

Weekly News Analysis Fear of Foreign Entanglement Brings Return to Isolationism By Joseph W. La Bine

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

Domestic

Since President Roosevelt's "quarantine" speech at Chicago in October, 1937, U. S. public opinion has veered sharply and outspokenly against dictators, meanwhile making new friends for France, Britain and China. Washington's traditional policy of isolation and neutrality has well-nigh gone by the boards, thanks to Nazi Jew-baiting, Japan's threat to U. S. interests in China and dictator inroads throughout South America. Most heated U. S. speechmaker against Adolf Hitler has been Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, whose tirades presumably reflect White House sentiment.

Long-awaited reaction against foreign entanglement took root only a month ago when congress discovered the administration was sponsoring military plane sales to France and Britain. Today the issue of isolation is growing by leap and bound, not only as a question of foreign policy but as a political football headed for the 1940 presidential election. In less than one late February week enough shots were fired to constitute a definite trend.

"Wicked Dictatorships." To Pittsfield, Mass., went William R. Castle, assistant chairman of the Re-



REPUBLICAN CASTLE
More concentration, less chatter.

publican national committee, once U. S. envoy to Japan, later a Hoover undersecretary of state. Said Mr. Castle, before a 40 and 8 (American Legion) society: "There is still so much work . . . to keep this the best possible country . . . that our officials would do well to confine themselves to this task instead of spending so much time talking about wicked dictatorships and the dangers of war. We certainly want none of their philosophy . . . but . . . if that philosophy is what other nations want it is not for us to attempt to prevent it."

Nye Again. An irreconcilable pacifist, North Dakota's Sen. Gerald P. Nye saw red when he learned of the French-British plane sales, rushed to his office and drafted a bill. Its gist: Military and naval officers could bar export of any planes developed in the U. S. until they determined that the craft are not needed exclusively at home.

One reason for the bill was testimony that Mr. Roosevelt had ignored high military-naval officials in making the foreign deal. Another reason is Senator Nye's fear of an ultimate U. S. desire to sell planes to Germany, Italy, Japan or any other nation, thus producing a "vicious circle." Next day it became apparent the "vicious circle" had already been created internationally. A member of the civil aeronautics authority reportedly told the senate military affairs committee that Germany was willing to sell fighting planes to—of all nations—France.

Foreign Trade. Among important loans of the federal-sponsored Export-Import bank was one to China for \$25,000,000, financing sale of 1,000 trucks for obvious military use. Fearful lest this constituted a dangerous commitment, congress thought twice when the Export-Import bank—due to expire June 30—came up for two years' extension. Argued Michigan's Rep. Jesse P. Wolcott: "This bank can get us into a situation which may involve us in any European or Asiatic conflict . . . It is a dangerous thing to have this power lying around." Argued Ohio's Sen. Robert A. Taft: "The government shouldn't be in the export business." Passed by the house after vigorous debate, the extension bill could expect a chary reception by the senate.

Meanwhile the U. S. chamber of commerce lifted its eyebrows over a report that 25 American industrialists would join a British-German cartel to regulate competition in world markets and offset a threatened trade war. The state department knew nothing about it and was far from enthusiastic.

But—While one branch of U. S. opinion obviously swung to isolation, another branch stuck out its neck by virtue of a long-standing, thoroughly accepted American creed, the Monroe doctrine. Illustrating how any U. S. interest in South America leads to international complications in the world of 1939 were two developments: (1) The civil aeronautics authority prepared to fight German, Italian, French and Dutch air services for supremacy in South America; (2) Dr. Raul Ribeiro, Brazilian economist, offered U. S. capitalists a chance to invest in a mining development project for his country, with possible exchange of Brazilian ore for American-made munitions.

Europe

All European crisis since 1930 have been started by scheming Italy and Germany. With Europe well on its way to another nervous breakdown scheduled for mid-March, signs now indicate that Britain and France—lovers of peace and the status quo, may at least be blamed—if not responsible—for the spring crisis.

Underlying every potential European development is the Spanish war, whose early termination will leave Italy free to pursue Mediterranean territorial demands against France. This, because a Franco victory in Spain is an Italian victory, giving Il Duce more Mediterranean power. It would jeopardize not only France's colonies, but Britain's "lifeline" to the Far East.

