it with us in national Constitutional Prohibition never threatened that but it became the most hateful aspect of government next to the post-war Northern regimentation of the South that ever beset our system. A distant and unsympathetic majority can become as ruthless a tyranny as a distant and unsympathetic dictator.

Hitler will eventually fail because neither he nor

any other force can fit the diverse religious and racial divisions of Europe into any Procrustean bed. Any government which attempts to cover too much territory with any kind of undigested and unacceptable dogma and to pour free and diverse peoples into any common mold will fail. So would any Union—now or later—which would attempt, under our Constitutional model, to make uniform and subject to a common master—even a democratic majority—the wide variety of peoples in the United States and the far-flung British “Empire,” or “Commonwealth” if you prefer.

It is not enough to say, “Oh, they will be semi-sovereign states, perfectly free to control their own affairs in the Anglo-Saxon principle of local self-government.” It is possible that under some new formula, that might be true—but not under the formula of the Constitution of the United States. The powers found necessary to make that Constitution work have, as has been earlier demonstrated, turned out to be powers quite sufficient to turn the quasi-sovereignties into pale echoes of “local self-government.” America, under the Constitution, is governed mostly from Washington, and, when this present era of centralization is complete, that will be true to a far greater extent than any of us suspect today.

You will hear increasingly more about "Union Now," the "Four Freedoms," and "Reconstruction of the World" and American abolition of fear and want everywhere, as the present scene unfolds. All are trial balloons as war slogans at this moment. Maybe that is what we went to fight for—to give away our birthright which we have already so heavily mortgaged. Maybe I am living so far in the past and have fallen so far behind the times that I am not competent to pass judgment. And then again, maybe the ancient verities still prevail. Maybe two and two still make four. Maybe no wiser words were ever said than by the Fool to Lear, who gave his inheritance into the hands of his kith and kin and went mad over the "gratitude" he got in return—the same sort of "gratitude" we got after 1918:

FOOL. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

LEAR. No.

FOOL. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

LEAR. Why?

FOOL. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

It's a hell of an object for which to fight a war.

Chapter VII

O. K., WISE GUY. WHAT BETTER COURSE THAN OURS?

THE QUESTION that is used for this chapter heading is always asked as a sort of taunt by the interventionist of anybody who criticizes our present headlong toboggan slide toward war. It seems to me that there is an answer out of their own mouths—uttered before the 1940 elections—but dropped out of their lexicons without trace immediately afterward. It is “measures short of war but more than mere words.” It is “no American participation in this war, unless attacked.” It is “all-out American defense and rearmament that shall not be delayed or stripped for other nations until our own security is complete.”

To these I would add a few. One is: a lot more thought and preparation for the economic consequences of this war, no matter what trend it takes. Even if we get into it, the duty of any war government is not only to fight the war and win the war,

but also to survive the war. It was the aftermath of 1918 rather than the war itself that almost ruined us. We are giving less thought to that aspect now than we did then. Another is: step this defense production program up about fifty per cent and keep down its rapidly mounting wastes and cost increases, both by authorizing a single-handed competent management of it, and by getting tough with both industry and these bottleneck labor strikes which are holding it up a lot more vital defense production than is officially admitted and are becoming a stench in the nostrils of the American people.

Finally, I fear what is behind the daily disclosures of the Executive trend toward mixing us more and more in this war, not in aid to Britain merely, but toward an alliance with Britain, and toward American Executive direction of the course of this war. That means American responsibility for its outcome. Since all that is, I believe, contrary to the will of the American people as expressed in the election, I think there should be a joint committee of Congress, sitting continuously on the conduct of this war.

There are many volunteer pressure groups whose operations have had a tremendous effect on the creation of war hysteria and some that have tried to compose it—the “Defend America by Aiding the Allies

Committee" on the one hand and the "America First Committee" on the other. Such so-called polls as those of Doctor Gallup have had a tremendous effect. Far be it from me to suggest any restrictions on freedom of speech or advocacy, but we ought to know more about these pressures.

My name appears on the lists of the "America First Committee." I authorized that without enough thought and before I had seen what these new methods were going to be. I have never attended any of its meetings or participated in any of its deliberations. I sympathize with many of its general aims but it soon became apparent, as the Battle of the Committees developed, that no person who makes his living as an independent commentator on the passing scene can possibly afford to identify himself with any group opinion. He has to maintain his own, no matter what may be that of other members—and these range between very widely separated extremes.