By now the Paris-London "axis" has at least three reasons to decide on an aggressive course which may decide Europe's future:

(1) Unconfirmed but persistent reports of French-Italian clashes on the Libya-Tunisia border (see map) jibe with announcements that Italy's Libyan garrisons are being increased. Tunisia is one French territory specifically demanded by Italy, unofficially. Reports say Fascist troops penetrated Tunisia at a spot 25 miles southeast of the first French fortified zone, just as Italy's Marshal Pietro Badoglio visited Libya to inspect frontier forts. Meanwhile Rome reports indicate 1,000,000 men will be under arms this spring.

(2) Germany has started mobilization for annual war games, accompanied by renewed grumblings against "war scares" by western democracies.

(3) Chancellor Hitler, Premier Mussolini and Generalissimo Franco are scheduled to meet soon for a decision on Spain's future, and, whether nations want it is not for us to attempt to prevent it."

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Asia

Japan's thinly veiled ambition is to drive westerners out of China. Until this year the white man was oppressed only insofar as he stood in the way of Tokyo's marching armies. But Japan looks covetously and angrily on such prosperous developments as Shanghai's international settlement, Britain's Hong Kong crown colony and France's Indo-China. Already Hong Kong has been isolated by Jap conquest of Canton, her gateway to China. More recently British territory along the Hong Kong-Canton railroad was bombed. Farther south Japan seized independent Hainan



PREMIER HIRANUMA
Is International Settlement next?

island despite an agreement with France.

Latest and craftiest Japanese plan is seizure of the Shanghai international settlement, only non-Jap area left in the city and an unwilling haven for Chinese guerrilla warriors. In the past 18 months 88 political murders have been committed there, most victims being puppet Chinese governmental officials in Japanese pay. Latest victims were Chen Lo, foreign minister for the Central China government in Nanking, and Marquis Li Kuo-chieh, grandson of China's great statesman, Li Hung-chang.

Life is cheap in the Orient and loss of a few puppets would be small for control of the Shanghai international settlement. Though backed only by rumor, there is growing belief that Chinese murders may have been "planted" by Tokyo as an excuse to march in and keep peace, never to leave.

Whether true or not, the belief jibes with retaliatory action taken in Tokyo. Up before a turbulent meeting of the diet rose Lt. Gen. Seishiro Itagaki, minister of war, to declare he was "convinced of the necessity to take an effective measure of self-defense" in the international settlement. Later, in extraordinary session, the cabinet placed official approval on such action when Premier Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma declared the terrorism "compels Japan to take fundamental measures to maintain peace and order."

Meanwhile Premier Hiranuma could see that his newest drive to close China's open door would meet stubborn resistance. From London came bitter protest against the Hong Kong bombing. In Shanghai the international police redoubled their efforts and prepared to resist a threat on the settlement. To the south, at lazy Haiphong, Indo-China, France was angry enough to junk her Japanese agreement just as Japan had junked it, opening her gateway to supplies for China.

Business

U. S. efforts to reconcile heavily taxed business have proceeded since "Uncle Dan" Roper was replaced as commerce secretary by Harry Hopkins. After initial promises Mr. Hopkins settled back in silence for two months of study to learn what made his heretofore ineffectual department tick.

Some hint of more reconciliation was contained in President Roosevelt's pre-vacation remark that business need fear no more taxes. More hint was found in the speech of Secretary of War Harry Woodring, who stepped from his military shoes to tell the Democratic Women's National council that he hoped soon to see an end of "spending and taxing" if private business will take the initiative.

Even before Secretary Hopkins left for Des Moines to make his "policy speech," Washington knew pretty well what an obviously revitalized commerce department intended to do. Main points in the Hopkins program: (1) Develop the heretofore unimportant business advisory council; (2) promote re-employment to slash WPA rolls; (3) study taxes and their effect on business; (4) attempt to succeed where the labor department had failed, in settling the feud between the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Bruckart's Washington Digest

In U. S. Alone of All World Is There Real Freedom of Speech

Disturbing Signs Recently Indicate All Is Not Well; Administration Tirades Against Press Become Frequent; Concerted Effort to Get Rid of Critics.