But as to all these pressure groups and polls, in view of the tremendous influence they have developed and the utterly unofficial and irresponsible nature of their operations, I think they—including of course the America First group—should be searchingly and thoroughly and publicly investigated by a committee of Congress, not necessarily to put on them any re-

strictions whatever, but to disclose to the public, so that it may judge for itself, exactly what are their methods, their sources of income, and what influences do or may direct them.

Maybe it is too late. Maybe that would be locking the stable after the horse is stolen. But let us hope that we still have ahead of us a long life for this nation, and if it is to be guided to such an extent by privately conducted plebiscites and privately financed pressure groups, rather than by established governmental instrumentalities, we ought to know publicly who is doing the guiding and exactly how and why it is done.

Furthermore, for weal or woe, the day is coming as sure as sunrise when this country is going to ask, "Who got us into this mess? Why? What did they offer? What did they sacrifice? What were their motives?" Some few great names appear among the openly war-minded leaders. Others equally insistent are not so conspicuous. But of all the great names that urge belligerent action, their very ages make it clear they will not be in the sweat and blood and suffering of any battle charnel field. When crushing financial burdens come they will bear them too, but most of them can so well afford it that there will

be for them no belly pinch and pain, no lack of "enough to keep out hunger, thirst and cold."

Such is not the state of the great mass of voiceless Americans who are so many and who are thus being urged to disaster by so few. The multitude is of mothers who will mourn for sons, children who will lose fathers, families which will be broken, dependents who will be deprived of breadwinners—not to mention the broken bodies of soldiers themselves. These outnumber the war-criers by millions to one. These must carry the burden of war, if we get in, with all the inflationary bearing of its result on noncombatants, the resulting unprecedented depression with its infinitely worse bearing on them, the years ahead of insecurity and uncertainty. They will carry the burden, they will suffer the pain multiplied infinitely over anything the owners of the present voices for war will have to bear, and the multitude will want to know who were so importunate for their vicarious sacrifice and why.

I don't know all the answers, but I do know this: when comes that day of wrath, I wouldn't like to be in the company of those who don't seem to reckon this unhappiness of their fellow men. I believe that in ordinary courage and honor their names and interests now should be plainly endorsed on this bill of

exchange drawn upon war and horror, in order that they may appear as effectively at the reckoning as they are effective now in its negotiation.

Before returning to the question of the chapter heading to answer it more specifically than in this general summary, there is one reply in kind to its taunting tone. If these headlong architects of disaster had been as headlong for stopping Hitler and preparing our own defense through all the years since 1933, when Mr. Churchill was so eloquently warning of these needs, as they are now, this terrible situation for us would never have arrived. I glory in the fact, as earlier related, that in a much more modest and ineffective way I insisted on such a policy for us. If these gentlemen who are so hot now to throw billions about had been leading us then to spend only a few hundred millions, in building our defense, this Golgotha of humanity could have been completely avoided. Mr. Hopkins used billions with little for defense and so unthriftilly that he had to be sidetracked as a political liability. Now he is to direct the spending of billions for Britain. It doesn't make sense.

We had a far greater stake to rearm in those days to prevent universal war than we now have to engage in universal war. In World War I, we had spent our

tens of billions and our lives and crimped our country cruelly to aid the allies to a control of the German drive of conquest like that of the Angel of the Apocalypse "to cast that old serpent into the bottomless pit and shut him up and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled." They frittered it away, as Churchill says, "while England slept," and as is fair here to say, "while these new Sioux sun dancers of ours slept. One answer to this taunt in the question, "What better course than ours?" is "On the face of the eight-year record—as between thee and me—almost anything."

But let's get out of this hateful area of innuendo. What was meant by "methods short of war but more than mere words" before the election? What is meant by the omission of those words now? The change and the reasons for it are so clear that he who runs may read—unless he is illiterate. They were a device to conceal a purpose toward war, a purpose that it was politically wise to conceal before election because our people did not want war. It was a purpose to hoodwink us into thinking that we would aid the allies only by methods short of war when the meditation of their hearts as now clearly revealed was a conclusion that we could not do it short of war.