By WILLIAM BRUCKART

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WASHINGTON.—One of America's greatest and most glorious traditions is the jealousy with which its citizens guard the right of free speech and a free press. There is no nation in the world now, and there never has been one, where such freedom for expression of opinion is accorded as we have in the United States. For proof, if proof be needed, simply take the old atlas and examine the countries, one by one, and abundant evidence will be found. Here, alone in all of the world, can an individual or a group have its untrammelled say.

There have been some signs lately, however, that are disturbing. I do not mean to over-emphasize them by a discussion of them, but the greatest lesson that I have learned is that the American people will correct conditions, or prevent their development, if they know what the facts are and find them adverse.

During the last several months, there have been frequent tirades against the press of the nation. Some of the denunciations have come from President Roosevelt in reply to press criticism of some of his policies. Other administration spokesmen have followed the President's lead. Notably among them, and certainly the most vicious, is the secretary of the interior, Harold L. Ickes, who seems, in this instance, to be the lord high chief verbal executioner of opposition writers and newspapers.

Mr. Roosevelt's recent assertion that some newspaper owners are deliberately misrepresenting the facts and Mr. Ickes' assertion that "our newspapers are not as free as they ought to be in a democracy" constitute serious accusations, even after one forgets how constantly Mr. Ickes gets out on a limb. It seems to me, therefore, that there ought to be some clarification of the situation. It might be asked, and properly, I believe, why Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Ickes do not point out those newspapers that are charged, in effect, as plain liars.

Administration Seeks to Get Rid of the Critics

Now, to turn abruptly from one phase of the situation to another, attention should be directed to the recent bill introduced in the senate by Senator Wheeler, the Montana Democrat. The bill proposes reorganization of the federal communications commission, the agency that controls radio. Radio, of course, is the "free speech" just as the newspapers are the "free press" that is one of the guarantees of the national Constitution.

There can be no doubt that the federal communications commission is shot through with dissension. There is no doubt that it has developed one of the worst messes in government supervision of any industry. It is a shameful situation, and there appears to be no solution except to get rid of the bulk of the personnel, from the commissioners on down the line, until all trouble makers have been eliminated. I have written frequently in these columns that the best law can be destroyed by selection of bums to administer it; and the general appraisal here is that the members of the federal communications commission are a pretty sickly lot of government officials. The appointments of various agencies for "press relations" began to undergo expansion.

Well, you ask, how does this have anything to do with President Roosevelt's denunciation of the newspapers. Where does it touch free speech that may be adverse to the New Deal administration?

The answer lies in a belief, now held by a great many observers in Washington, that somewhere in the administration is a concerted effort to get rid of the critics. There is little political pressure that can be exerted upon the newspapers, because they will speak their views through their columns, but with the radio, government supervised, licensed, a weighty club over its head at all times, the situation is different.

Radio News Commentators Eliminated From Air Waves

Some things have happened lately that bear recounting. Just as an example, and to cite only one case,

Boake Carter is off of the air as a news commentator. He was a severe, and, at times, a vindictive critic of the New Deal. A former friend of the New Deal, Dr. Stanley High, recently wrote in the Saturday Evening Post that Carter was kept out of new contracts by the administration.

There have been frequent recurrences of the rumor, too, that W. J. Cameron, who speaks for the Ford Motor company, was marked by administration trouble shooters as a speaker who ought to be eliminated from the air waves. Mr. Cameron continues on the air. Gen. Hugh S. Johnson, former NRA boss, is a pain in the neck for the New Deal as well, but nothing has happened to him, yet.

Other rumors of the type could be mentioned, but I was asked how any body in the government would dare to interfere. The same letter asked how such ends could be achieved.

A few paragraphs earlier, I referred to governmental supervision, licensing, etc. That is the answer to the question. Any radio station gets a license for only a short period. Renewal of that license depends, according to law, upon compliance with federal communications commission regulations and the law's provisions. This would seem to leave only a limited discretionary power. It is a case, however, like the army officer making an inspection of a buck private's barracks: if he wants to find dirt, he will find it.