Could we not? Our greatest threat just now is a war in two oceans with a one-ocean navy. This book has developed the conviction of its author that there is nothing in the Far East that justifies us in a naval battle in the Pacific. But I know of not one single observer who does not believe that, if we had embargoed shipments of war material to Japan—a method more than mere words but short of war—any threat to us in the Pacific, even in the West Pacific, would have been completely futile.

We made some gestures. We did nothing effective. We permitted vast quantities of metals, fuels and the constituents of explosives to pass. We are still permitting some of them to pass. We short-rationed our potential enemy, but we still supplied enough to tempt him to belligerence. It almost seems in retrospect as though we courted conflict.

It seems the more so now, because the most warlike of our strategists now advise that we should immediately base the bulk of our Pacific fleet on the British base at Singapore and either bluff the Japanese out of southward expansion in the West Pacific or fight a great naval battle there to erase the threat of any Japanese navy. The elements of this reasoning and the possible results are discussed earlier in this book.

If the Japanese Navy could be blacked out forever,

it would relieve all our tensions considerably. We wouldn't then need a two-ocean navy. It would put a different and better aspect on the war. But it is a magnificent gamble. Many, but far from all, of our naval officers are itching to go to it. Many of them feel absolutely confident of our superior fighting ability. If I were Secretary of the Navy, I wouldn't care much for a combatant naval officer who didn't feel that way.

But if I were directing national policy with all the assurances of "short of war" that have been given the American people, my conscience would trouble me considerably. I would know from almost every single study and official report that any destructive threat to this continent from Japan is absolutely negligible. I would know also that the usual percentages of strategy do not justify an attack so far from our bases. I would know further that, on the doctrine of the "fleet in being" which dominates modern naval strategy, the Japanese wouldn't risk a single engagement to a knockout unless they were assured of success. I would re-examine the innumerable hideouts, channels and advantages of those archipelagoes and say:

Chance One: A quick and smashing victory.

Chance Two: A paralyzing defeat.

Chance Three: An interminable war for the destruction of commerce which would pin our navy in the Pacific indefinitely and render us absolutely dependent on the British Navy in the Atlantic and on the outcome of the European war for a long time to come.

Then I think I would say: "the gamble is magnificent but both hazardous and unnecessary. It is either quick victory or interminable involvement. The possible gains, at least in the Orient, are negligible. The possible dangers to us of "waiting and seeing" are also negligible. The possible losses are national bankruptcy and inextricable entanglement in war in which we have little to gain and much to lose in all parts of the world. I think I'll just clamp on all-out embargo on Japan, maintain our position in readiness in both the Pacific and the Atlantic, keep our Pacific fleet based on Hawaii, speed up the building of an American Navy, Army and Air Force until my margins of safety are much greater than they are today, and not plunge into this maelstrom, all unready, until we are a lot stronger on every front than we are today."

The danger is that the pressure groups for war are all for getting in, whether we are ready or not. They are for gambling. Above all, the Commander-in-

Chief is one of the greatest, boldest and, let us admit, most successful gamblers in our history. He is a great navalist. I think in his heart he has always believed that we could blow the Japanese out of the water and has longed to try it. The danger is that we are hell-bent for war in both Europe and Asia. The only purpose of this book is to take one last look at the surrounding scenery, while it is still possible, because if we do take the dive, as a soldier, its author will be in duty bound to support every decision of the President.

The question of the authority and responsibility granted to the President by the Lease-Lend Bill, to conduct this war, even if we do not engage in it, has been thoroughly discussed in preceding chapters. I believe that the extent of that—far beyond its superficial seeming—was not and is not understood by our people. Our war-criers of the Defend Britain Committee, who had never before dared to raise their voices to that effect, are already out with a demand for American convoys of munitions shipments, revision of the Neutrality Acts, and permission to the British to recruit American man power, a violation of several of our present laws. This is urged notwithstanding assurances by both Mr. Churchill and the President that no men were needed or wanted

—only machines—and apparently forgetting Mr. Churchill's urgings of the first World War that the quickest way to get Americans to Europe was to include American boys in British troops and spill American blood in France. (He was right from the British standpoint, but somebody ought to be thinking from the American standpoint.) If there were anything that Britain, as a belligerent, wanted this Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies to do that it would not do, and do notwithstanding the earlier utterances of its own chairman and campaign promises or the expressed judgment and wish of the American people, I can't think what that would be.

I think we should not rush forth in such headlong fashion. Full fiscal authority has been given to the President and I opposed very little of it, but I think he should be made clearly to understand that it was given in accord with the representations upon which it was asked—not to get us into war, but to keep us out of war.

Naval, military and air equipment is being given away far beyond the judgment of what any but the most subservient of our professional soldiers and sailors think is prudent in view of our own defensive requirements, especially considering the possibility of some sudden catastrophe.

It is too early to be sure, but the requested powers, which were given on the representation that they were to enable us to serve only as the arsenal of democracy, are apparently already being used to influence the diplomacy and strategy of the war on every front. It is perhaps too early to conjecture—surely too early to characterize or criticize something that is not clear. Perhaps, by the time this book reaches print, these tendencies may be either not established, shown never to have existed, or clearly proved as policy. In my view it is worth while to call public attention to their possibility now because, if they are the wish and will of the American people, they should be supported. But they are the plain path to total, inevitable war. If they are not the American wish and will—that had better be registered immediately because they bear within their breadth a possibility of precipitating outright war with not a moment's notice.

It seems to me that the opening of our treasury, our granaries and our whole industrial plant to British uses at the expense of the American people is a sufficient contribution, without using that wholesome and unusual generosity as a rope to tie our fate to the war chariot of another nation not only in Europe but in Asia. Maybe I am wrong. Maybe that is American

judgment but, if not, it is high time that a negative judgment should be registered.

Of course all things in this fateful spring are in the balance. The destiny of nations never quivered in a more delicate equipoise. We are now staking our defensive efforts in supplying alien forces far afield—thousand of miles overseas.

This may be good strategy. Many good men so believe. But none can contest that our only eventual certain security, at the end, is our ability to defend our own—"this America," about which I, at least, feel far more sentimental than some Americans about "this England," sentimental as I am about that source of my family's beginnings and steeped as I am in knowledge and admiration for her history and especially of her present incomparable leader, Mr. Churchill.

Furthermore, as to the question in the caption, "What better course than ours?"—with some first-hand experience with our earlier vast rearmament attempt and a good deal of knowledge of what is going on now, permit me to report that the present effort is simply not moving fast enough or well enough.

It is already estimated that, due to inefficiency, delays, and rising prices and wages, the original cost estimates of our defensive effort will have to be revised upward by perhaps as much as ten per cent—

two and one-half to three billion dollars. The estimated cost of the cantonments will be almost doubled.

Officially it is said that delays due to labor troubles are insignificant. Actually all Washington correspondents who have to analyze and report upon these matters know that while strikes seem to have been cunningly devised to involve few workers, they have been pulled at key points, where they affect and delay the final production of vast quantities of the most vital defensive weapons—at testing plants where they paralyze the whole production of the new super-power airplanes, at alloy plants where they hold up important segments of the entire shell program, at plants producing electrical equipment where they hinder a large part of the explosives program, at cantonments and hospital installations where they hold up the beginning of training of tens of thousands of men.

Men are drafted for the army. Production of equipment is as much a part of national defense as military training. Most of these strikes have nothing to do with wages, hours or working conditions. Most of them have to do with whether one or another union shall represent workers—and they are given no fair chance quickly to vote on which they want.

Racketeering, exploitation and all the evil aspects

of labor organization—in a small percentage of the great mass of American workers' unions—are being allowed to scandalize the whole labor movement and for some reason the defense administration, instead of getting tough, as it does in conscripting men, is as spineless as an oyster in the face of this sabotage, which in some cases, as in the Vultee plant, has been reported as clearly Communistic, and in others is apparently something the Fuehrer himself has ordered.

A worse aspect is the apparent official indifference to rising costs and incipient inflation.

This is the greatest danger threatening us today. It threatens our position in this war, in the world thereafter, and our children for generations to come. I could do no better than to quote Mr. B. M. Baruch on this subject in a memorandum of some years ago but which is just as true today as the day it was written—and which few in the present defense organization have even taken the trouble to read.

“The following sequence has attended every major conflict in history:

- (1) Shortages of services and things develop rapidly.
- (2) Competitive bidding among the procurement agencies of government and, in the last war at least, other procurement

agencies, for the civil population send all prices into a rapidly ascending spiral.