President's Trusted Adviser Drafts Reorganization Bill

So, to link the Roosevelt denunciation of newspapers and the Wheeler radio bill, one has only to know that Chairman Frank McNinch, the President's most trusted radio adviser, largely drafted the Wheeler reorganization bill. That measure, it should be added, reduces the communications commission to a membership of three. There would be "administrative assistants" appointed for each of the major types of communication, and, thus, one individual becomes czar of radio, another of wire communication and so on. And, while the members of the commission must be named "by and with the advice and consent of the senate," the administrative assistant may be anyone who has the necessary political pull.

I repeat that the statements related above represent the belief of a good many persons. One of the swift changes that has taken place in this country is the switch in the attitude of the bulk of the newspapers. It will be recalled that when Mr. Roosevelt and the New Deal took over the government, there were so few editorial criticisms of the President's program that any outcry was negligible in effect. The corps of news writers who attended the President's twice-a-week press conferences accepted his statements without equivocation, or without question. It was a press relationship more friendly than any other President ever had.

Then, some of the New Deal ideas proved flops and editors started asking questions. Their Washington correspondents searched deeper than just official handouts. It was about this time that the personnel of various agencies for "press relations" began to undergo expansion.

Once He Laughed at Them, But Things Have Changed

A few years ago, Mr. Roosevelt dealt with the few editorial criticisms in masterful fashion—by laughing about them. That was the attitude of most department and agency heads. But things have changed now to the extent that editorial criticisms and unfriendly stories, or stories that include information beyond the handouts released from government sources, become the subject for vitriolic attack from government quarters.

I have no idea how long the campaign against the press may run. It surely has plenty of momentum now, and there is plenty of money available for "press relations" work. Mr. Ickes said that the modern newspapers can "dish it out but cannot take it." I wonder if Mr. Ickes "can take it" after dishing it out.

Speaking of Sports

Hagen to Play In British Open; Plans Comeback

By ROBERT McSHANE

WALTER HAGEN, a few years ago regarded as one of the greatest of all golfers, amateur or pro, emphatically declares that he is a long way from being through with tournament golf.

"I'm going to play in tournaments going over to Great Britain to take another shot at the British open," Hagen said. "But I'm not going to play until I feel that I am ready. When that time comes I'll play, and I believe I'll go as well as I ever did—that is—if I get a weather break. I'm no mudder, you know, and nothing wrecks my golf game like rain or snow during a tournament."

Thousands of golf bugs will hope, though perhaps skeptically, that Hagen can make a comeback. The old master started winning tournaments a long time ago. In 1914 he won the National Open, repeating in 1919. He captured the Western Open in 1916, '21, '25, '27 and '32. In 1916 he won the Metropolitan Open, duplicating the performance in 1919 and 1929. And as regards another try at the British Open, he should do all right. He's had plenty of practice, winning it in 1922, '24, '28 and '29. The Canadian Open crown fell to him in 1931.

Hagen contracted malaria last year during a big game hunting expedition in Africa. He has had a long rest, and has regained much of his lost strength. During his recuperation he devoted his time to designing and building new clubs.

At one time he stated that he was through with tournament golf—that he'd putter around the course in a friendly game or two, but was through with competition. Now he declares he made that remark in order that friends would not insist on his playing when he was not in shape.

"Sarazen spoke the truth," he said, "when he remarked that our American courses are softened up for the tournament players. It's a fact that with greens as soft as the tournament players want them you can stop a midiron shot dead, without fear of it rolling over."

Baseball Schools

THAT comparatively new and rapidly growing institute of education, the baseball school, seems to be finding few backers other than faculty members and student bodies.

Indeed, there are those alert individuals who look at the schools in anything but a kindly light. They realize that "racket" is a horrid word, but haven't found an adequate substitute in describing diamond colleges. Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who has somewhat more than a passing interest in the game, is known to be cocking a scrutinizing eye over some of the various baseball schools blossoming in the country.

For the most part, deans and professors of these schools are past and present major league stars. Big names in baseball. They furnish bait for students. Entrance requirements are very simple—almost too simple. All the student needs is enough money and the desire to become a big league star. Requirements for the instructor are equally simple. He needs only a nation-wide reputation and the desire for a bit of out-of-season spending money.