- (3) Expenses of government multiply. The abnormal need for money requires vast issues of certificates of governmental indebtedness. The inherent threat of destruction of government impairs national credit. The combination of all these things rapidly debases the exchange value of money thereby still further increasing the prices of things. The consequent destruction of buying power in the markets of the world begins almost immediately to impair the economic strength of the nation in the conflict. This sapping of economic strength will, in future wars, be the determining cause of defeat. As Ludendorf has so bitterly complained his military front remained impregnable long after what he called 'the home front' had crumbled. Destruction of civil morale defeated Germany.

“This process intensifies as time elapses with the following inevitable results:

- (1) Destruction of domestic morale through a just and bitter resentment by soldiers, their families (and indeed by all persons

of fixed income) at the spectacle of grotesquely exaggerated profits and income to those engaged in trade or in services for sale in competitive markets and the constantly increasing burden of bare existence to all those who are not so engaged. This is the greatest source of complaint of 'unequal burdens.' The present demands for 'equalizing burdens' and 'taking the profit out of war' both go back to this single phenomenon of war inflation. There is no more important problem to solve—whether we consider it purely as a means to maintain the solidarity and morale of our people, or as the basis of our economic strength for war purposes, or to avoid war's aftermath of economic prostration, or on the broader grounds of humanity and even-handed justice.

- (2) The inflationary process affords opportunity to individuals and corporations to reap profits so large as to raise the suggestion of complacency if not of actual hospitality toward the idea of war. That any human being could be persuaded, by

prospect of personal gain, however magnificent, to invoke the horrors of modern war is almost unthinkable, nevertheless the certainty that war could never result in the enrichment of any man would give us all security and comfort.

- (3) Inflation enormously increases the cost of war and multiplies burdens on the backs of generations yet to come. The war debt of the nation is necessarily incurred in terms of debased dollar values. In the inevitable post-war deflation the debt of course remains at the inflated figure. Thus the bonds that our government sold in the World War for fifty-cent dollars must be paid through the years by taxes levied in one-hundred-cent dollars. For example, our total war expenditure was \$39,000,000,000 incurred in terms of 1917, 1918, 1919 and 1920 dollars. In terms of the purchasing power of 1913 dollars it would have been only \$13,000,000,000, or in terms of 1930 dollars probably not more than \$15,000,000,000. Such a grotesque result would be almost unbelievable were the figures not living

facts. If anything can be done to avoid this practical *doubling* of the economic burden of war certainly we should spare no effort to accomplish it.

“When we entered the World War, the frantic demands and uncoordinated counter-bidding of our future associates in war had already distorted our own price structure out of any semblance of its normal scheme. In other words there was a robust inflation here before we ever entered the war. Furthermore, nearly twelve months elapsed after our declaration before we had evolved controls and organization capable of coordinating our own and our associates’ procurement activities and of controlling price. Notwithstanding this delay and the dimness with which controlling principles were at first perceived, we did, in 1918, arrive at a method which checked the process of inflation in America and kept it in check until all controls were released in November 1918. It is to this experience that I refer when I say that we have proved in practice a method to control inflation. That proof convinces me that it would also prevent inflation if applied at once upon the

advent of war and before the inflationary process begins.

“To measure inflation of price and profit we must have some norm. The obvious norm is the whole price structure as it existed on some antecedent date near to the declaration of war on which the normal operation of the natural law of supply and demand can be said to have controlled price. That determined, we need a method of freezing the whole price structure at that level. The obvious way to do this is simple:—by proclamation to decree that every price in the whole national pattern as of that determined date shall be the maximum that may thenceforth be charged for anything—rents, wages, interest rates, commissions, fees—in short, the prices for every item and service in commerce.

“In these few words reside the basic principle of war control of national industry and of the present suggestion for elimination of war inflation in America. The superficial objection is—‘You propose to repeal the law of supply and demand.’ We may as well take this bull by the horns. In modern war administrative control *must* replace the law of supply and demand.

“In the national pattern of peace, all economic

forces are operating under the workaday influences of that natural law. Prices, production and finance all are factors of competition—in other words, of that law. But in peace, the various parts of what will eventually be the economic engine for war are neither coordinated nor subject to any single guiding control. Indeed, to prevent such combination and control is the basic effort of peace-time administration. ‘*Competition* is the life of trade.’

“Suddenly war appears. The whole tempo, volume and quality of the force of *demand* becomes distorted. Things that yesterday were of no great importance (*e.g.*, toluol, picric acid and sodium nitrate) suddenly become the aim of all endeavors. As to these as well as to all other fundamental commodities there is an almost instantaneous shortage. Now, in peace-time shortage, the highest bidder takes all. That is the law of supply and demand. In war—at least in major modern war—we cannot permit this. The government must assume control of the whole supply and ration and apportion it—not to the longest purse but to the most necessitous use. Furthermore, the distinguishing characteristic of peacetime economic operation is *competition*

and basic prices are largely determined thereby. Also it is literally the object of one great competitor to secure as great a proportion of all business as possible. Under war conditions the entire process is reversed. There is more business than all the facilities of the country can handle. Competitors must become cooperators in order to meet the very minimum demand for shortage items. Control of this cooperation rests in government. Thus, both because governmental determination (*and not price*) controls demand, and because only complete cooperation (*and not competition*) can produce supply in sufficient quantity, the law of supply and demand adjourns itself.

“These principles apply to shortage items. The crystallized price structure is a schedule of maxima. Items in ample supply are left free to fall below the fixed price level.

“Furthermore, this provision, which places control of and responsibility for supply of shortage items in the hands of government, by no means solves the shortage problem. Under the law of supply and demand rapidly increasing demand (and consequent rising price) is the force relied upon to provide increased supply. In war

we cannot wait for this and we cannot stand the waste and confusion incident to it. We must use other means such as were very fully developed in 1918. By way of introduction let us name them:

- (1) Elimination of waste, loss and unnecessary accumulation through frantic competition by all procurement agencies, which elimination is achieved by a rigorous control and coordination of them and the funneling of all demand through one central control agency.
- (2) Rationing by a priorities system and allocation of shortage items in order that more necessitous uses (such as equipment and supply of field armies) may have priority in time with careful provision against undue hardship to the civil population.
- (3) Conservation, by which is meant: standardization of type of design; elimination of any but necessitous uses; prevention of hoarding and accumulation; postponement of all deferrable uses thus increasing supply by sharply curtailing demand.

- (4) Substitution—by which is meant substitution of items of greater availability for shortage items.
- (5) Discovery of new sources of supply.

“The resiliency of a great people like ours—their capacity to ‘do without’ or adapt themselves to new conditions—makes the potentiality of the above expedients very great. No one who has not seen these expedients in operation would be likely to imagine the vast quantities of essential commodities, power, storage space, transportation, money and labor which can be made available in this way. An explanatory word as to some of these expedients may be in order. Conservation is among the most effective of war-time expedients. Multiplicity of type and design in almost every commodity of commerce wastes a vast amount of component material. Had the war gone on another year our whole civil population would have gradually emerged (as wardrobes and inventories became exhausted) in cheap but serviceable uniform. Types of shoes were to be reduced to two or three. The manufacture of pleasure automobiles was to cease. Flaps from pockets and unnecessary trim in clothing

would have disappeared. Steel had already been taken out of women's corsets.

"The conservation program was of course much broader than this. It affected practically the whole field of commodities. We had instituted a deferment of every type of building construction except that indispensable to the prosecution of the war. We had gasless, meatless, sugarless, fuelless days and, in ways and methods too numerous to mention, we were greatly increasing the supply for essential uses by cutting off supply for non-essentials.

"Yet, after all these things are done there will remain unavoidable necessity for adjusting the crystallized price structure upward in individual cases. We always have low-cost producers and high-cost producers. War requires *all* producers. This presents the most difficult aspect of the problem:

'If we raise the price sufficiently high to pay a reasonable profit to the high-cost producer we will thereby create inordinately high profits to the low-cost producer.'

"There are only two alternatives—create a system of bonuses to the latter class, or limit, by

an excess profit tax, the return on invested capital to the former class. After exhaustive study during the war, the former method was considered impracticable and the latter was adopted. The most cogent objection to it is the great variety of accounting systems and the consequent confusion and opportunity to conceal profit. Due to the income tax and the increasing ownership by the public of the securities of great corporations accounting is now much simpler. Some of the difficulty still remains but it is a hindrance—not an insuperable obstacle.

“Besides the necessity of revising some prices upward there will also be a variety of occasions for revising others downward. A method must be devised to adjust the initial ceiling on the price pattern to the changing situation.

“We did this during the war by a Price-Fixing Commission which reported directly to the President who passed final judgment and announced the price. There was nothing in the experience of that Commission to suggest that a similar system would not be entirely effective in the future.