It must be admitted that some sponsors really expect to find a good prospect among the run-of-the-mill aspirants at their schools. But there is real danger that the baseball school, if permitted to operate without close supervision, will become nothing more than a racket.

When the baseball bug bites Junior he'll probably quit his job at the Bon Ton Soda Shoppe, withdraw his savings from the Soda Jerkers National Bank and embark for the closest college of clout. Nine times out of ten the experience won't harm him, and odds are the same that he'll be no closer to big time baseball. However, parents are beginning to mutter. They don't want Junior spending both time and money trying to reach the moon, especially when he's neglecting the liberal arts or his more mundane job. Eddie Collins once said that ability to hit big league pitching was 50 per cent confidence and 50 per cent natural talent. All of which doesn't leave much room for instruction.

'Hot Stove' Fuel

FUEL for baseball's "hot stoves" was furnished in abundance recently by the National League Green Book, which contains enough information to keep arguments going until the diamond season is well under way.

For instance, Editor Gill Brandt's gleanings show that nine parks were used by the senior circuit clubs last year, and that one player was successful in chalking up home runs in all nine. He was John Costa Rizzo, Pittsburgh's rookie sensation who set a new Pirate record with 23 homers.

Though Mel Ott of the New York Giants spread his 35 home runs through all eight cities, he obtained none in Sibley Park, which the Pirates called home the last half of the season. Ott, incidentally, drew 118 bases, his sixth season with more than 100.

Contrary to earned run and percentage calculations which showed Big Bill Lee of Chicago the season's foremost pitcher, the green book shows Johnny Vander Meer of Cincinnati was tops on the basis of opponents' batting averages.

The system evolved by Tommy Holmes, sports writer of the Brooklyn Eagle, showed that the collective batting average of all players off Vander Meer was .215, while Lee's opponents hit .254. By this rating Russ Bauers of Pittsburgh and Clay Bryant of the Cubs were second and third best hurlers.

Only player to get more than 200 hits was Frank McCormick, Cincinnati's rookie first baseman. He also led in bunting them, twice clustering five safeties in a single game, and on six other occasions bunting four.

Paul Waner, veteran Pirate, never much of a slugger, moved into the league's all time home run leaders on only six homers. He is one of 11 players now active in the National league who have hit 100 or more home runs.

His .221 average placed Stanley Hack of the Cubs in company with 17 other present players who have a lifetime average of over .300.

Unworried Chief

JOE CARR of Columbus, Ohio, founder of the National Football league, is one gridiron official who doesn't worry about his tenure of office.

At a recent league meeting Carr was re-elected president and secretary for 10 years by unanimous vote of the club owners.

Carr is unique in the field of sports. He is one of very few promoters of professional athletics who have been able to stay with their enterprises long enough to see them become a success. Before and immediately after the war, Carr saw the need for discipline to halt players from jumping from one club to another and the need of an organization to regulate the game's relationship with college football.

In the winter of 1920 he called a meeting of the leading professional teams in the East and Middle West. Thirteen clubs responded, and a league was organized. Curley Lambeau and George Halas, who took out franchises for Green Bay and Chicago, respectively, are charter members and are the only ones who have survived the turbulent years.

He entered professional athletics at 18, as secretary of the Ohio State Baseball league. Two years later he became the league president. For the next 20 years he served as president of various minor baseball leagues and at one time was president of the Columbus club.

He has never forsaken baseball, and is still professionally active.

Sport Shorts

HELEN WILLS MOODY, tennis queen, is going to write a book—a mystery novel with a tennis background. . . . Canada holds the amateur hockey championship of the world for the third successive year, winning it at Basle, Switzerland. The Canadians were undefeated, and blanked the U. S. 4 to 0. . . . Tommy Farr, bashful British heavyweight, has confided to friends that he is engaged to an American college girl. Farr said the girl gave him a diamond. . . . Part of the World's fair sports program to be presented on Treasure Island will be 14 nights of indoor soccer. . . . Conny Warrander, San Francisco, recently broke the indoor polo vaulting record with a jump of 14 feet 6 1/2 inches.

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