“The ceiling over the pattern of price will also have to be protected against the situation in

export trade. If, as is almost certain, the inflationary process is in operation in the rest of the world, means will have to be applied to prevent extravagant foreign prices from upsetting our domestic schedule. Government, in its world economic strategy, must have almost plenary control over foreign trade. We shall see the agency for such control purchasing for export at the controlled domestic price, selling in export at world price and using the profit to buy necessary imports at inflated world prices and sell to domestic needs at the controlled schedule.

“Of course the basis of the present suggestion is price fixing. The student of the economic-history of war will say, ‘There is nothing new about this. Every nation with a debased currency has tried to force acceptance of it at a flat figure. None ever succeeded.’

“One did succeed. It was the Price-Fixing policy of the World War. The distinction between that and previous attempts was that, for price fixing in 1918, the whole of industry was mobilized and under control of government in a sense never even imagined in any other country or in any other war. This I shall later demonstrate. Another distinction between all previous

attempts with which I am familiar (including that of the World War) and the present suggestions is that what is here proposed is that we apply the organization and methods developed in 1918—not *after* rampant inflation has run away with our economic structure—but at the very outset.

“As illustrative of these distinctions, New York in the Revolution (1 Cook’s New York Laws 1780, p. 210) enacted a law by which the profits of manufacturers, wages of mechanics and laborers and the prices of a long list of commodities were fixed at a figure ‘*not to exceed twenty fold of the prices paid in 1774*’—the latter date was taken as reflecting the normal operation of the law of supply and demand and the ‘twenty fold’ as measuring the debasement of the Continental currency. Here was an attempt to check inflation *after it had occurred*. The basic idea is the same as the one here suggested, except that we now propose to check inflation *before* it occurs.

“Similarly, in the 1917 Food Control Act, profits in July 1914 were set as the maxima for war-time profits of bakeries. The New York price fixing was a failure. The Food Control Act succeeded. Why? The former was a fiat

with no adequate means of enforcing it. The latter was backed by the whole system of licensing, commandeering and regulating powers slowly evolved by our War Administration.

“A re-creation of that Administration at the very outset of another war would insure the success of the suggestions here advanced.”

Now these words were from the greatest expert on this subject the world has ever seen. They are today being almost completely ignored. To the question in the chapter caption, “What Better Course Than Ours?” one answer is to take vigorous hold of our own preparations for defense and make them work to protect our people and produce our requirements, before the war, during the war and after the war. All the people who ask that question seem to think about is getting into war as fast as they can contrive it with precious little thought to the far weightier matters of the problem.

There resided in the experience of the War Industries Board, which was copied, as far as their institutions were adaptable, in both Germany and England, and which had been brought up to date by constant studies in the Industrial War College, a complete plan which would have reduced the cost and

increased the speed of our present rearmament effort very greatly. It would have protected our country from the terrible dangers of inflation which are now rushing upon us.

What would "Wise Guy" do better than what we are doing? Well, in addition to what else has been said, he would take hold of this defense program on proved practical principles and make it work.

For example, neither the army, the navy nor the OPM should have anything to do with labor disputes. Their business is to get production. To set labor against management in the very Office of Production Management (OPM) by a two-headed man—Knudsen-Hillman—one representing labor and the other management—is to produce as much of a monstrosity as any other two-headed man. It belongs with the rest—preserved in alcohol in a specimen bottle in a medical museum. Some impartial board should settle labor disputes, and managers of production should have nothing whatever to do with them.

The organization and integration between the organized supply departments of governmental demand and some nation-wide commodity organization of American supply, so clearly shown to be necessary in every great economic war effort since 1914, is also almost completely absent.

Finally, the whole nation should be mobilized behind this effort, sparked with enthusiasm and given something to do—every man and woman and a lot of the children. We are moving into this forty-billion-dollar effort, on which we are told our fate if not that of “Western civilization” depends, with about the zip of a funeral procession in a leper colony.

In answer to this question which has been frequently flung at me—“O.K., Wise Guy. What Better Course Than Ours?”—it would be possible, from experience here and in other countries and from the running record of our present effort, to write a book much longer than this; but this one is already long enough for modern reading habits.

I trust that it outlines at least one point of view. It may be a wrong point of view but it is one that at least should be given momentary consideration before we plunge clear over the precipice, “hell-bent for war.”

THE END

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